

people what this is all about, because that is what this is.

Now, Donald Trump, when he made those intentions clear, he also said that Republicans should just try to rewrite the rules. President Trump said that Republicans should just take over these elections. President Trump has already threatened insurrection rule here and there. President Trump has also said he is going to send ICE agents across the country to ballot places.

There was a hearing this week where TULSI GABBARD, who is supposed to be in charge of intelligence in America—that is kind of an oxymoron. She was sent down to look for ballots in Georgia, something about a stolen election in 2020.

Now, I look around the room. At least two of my colleagues that are in the Chamber right now were here on January 6. I was here as well.

This notion of the President not buying the outcome of the election because he didn't win—bring it back to where we are today and the SAVE Act: another power grab. Take away the right to vote for American citizens.

Now, Republicans know something today that I know to be true as well: that the Republican agenda isn't working, and that is bad for the American people.

If you don't believe me, go to a grocery store with some of your constituents. Chat with them after church. Go to the ball game, but take a few extra bucks because that hotdog is not going to cost you a buck fifty anymore. It is going to cost you 5, 6, 10 bucks.

American people, when they are trying to get some groceries for the kids, they go to the checkout line, and they realize that maybe they put too many things in the grocery cart because everything got more and more expensive—Trump tariffs, this and that.

There is nothing happening to lower the costs for the American people, and what I hope my brothers and sisters across the country realize today is that if Republicans in the majority in the Senate want to do something and bring it to the floor, they do it. They are doing it right now, even though a bunch of Republicans are not in Washington, DC. We are on the floor talking about the SAVE Act.

I wish they had the same gumption to lower prices for the American people, to hold this President accountable. Bring that legislation to the floor.

And maybe one of my Republican colleagues will surprise me and offer a unanimous consent to pay the TSA agents. I am going to stick around for that one because I look forward to hearing that we are going to do that one here as well.

So just as a reminder, this legislation would also empower the Department of Homeland Security to get their hands not just on Social Security information and on IRS information, but now on voting information.

What my Republican colleagues want to do is give these out-of-control ICE

agents—the same ones that killed two of our American citizens, our brothers and sisters in Minnesota; the same out-of-control agents that are busting American people's car windows open, busting into people's houses without a judicial warrant—those same folks, that is what this legislation will do, hand that nonsense over to them.

But, look, let's not forget that the Trump administration has shown that it is willing to lie and abuse its power. President Trump keeps joking over and over and over about a third term. And every time I bring it up, my Republican colleagues say: Oh, he is just joking. He doesn't really mean it.

Well, I wish that was true.

I am going to give some advice to my Republican colleagues, if they are willing to listen. Some of them are up for election this year.

I am reminded of stories that many of us maybe heard firsthand—I hope all of us have read—about a colleague that some of us served with as a Member of the House of Representatives. His name was John Lewis.

John, a civil rights giant, a civil rights hero, a man who stood arm in arm with strangers to stand for our rights, to make sure that—no matter who we were as American citizens, the way we spoke, the color of our skin, where we were from—we could vote; that no longer would the right to vote be taken away from us. He stood on that bridge in Selma, where thousands of Americans were bloodied and beaten and left for dead—that John Lewis.

The SAVE Act would undo the work of these civil rights activists and giants that fought for all of us.

Now, in our democracy, voting should be accessible for every eligible American, no matter who they support. But what congressional Republicans only want to happen is you can vote in America, but only if you vote for them.

So here is my advice: If Republicans want to win some more elections, they should stop taking food away from seniors, children, and veterans. That is something we should agree on. They should stop taking away tax credits that make healthcare more affordable for millions of Americans. I am not even going to remind you all of my fight 4 years ago when I survived a stroke, of how hard it is to get care and how expensive it is.

Maybe stop emboldening untrained ICE agents from smashing in Americans' car windows and illegally entering American citizens' homes to kidnap American citizens. That is probably good too.

And stop leaving behind our farmers and ranchers—enough with the bandaids. Let's work on some things together here. The farm bill is something that we could still do, and I hope we do it.

Stop allowing this President to keep raising prices on families with tariffs and illegal wars. That is something that a lot of my colleagues agree on. Some of them have voted to stop this stuff.

So to my Republican colleagues, if any of you are still wondering how I am going to vote on this bill, I will be voting no.

And to the American people, my Republican Senator colleagues should too.

Donald Trump doesn't get a third term. He does not get to choose who votes and who doesn't when they are American citizens. In America, people decide who is going to represent them.

BATAAN DEATH MARCH

Mr. President, what I want to chat briefly about is about the Bataan Death March. Now, the anniversary, the recognition, the commemoration will be in April. It is still a few weeks away.

Approximately 70,000 troops surrendered at the fall of Bataan in April of 1942. About 66,000 were Filipino soldiers, about 9,000 American troops. They were forced into the Bataan Death March, one of the largest surrenders of the United States and Allied forces in history.

I want to take a moment to remember one of the darkest chapters of World War II. After the fall of Bataan in 1942, tens of thousands of American and Filipino servicemembers were forced to march for miles under brutal condition—little food, water, medical care. Many did not survive. Those who did endured suffering as prisoners of war.

The reason I am raising this is, tomorrow, in New Mexico, there are thousands of people gathered from across America and across New Mexico for the Bataan Memorial March.

Some of our staff are actually down that way. I was hoping to be there with them in person. I will be putting some miles in tomorrow to stand in solidarity with all of my brothers and sisters who are there.

I just wanted to take a moment to send them prayers and send them strength, all the Bataan families that have sat to share the importance of why we need to stand strong for those who have served across the country and are still with us today. I just want to say thank you to each and every one of them for taking their time.

And the last thing I will say, Mr. President—if my colleague still wants me to yield, I would be happy to—but the last thing I want to say is to the two barbers I had a chance of meeting in Mesilla, a couple of weeks ago, from Pistoleros Barbershop: God's speed to you as you hit the sand tomorrow. God bless each and every one of you tomorrow.

My colleague is no longer on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I don't think our friend from New Mexico will be shocked to hear me say that I am not going to be taking his advice. I know he is very concerned about Republicans in the next elections and our

ability to maintain our majority in both houses. So he will have to forgive me for not taking his advice.

What I have a hard time understanding—and the argument that our colleague is making—is they are willing to fund everything at the Department of Homeland Security except the people who enforce our immigration laws.

Mr. LUJÁN. Would the Senator yield?

Mr. CORNYN. But this is very consistent with the policies of the Democrats because they are the party of “defund the police.” They are the party of “abolish ICE.” They are the party of “now don’t pay ICE” and “don’t enforce our immigration laws.”

So the reason why the TSA agents are not being paid is because we have voted multiple times to pay everybody who is working on behalf of the American people—all the patriots who are currently working—whether they are TSA agents or they work for Homeland Security Investigations, which does counterterrorism investigations.

You know, these are very dangerous times. We have had multiple terrorist attacks in places like Austin, where I live, and in New York, Michigan, Virginia. And we heard from the Director of National Intelligence, the FBI Director, and others that we could expect more of these sleeper cells or people who are already here, who came in during the Biden administration, to become radicalized and lash out and kill more Americans.

And those people aren’t being paid either.

And they also objected to paying the Coast Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Heaven forbid that we have a hurricane or tornadoes or floods or some other natural disaster because the men and women of the Federal Emergency Management Agency will not be available because they have either been furloughed—in any event, they will not be paid—while Democrats persist in insisting that our immigration laws not be enforced because they don’t want ICE—the law enforcement agents who enforce our immigration laws—to be paid. It is that simple.

Here is another thing I don’t really understand. I have seen a number of polls ranging from 70 to 80 percent of Americans who support the SAVE America Act. I am surprised it is that low. When you think about what it is, it says that you have to be an American citizen to vote, and when you show up at the polls, you have to produce a photo ID. We have given many speeches talking about how common sense that is.

But if you are opposed to those requirements, it makes me wonder: Do you think noncitizens should be able to vote? Do you think fraudsters who claim to be someone they are not ought to be able to cast a ballot? I don’t know what the rationale is.

They say we are disenfranchising American citizens. Is that why 70 to 80

percent of Americans support it? They support being disenfranchised? It makes no sense whatsoever. Yet Democrats persist in their folly.

I think really what this boils down to, as I have said before, is that anything that President Trump is for, they are against.

Do you remember at the State of the Union, the President asked people in the audience to stand up if they supported our law enforcement officers—the people who put their lives on the line to enforce our laws and maintain public safety? Every single Democrat sat on their hands. I mean, isn’t there anything that comes out of President Trump’s mouth that they could find their way to agree with no matter how self-evidently true?

You know, when President Trump took the courageous move to take out Iran’s nuclear program, the Commander in Chief ordered our incredible military to fly 30 hours from Missouri and drop a bunker buster bomb down a ventilation shaft in a nuclear program facility in Iran. It makes me proud of our men and women in uniform.

Then when Nicolas Maduro in Caracas—a fugitive from justice, somebody who was indicted in Federal court in New York—when law enforcement needed to arrest him, they were supported by our men and women in uniform again, who, almost miraculously, to my mind, gave cover to the law enforcement officers who went in and extracted him to bring him to justice in New York.

So on almost every occasion, no matter how common sense, no matter how proud it makes me of our President and our military to keep the Nation free of the No. 1 state sponsor of terror, who is seeking to acquire a nuclear weapon, they take the other side. It is really amazing.

President Trump has this amazing power to force normally reasonable, rational individuals to take crazy positions for no other reason than they oppose President Trump, and that includes commonsense provisions like only American citizens can vote.

I thought our colleague from Louisiana did a nice job of sort of laying the predicate—I think the Senator from Ohio did the same—and pointed out the millions of people who came into the country during the pendency of the Biden administration, during his open border policies, unvetted—many good people who want nothing but a better life, but we don’t know who came in for sure. We do know that it wasn’t all good people who wanted to work and seek a better life here. It included criminals, sex offenders, drug traffickers, murderers, terrorists. And now we are paying the price for that.

When we say that we want to be doubly sure that only American citizens can vote, they say: No, that is disenfranchising people from voting.

I even heard our colleagues across the aisle say: Well, it is already illegal. There are a lot of things that are ille-

gal, but if you don’t enforce it, people get away with it.

Well, the argument of our colleagues is, again, that the vast majority of Americans who support this legislation are trying to disenfranchise themselves. How ridiculous can you be?

Then we hear the argument that it is just too hard. It is too hard to come up with the papers that you need in order to prove you are an American citizen—a marriage license, a birth certificate, a passport, some other form of identification.

Two days ago, the Senator from Maryland came to the floor and said he opposed the SAVE America Act because only about one-half of Americans have a passport. He then went on to say that means that only half of the American citizens that are preparing to go out to vote will be able to vote.

Well, as I mentioned yesterday—and I know it has been repeated ad nauseam by my colleague from Utah and others—there are other forms of acceptable ID. Unfortunately, some of our Democratic colleagues have come out here and misrepresented what is in the bill.

Americans can present enhanced driver’s licenses, a REAL ID-compliant driver’s license like I have in my pocket, a State ID card, a certificate of naturalization, or military identification card. If they have none of those, they can pair a normal photo ID with their birth certificate, a consular report of a birth abroad, or other similar documents.

In fact, if they still have legitimate concerns rather than excuses for this commonsense law, they can work with us, and we could tighten it in such a way that nobody would be disenfranchised, but they refuse to do that.

Everybody knows voter ID is common sense. Everybody knows you need a photo ID to get into a Federal building. You even need to get one to go into the Democratic convention, to buy a six-pack of beer, to buy cigarettes, to get on a plane—the list goes on and on and on and on.

So the excuses that our colleagues are throwing up saying, “Oh, it is just too hard for us to produce a photo ID; it is going to prevent people from being able to vote”—no. What it is going to mean is that when somebody votes by mail—because some States send ballots to individuals without those individuals requesting them, and then they claim to be someone they are not and cast a ballot. What it will mean is that we will be able to identify those people who should not be voting and prevent them from doing so.

It is not just about preventing people who shouldn’t be able to vote from voting; it is about them diluting your vote, because for every illegitimate ballot that is cast, that means it undermines and dilutes or offsets a legitimate vote and ballot.

Our Democratic colleagues act like this is some sort of fanciful innovation nobody had ever heard of before—a

crazy idea—but you look around the world, and other democracies have similar requirements. Norway, for example, requires voters to present a photo ID, such as a passport, a driver's license, or a bank card with a photo, in order to cast a ballot. Northern Ireland requires voters to present a valid ID. France, Israel, Iceland all have voter IDs. Even in Mexico, our neighbor to the south, with more than a third of its population living in poverty, that suffers from high levels of organized crime, a voter ID is required. If Mexico can require a voter ID, so can the United States of America.

Surely no one enjoys paperwork, but the simple fact of life is that sometimes you have to fill out a form and show an ID to do something that is important. We do it to go to the doctor or dentist or travel or to start a new job. When things are important enough to us, we do what is required to make them happen, and what could be more important than voting?

You know, the authority that we exercise on behalf of the people who vote for us and elect us is called the consent of the governed, which is the source of all legitimacy in government. This isn't just my idea or some other Senator's idea or Congressman's idea; it is because we represent people, and they have consented—by electing us to represent them, the governed have consented, in effect, to the laws that we pass. But when people who are not qualified to vote cast a ballot or when fraudsters claim to be somebody they are not and cast a ballot, it undermines the whole fabric and foundation of our constitutional system.

I will make a deal with anybody in Texas that I am sure the great Senator from Pennsylvania or Ohio or Utah or any other Members of the Senate—I have a great constituent service office in Dallas, TX. They do magnificent work. They have won awards. So if you have a problem with your passport, with your VA benefits, with immigration, whatever, we have people available, with a phone call or a stroke of a keyboard, who will help you.

If you are somehow unsure about how to get the paperwork you need in order to demonstrate you are an American citizen and qualified to vote, we will help you. We will make sure you have that documentation. We will make sure you are able to demonstrate that you are an American citizen.

If you have a problem getting a photo ID in Texas—admittedly a red State, so we do have voter integrity measures in place, like photo ID—if you don't have a driver's license, you can get a free photo ID just for the asking. It doesn't cost you anything.

You know, I frankly find the argument of our friends across the aisle insulting because they act as though the American people are too lazy, too dumb, or too incompetent to do the basic things you need to do in order to meet the terms of the SAVE America Act. And I know that is not true, but

that is how they act—or at least that is what they claim.

I have full confidence that all Americans who are legal citizens can rise to the demands of self-government by making sure they can demonstrate that they are, in fact, American citizens and acquiring a photo ID from some source that is readily available that will help you, if you have difficulty, in order to cast your ballot.

The truth is, the SAVE America Act is common sense. That is why you see broad polling support among Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. It is supported by more than 70 percent of the American public. So if it was true that this bill would disenfranchise voters, you are, in effect, saying 70 percent of Americans want to disenfranchise themselves. What a ludicrous argument that is.

What is more, passing this bill would strengthen and honor our 250-year tradition of self-government. By opposing this bill, not only are Senate Democrats placing themselves on the wrong side of public opinion but on the wrong side of history. And I hope—maybe this is too much to hope for, but I hope they will reconsider and join us in passing this commonsense bill that so many of the people they represent—not just whom I represent but they represent—want to become law.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. MORENO. Mr. President, for those who are not familiar with what actually happens here in Washington, DC, as I stated earlier, for the fifth time, Democrats have blocked to end debate on whether 260,000 families should get paid for the work that they have done. It is almost ludicrous to even make that statement because the idea that we would withhold the pay of 260,000 hard-working DHS employees is insane.

But we haven't actually even had debate. What you see here in this Chamber that is virtually empty is that one person will make a speech, another person will make a speech, and quite frankly there is no interaction. So I actually want to change that a little bit.

So to any of my Democratic colleagues that want to speak, I will yield my time if they can answer for me and acknowledge that there are currently 260,000 DHS families going without pay. Is that true or false?

OK. No answer on that one. I will break the suspense. That is true.

The second thing I will yield for a comment on is: Will any of my Democratic colleagues that are present in this Chamber acknowledge that the Democrats have not agreed—have not agreed—to individually fund Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, and the nuclear threat Agency within the Department of Homeland Security—have absolutely not presented any resolutions or votes to fund those Agencies? Is that true or false?

Seeing no response, I will break the silence and say that is true.

Would any Democrat in the Chamber acknowledge that fewer than 10 percent of the entire workforce of DHS works for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, known as ICE?

Well, they can fact-check me, but the answer is that is true.

Of the 22,000 ICE employees, will any Democrat in this Chamber acknowledge that the vast majority of those employees work for Homeland Investigations?

What do they do? That is the group that identifies, chases, and catches really bad guys. These are the people who actually go out and find the worst of the worst, transnational groups. The vast majority of ICE employees work for that division. Is that true or false? Would you acknowledge that that is accurate?

OK. Hearing no comments from my Democratic colleagues, the answer to that is it is true.

So the remaining 5,000 employees out of 260,000 that my colleagues do not want to give a paycheck despite the fact that they came to work for the last 35 days—unlike anybody in this Chamber who has not come to work the last 35 days because that has definitely not happened—will they acknowledge that collective punishment is a bad idea? In other words, would they acknowledge that punishing 5,000 people who work for Enforcement and Removal Operations because a couple dozen—maybe, generously, a couple dozen; probably less; probably a handful maybe didn't do everything perfectly—you are recommending that we collectively punish all 5,000 people? Is that what you are saying?

No response. The answer is only a politician would think that that is a good idea. Only a politician would think that collective punishment is the way to go. You are punishing 260,000 employees in the Department of Homeland Security because you think that if you had been in that situation, you would have acted differently. Four or five, six, seven people that you think did the wrong thing gives you the moral authority to take away the paychecks of 260,000 people.

And I am going to look forward to hearing from my colleague from Utah, who has done so much work to put together the SAVE America Act. And he actually hasn't had anybody say this to him: Thank you. Thank you for the hard work. You have put in I can't even imagine how many hours—you and your staff. You have been willing to listen to anybody who wants to improve your bill, and yet you have gotten very little feedback, except for on the floor when they accused you of God knows what.

But I will ask my Republican colleague—because I watched it on TV, and so I am going to ask my Republican colleague to answer whether this is true or false; and any of my Democratic colleagues I will yield to if they want to jump in. I suspect they won't.

Is it true that, yesterday, my fellow Republican Senator, Senator HUSTED, who is doing an amazing job—a good man that I have known for 20 years. Is it true that he proposed a bill that would have simply required photo ID to vote? Not a photo ID that proves you are a citizen, which I think we should have that, but just a simple photo ID the way any of us have to walk in and out of this building? Is that true?

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask consent to answer the question through the Chair.

Mr. MORENO. I yield to my colleague from Utah.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, in response to the question from the Senator from Ohio, the junior Senator from Ohio—not to be confused with the very handsome senior Senator from Ohio—came to the floor yesterday. Now, the junior Senator from Ohio comes to this job with a unique background, a unique set of knowledge born of experience as the longtime chief elections officer of the State of Ohio.

As he looks at the SAVE America Act, he sees that there are two main components. Component 1 deals with voter ID, where you just show up with a photo ID on the day of election to prove that you are who you say you are, the same person listed on your voter registration file. Component 2 deals with establishing citizenship at the time of voter registration.

About 48 hours ago, a lot of our Democratic colleagues started stating publicly and privately, here on the Senate floor and outside of this Chamber, that they would be just fine if this were just a voter ID bill. And so the junior Senator from Ohio had this great idea. He said: Look, why don't we create a separate bill file. We will take the exact same text from component 1—that is the part that deals just with photo ID, photo ID to be shown by the voter on the day of voting, at the voting place, to show that the voter is, in fact, the same person listed on the voter registration file. After all, the Democrats have said they are just fine with the voter ID component.

So he gave a speech in support of it. I backed him up in a parallel speech. Then he offered it up, offered to pass it by what we call live UC, which is a mechanism by which you ask unanimous consent of all Senators to pass something. It seemed like a very good idea given the amount of bipartisan consensus surrounding the voter ID provision.

We were watching with bated breath, very much anticipating the answer. And, curiously, it drew an objection from the Democrats, articulated by the Senator from Oregon. But here was the interesting thing that I would say to my friend and colleague, the distinguished senior Senator from Ohio. At the time the Democrat objection was raised, the basis of the objection, as I heard it, was related entirely to com-

ponent 2 that has only to do with proof of citizenship at the time of voter registration.

So I don't know. Maybe this was a mistake. Maybe this was an accident. Maybe he didn't mean to object.

I hope that we will continue to do those things. Perhaps tomorrow or in the days to come, we will try that again—because it drew an objection, but the objection didn't have any explanation as to why it would be unreasonable for someone to show up on the day of voting just to make sure that somebody else isn't impersonating you, that you are the same person you claim to be and the same person on your voter registration file.

I hope that that answers satisfactorily the question asked by the senior Senator from Ohio.

Mr. MORENO. It does. Unless any of my Democratic colleagues want to debate any of the items I mentioned—hearing no debate, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Mr. President, it is unfortunate that we are here today to debate the merits of this so-called SAVE America Act.

Right now, Americans are struggling with the rising costs of housing, healthcare, gas, groceries, and more. Earlier this week in Maryland, the average price of gas shot up 14 cents overnight. The American people are suffering from the effects of a trade war started by this administration and now are watching as we are stuck in an illegal and poorly planned military war in Iran.

This increasing unaffordability is an urgent crisis that actually demands a resolution, but unfortunately we have an administration that is completely out of touch. There are so many real issues that we could be working on that would actually benefit the lives of working families across our country, but we are here ignoring their wishes and debating this legislation because this President isn't living in reality. He has created a fantasy crisis and is committed to finding a solution to a problem that does not exist.

So my colleagues are here making arguments that don't hold up under any real scrutiny, claiming that this bill is necessary to ensure that only U.S. citizens vote in American elections. But reality says that noncitizen voting in Federal elections is already against the law, and there are enforcement mechanisms in place. This is the law, and it should be followed.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle disingenuously claim that this bill is a commonsense election integrity measure focused on proof of citizenship, voter ID, and cleaner voting rolls. Reality says that, on top of everything else that people are dealing with right now, requiring even more paperwork would create real problems for so many people—like married women whose documents don't match because they changed their names to

match their husbands or members of our military who move locations often in service of our country. It would be a problem for people who rely on mail registration or absentee voting. It would be an undue burden for our seniors, veterans, students, and rural voters. Voting already requires a form of American identification.

And so my colleagues on the other side of the aisle say that this bill would provide necessary aggressive voter roll verification and removal of noncitizens from the rolls. Reality says that this aggressive Federal overreach would include requiring States to submit voter data to DHS, the same organization that is currently sending ICE goon squads of men with masks on to kill Americans in our streets. States would be required to submit their complete statewide voter registration lists to DHS for comparison through the SAVE program on an ongoing basis. That is completely impractical.

The SAVE program was not designed to be a voter registration system, and it predictably has resulted in false matches and false ineligibility flags. What is more, it gives DHS a continuing role in Federal elections that it is not equipped or designed to handle. It hands over critical information to an administration that I would dare say has already proven that it is not trustworthy and that it cannot or will not keep the sensitive data of the American people protected. It hands over information to an administration that has already failed this very basic test of using its power for retribution.

Reality says this is being treated as an emergency right now, and we understand why: Because it is a part of a broader electoral strategy that this administration needs to be in place ahead of the upcoming midterm elections. People are unhappy with the direction that our country is going in right now. They are upset that their government isn't working on the real issues that they are facing. And instead of addressing the affordability crisis that is staring us in the face—the affordability crisis that was caused by this President—this administration wants to guarantee a successful midterm election by “fixing” an electoral system that is not broken.

The President already issued an Executive order directing Federal Agencies to be more involved in election-related enforcement and citizen verification.

And since then, the DOJ has sought extensive voter data from nearly every State. At least 48 States and DC have received requests for their complete voter registration lists, and the DOJ has sued DC and 29 States, including Maryland, for refusing to provide statewide voter lists with driver's license and Social Security information.

This administration is counting on Republicans in Congress to sell their sick fantasy, and that is why we are here now, wasting precious time trying to fix a problem that is not real. But

reality has refuted every single fantasy claim made in support of this bill.

So what are the architects of this bill actually seeking? Well, simply put, they are seeking to suppress the vote. This is not a standard voter ID bill. This bill is not about protecting democracy. Protecting democracy would eliminate barriers that keep more Americans from voting. This bill does not do that; it does the opposite.

This bill is a blatant attempt to kick eligible American voters off the rolls and make it more complicated for Americans to register and vote. States have already done an excellent job fashioning a system that works.

The fantasy world this bill envisions would disrupt the way voter registration and voting actually work in practice. It would undermine or severely limit online registration, registration by mail, motor-voter systems, same-day registration, and voter registration drives by requiring in-person presentation of documentary proof.

It would alter registration, list maintenance, and ballot-casting all at once, forcing States and election officials to rework systems that voters already rely on.

My home State of Maryland has worked hard to build a system that is both secure and accessible. This bill would undermine the progress that we and so many other States have made by replacing those successful, efficient State systems with new Federal mandates and new legal risks for elections officials.

It would result in wrongful removals from voter rolls and more undue burdens, putting new barriers between eligible voters and the ballot box.

Now, if the President and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to ignore the urgent crisis facing the Nation in order to fix issues with voting that actually do exist, they would endorse the bill that I have introduced, the Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act, that would criminalize knowingly spreading false information about the time, place, or manner of voting or about voter qualifications, and would prohibit threatening or coercing individuals not to vote or to vote in a certain way.

But that would require my colleagues to actually care about our democracy. They would sign on to the numerous bills by my colleagues that I cosponsored, like Senator KLOBUCHAR's Register America to Vote Act. It would automatically register all eligible citizens to vote when they turn 18. But this, too, would require my colleagues to actually care about our democracy.

They would sign on to Senator WYDEN's Vote at Home Act that would expand vote-by-mail, a method that has proven to increase voter participation. Yet that would require my colleagues to care about our democracy.

They would sign on to Senator PADILLA's Voter Purge Protection Act that would prohibit States from using

questionable voter purge tactics to take tens of thousands of eligible voters off the voting rolls. But that, too, would require my colleagues to care about democracy.

If they truly cared about democracy, they would have already signed on to the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act that would restore the safeguards of the Voting Rights Act that was so shortsightedly gutted by the Supreme Court.

John Lewis lived through some of this Nation's most challenging times. His reality was seeing poll taxes and literacy tests disenfranchise thousands, harassment and death threats for trying to register voters, violent attacks for peacefully protesting. His reality was bravely standing up to hate, knowing that fighting for the right to vote was worth the blood he shed on the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

That very real crisis was met by the passing of the landmark Voting Rights Act, so instrumental to this Nation's progress that through everything he faced in his life, John Lewis said that his "greatest fear is that one day we may wake up and our democracy is gone."

You know, I walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge last summer. It is something that I recommend that all who have the ability to do will do, so that especially the young people of our country will understand truly what has been put on the line in order for us to have the right to vote.

It wasn't lost on me, as I walked across that bridge and recognized—to be honest with you, very similar to these goons running across our country, these ICE agents in masks. These are people who were essentially deputized to traumatize American citizens.

So the men who were on the other side of that Edmund Pettus Bridge were waiting for these young people—John Lewis was 22 years old when he took up this battle—walked across that bridge, and these people who were not even truly law enforcement officials had sticks that were wrapped in barbed wire.

Can you imagine the character of a man or a person who is capable of beating another human with a stick that was wrapped in barbed wire? But that is how strongly these people felt about depriving people of the right to vote. They beat him within an inch of his life because they did not want to give African Americans the right to vote.

So this bill would take real steps toward creating another crisis, a crisis that was John Lewis' "greatest fear." America has a long, detailed history of people fighting, bleeding, and dying to secure the right to vote.

That hard-won freedom to speak with your vote should not depend on whether you have the time, money, or flexibility to satisfy a new set of hurdles that go to serve this administration's goals.

And I would say that those goals are intellectually dishonest goals, and they are not reality.

You don't save America by silencing the voices of Americans. I will repeat that. There is no way to save America by silencing the voices of Americans. You save America by embracing the ideals that set us apart to begin with. The reality is that we should be encouraging more people to take full advantage of their rights. That is why we should be making it easier for eligible citizens to participate in our democracy, not harder.

When a bill takes a fundamental right and wraps it in paperwork, penalties, and confusion, that is not election security; that is a step backward for American democracy, and that is not what the American people want.

They did not ask for an additional crisis to deal with. This administration has insisted on ignoring their calls for help on the affordability crisis, but maybe listening to their objections to this bill will open their eyes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I appreciate the insights and enthusiasm offered by my friend and distinguished colleague the Senator from Maryland. I appreciate the right of every Senator to express his or her opinions, his or her thoughtful analysis in the legislative Chamber that we occupy.

This is part of what it means to be Americans, and it is a big part of what it means to be a U.S. Senator, to have the privilege to stand here and debate matters that are important to the American people, important to the ongoing health and vitality not only of our elections but also of our system of government, our Constitution, and the ideals embodied in our other great founding document, the Declaration of Independence, whose birthday we are about to celebrate in a few months.

Documents don't enjoy the 250th anniversary of their writing very often, but we are about to celebrate that. And on the same day, we will celebrate both the birthday of that document and with it the birthday of our country because that document ushered in the existence of the United States of America as a separate and independent sovereign country.

One of the many features of that country from the very day it was created nearly 250 years ago is the concept of popular sovereignty. Now, it is probably too many syllables for most folks to want to use it in one sentence, but of course we all understand that popular sovereignty—well, it sounds like a fancy term—refers to a very simple thing.

In this country, the government, the country itself, consists of the people. Those who have the right—the divine right—to govern are the people themselves, the citizens themselves. That, from day one, has been the concept.

That was different than things were in our mother country. In our mother country, we didn't have—we had elements of popular sovereignty that had

evolved over the years, but it was very different than it is here.

For that to mean something, we do have to protect the right to vote. And for the right to vote to mean anything, you also have to have fair and free elections. Now, when we have elections, we have a common understanding that I don't think anyone here disagrees with or at least wouldn't articulate their disagreement in public.

There is a very widespread agreement that those who vote need to meet the legal requirements to vote. And one of the most fundamental laws that we have is that in order to vote in U.S. elections, you have to be a U.S. citizen.

To my knowledge, this has never been controversial in the United States of America. And in fact, it is not controversial to this day, even in this Chamber. I think every one of us here, if asked, would agree: Yes, only U.S. citizens should vote in U.S. elections. It is against the law to do otherwise, and in fact, if someone casts a vote in a U.S. election who is not a U.S. citizen, he or she has committed a pretty grave felony offense against the United States.

So the question then becomes: If that is such a key element to who we are as a people, to the functioning of our government, to the concept of popular sovereignty that has been embodied in our system of government—first in the Declaration of Independence, later in the Constitution, and in our laws ever since then—then what do we have to do to protect that if it plays such an important role as it does?

Well, there is this old expression that if everyone is family, no one is. There is a corollary to that: If everything is urgent, nothing is. When you apply a label too broadly, the label itself loses meaning.

When you grant too many people the privileges, the incidents of citizenship—when those granted it include people who are noncitizens, then that is making everyone family, even if they are actually not. That, in turn, erodes what it means to be an American. It dilutes each lawful vote cast by an actual U.S. citizen.

Now, we just heard a laundry list of complaints, very, very similar to the laundry list of complaints that we have heard over the last 36, 48 hours—I guess, we are going on 72 hours since we turned to this bill just a few days ago.

Almost every argument we have heard against this from across the aisle has included some of these same elements, and we heard some more of those today from my friend and distinguished colleague the Senator from Maryland.

Among those arguments that she made today just a few moments ago had to do with—there were some arguments that had to do with the fact that this bill, as she described it, would somehow take away the rights of some American citizens to vote and that it

would result in disenfranchising American citizens.

I wish to state at the outset, emphatically, that this is not true. This was neither the intention of the SAVE America Act nor would it be the effect of the SAVE America Act. This legislation, once it becomes law, will not disenfranchise a single American citizen, not a single one.

The only people who will be prevented from voting are those who are not citizens, those who are not allowed to vote in our system of government, and those who, by voting, if they were to vote, would be committing a very serious Federal felony criminal offense and with good reason.

So we have to be clear about what this does. This does not achieve, as she put it, erect barriers—barriers that would stop U.S. citizens from voting.

Remember what this does. We have the twin objectives that are upstream from everything that we are doing. We want to make it easy to vote, and we want to make it hard to cheat. To do that, we have two principal elements in the SAVE America Act. The first element would require voters to bring a government-issued photo ID with them to the polling place on the day of voting to show who they are, to demonstrate that they are who they claim to be and that they are the same person referenced in their voter registration file.

That is important for a number of reasons, including the fact that you don't want somebody voting in somebody else's name, and you certainly don't want somebody voting who is not supposed to be voting at all.

There are some people in the United States who might be citizens who are prohibited from voting for reasons having to do with criminal convictions, for example, or those who have renounced their U.S. citizenship. You wouldn't want that to happen. You wouldn't want a noncitizen voting, and you wouldn't want one person who might be a citizen with voting rights voting in somebody else's name—perhaps in an effort to cast multiple votes in the same election by impersonating another or otherwise. So that is a very simple principle.

That feature of the bill—having to bring a government-issued photo ID to the polling location on the day of voting to show that they are who they claim to be—is not controversial. It is certainly not controversial among the American people—not among Democrats, not among Republicans, not among members of any ethnic group, racial minority, gender, any part of the country. This is noncontroversial throughout the United States.

It is apparently even noncontroversial in this Chamber, whether you are a Democrat or a Republican. Over the last few days, we have heard Democrat after Democrat—perhaps not all of them but many of them—including the minority leader himself, indicate that they are just fine with voter ID re-

quirements. Yet last night, when the junior Senator from Ohio attempted to pass by unanimous consent a provision limited to the voter ID requirements of the SAVE America Act, it drew an objection from the Democrats. Now, when that objection was raised, the argument that I heard, that I recall, didn't have anything to do with objections to voter ID; they had to do with other things elsewhere in the SAVE America Act.

The second component of the SAVE America Act, of course, is a requirement that at the time a voter newly registers to vote, he or she must establish that he or she is a citizen of the United States.

An important point to remember here is that no one will be required to reregister. If you are already registered to vote in the United States, you don't have to go back and do it again unless and until you have some event that requires you to register again. Let's suppose, for example, that you move from California to Utah. Well, then, yeah, you would need to reregister in your new place of residence. But nobody who is currently registered to vote would have to reregister unless or until they move or until something else might require registration, and nothing in this bill would require that. So let's keep that in mind.

There are a number of arguments that keep being raised, primarily about the proof of citizenship requirements within the SAVE America Act. I would note here that in the citizenship component of the SAVE America Act, there are two basic components within that. One component deals with the obligation of the registering voter at the time of voter registration, and the other imposes obligations on State governments to coordinate and share information and data with the Federal Government as they undertake regular reviews of State voter registration files just to make sure that people who are registered to vote are, in fact, U.S. citizens.

Why is that necessary? Well, currently there are a whole lot of States—and they tend to be States that might colloquially be described as blue, meaning that they are run by Democratic Governors and/or have Democratic-dominated State legislatures—that are refusing to cooperate, to coordinate, to share data with the Department of Homeland Security and the entities within the Department of Homeland Security responsible for maintaining the SAVE database—an already existing database designed to help identify issues like this—like noncitizens who may have crept into voter registration files—and get rid of them.

But with all those blue States refusing to cooperate, to coordinate, to enter into a memorandum of understanding pertaining to the sharing of information, of data, it is a really vexing problem because it raises all kinds of concerns. How are we supposed to know when the law is violated, when a

noncitizen has registered to vote, if the Federal Government, which is ultimately the piece within our government system that has the records and the ability to ascertain citizenship—how are you ever going to expect that we can ensure that our laws prohibiting noncitizen voting in U.S. elections are being complied with?

Now, a few minutes ago, my friend and colleague the distinguished Senator from New Mexico made an argument on this point. He made a parallel reference by analogy to what might happen if somebody were saying “We don’t need additional laws confirming that it is against the law to run a stop sign if it is already against the law” and saying that this is akin to passing another law making doubly sure that people don’t run stop signs.

I understand the point, but it would be a fair argument or at least a fairer argument if the argument runs something like this: If in his hypothetical there were a system in place that legally and practically prevented police from monitoring tracked activities at intersections guarded by a stop sign, then, yes, that might be a fair, parallel reference, because that is exactly what we are dealing with, status quo, under a 1993 law called the NVRA—a law that, 20 years after its enactment, was interpreted by the Supreme Court—wrongly but conclusively, and that ruling remains in effect to this very day—concluding that the State governments are prohibited—even where they suspect a registering voter is a noncitizen, they may not do anything to follow up on that person’s citizenship. They may not request any proof of that person’s citizenship even if they believe that it is suspect or lacking.

So that makes it analogous to this hypothetical of a supplemental law that would require or at least allow observation of the intersection guarded by a stop sign. If he is going to make that analogy, then that is how you make it fair, because that is essentially what is happening. That is directly analogous to what is happening here. It is as though we have laws saying that you may not run a stop sign, but State and local police are prohibited from observing traffic at any intersection guarded by a stop sign and may not issue traffic tickets even if they believe those things might be occurring because they are not allowed to watch that intersection. That is what is going on here.

But it is even worse than that because their own State governments are contributing to the violation of the laws, to ignoring it, because they refuse to share information; they refuse to hand over their data.

This is especially troubling for so many reasons, including and especially the fact that in a handful of States—I believe it is four or five jurisdictions, maybe four States and the District of Columbia—they allow noncitizen voting in some of their local elections.

Now, I don’t know why any jurisdiction would want to allow this. I don’t

know why any State would want to allow any local election within that State to include noncitizen voting. But if their State laws and their State constitution contain nothing to prohibit that, then that is their choice because there is nothing in the U.S. Constitution or in Federal law that would prohibit them from doing that.

Nonetheless, once they do that, it raises all kinds of questions that really do need to be addressed. For example, if they are voting, if you have noncitizens legally voting in some elections in four or five States and the District of Columbia, then that means they are registering to vote. They have voter registration files. Those States are asked: What are you doing with those voter registration files to make sure they are not cross-pollinating, that the same registered voters who are noncitizens are not also participating in Federal elections? And they are not sharing their information. They are not answering that question, which is a really, really important question. Their refusal to answer that question or to share data makes the need for this even more pressing.

Now, when we look at all of this, one of the many arguments that the Democrats appear to be raising over and over again—there are two of them that are especially common that I think need to be addressed head-on here.

One of the arguments raised over and over again is that if we require registering voters to provide at the time of voter registration proof of citizenship, then that is necessarily going to disenfranchise a lot of people.

Now, one number they throw around is something like 21 million Americans will be disenfranchised, will be unable to vote. Well, that by itself is not true. It is not supported. This is based on some studies indicating—based on surveys, they extrapolate that there are about 21 million Americans who don’t necessarily have that requisite documentation or they don’t know where it is at the moment or something to that effect.

Remember, by the way, any and every time any American citizen takes a new job, starts a new job as an employee for an employer on American soil or anywhere within the jurisdiction of the United States, they have to fill out an I-9 form. The I-9 form requires them to provide, before they may start that job, proof of U.S. citizenship either supplied by a U.S. passport establishing U.S. citizenship or, alternatively, an original, certified birth certificate accompanied by a government-issued photo ID and/or an original Social Security card. If you don’t have those things, you can’t start the job unless and until you can provide that documentation.

Now, those things would suffice under the SAVE America Act voter registration provisions requiring proof of citizenship, but that is not all that would suffice. We wanted to make it as flexible as it could possibly be, lest

there be any credible argument that this would impose an undue hardship, an undue burden.

One could argue, of course, that even just requiring the same documentation every American has to provide whenever they start a new job would be fair, and maybe it would be, but we wanted to make it even easier to comply with that. We want to encourage those who are U.S. citizens to be able to vote. If you can legally vote, you should, and you shouldn’t have these impediments. So we added a list of other documents that you could use. Certain other ID cards that have been established and recognized within the U.S. Government as establishing citizenship could do it.

Then we provided a catchall—a catchall that not one of my Democrat colleagues has even acknowledged even though they have been in the room when I have raised the argument, when I have cited it, when I noted what it does.

Some of the people hearing the argument over and over again still refuse even to acknowledge that it exists when they claim that unless you have a U.S. passport, you are going to be disenfranchised. Some of them will say that a passport will cost a couple of hundred dollars, so it is a poll tax; it is expensive; it is going to disenfranchise all these people. They ignore this provision.

The provision begins at the text on line 22 of page 12 of the SAVE America Act as passed by the House of Representatives, which is the legislation pending before us and that we are now debating. They ignore this every single time. They ignore it over and over and over again, to the point of being not only disingenuous but dishonest. These are, in fact, dishonest arguments because they overlook that.

This doesn’t disenfranchise anyone. You need not shell out a nickel, a dime, a quarter, not even a penny or a fraction of a penny. You need not spend anything. You need not waste any time digging through, oh, piles of documents. If you can’t find them and if you never had those documents to begin with—your house burned down or your dog ate them, whatever—not a problem. Why? Well, because we allowed them by a simple affidavit to provide an attestation. It is a personal narrative of, here is why I am a citizen—either based on the fact that I was born in such and such a city in the United States on such a date, or I was not born a U.S. citizen but I was later naturalized. Here is where I was born. Here is when I was naturalized. Here is the path I took to naturalization.

Either way, once you submit that—and that could be a brief paragraph or maybe a few sentences to describe those critical facts—you hand it over to the State election official, and the burden then shifts to the State to confirm or refute. Unless they can refute the facts that you allege, you are a registered voter, and there is no need for you to worry about it.

So this is absolute nonsense to say that you will be disenfranchised if you don't have your documents or if you can't afford a passport or whatever it is. This is just an absolute, total lie.

Look, in these more serene moments within the U.S. Senate, when things seem calm—and they are, in some respects, calm—it is not a time for us to assume that the arguments aren't real, that they aren't being made aggressively. This is not a time for drinking a piña colada. This is not a time for ignoring the endogenous and exogenous pressures that we face from every direction.

Speaking of endogenous pressures, I see the presence of my friend and distinguished colleague the great Senator from the State of Kansas, and he has got a message for us. I am going to interrupt my remarks and yield, with the permission of the Chair, to Senator MARSHALL, until the conclusion of his remarks, when I will continue mine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MCCORMICK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Utah for his great leadership on this.

Last night, we had a moment of clarity in this Chamber. Senate Democrats were given the simplest possible test—a clean, standalone vote on voter ID, with nothing attached, with nothing complicated, and just one question: Do you believe only American citizens with a valid ID should decide American elections?

With nowhere to hide, they voted it down. In doing so, they told every American exactly where they stand.

Now, I understand their concerns about the provisions in the SAVE Act as to the proof of citizenship and stronger guardrails around absentee ballots, and those deserve honest debate; but there is simply no excuse for rejecting basic voter identification when 70 percent of Democrats—their own voters, the people who sent them here—support it. There are 70 percent of Democrats who support voter ID. This vote was very clarifying; it was unmasking.

I want everyone who is at home tonight enjoying March Madness to think about your situation personally for a moment. You know what it is like to vote. You leave work. You go and vote. You stand in line. You fill out your ballot. You drive home. You are late for dinner. You did everything right. But on the way home, you think to yourself: Oh, my gosh. Somewhere out there, someone with no legal right to vote canceled my vote. My vote is gone—neutralized like it never happened.

Now, that should make every American angry regardless of your party. I think it is important to stop and think why—why people are concerned about this—and what we are actually dealing with here.

There are 50 million noncitizens living in this country. There are 50 mil-

lion noncitizens living in this country—some are legal; some are illegal—out of 330 million. We have four States that are automatically registering people to vote when they interact with government services.

Let me say that again. Four States are automatically registering people to vote—regardless of their citizenship—when they interact with government services.

We have no reliable national system to verify citizenship at the ballot box. That is not fearmongering. That is just the truth. Maybe that is why 80 percent of Americans support voter ID. We can't get 80 percent of Americans to agree on whether a hamburger is better than chicken or if peanut butter is better than jelly, but 80 percent of Americans support voter ID. It is just common sense. Like I said earlier, 70 percent of Democrats agree with them as well.

Now, as I sat and listened to the arguments on the floor last night, we saw Democrats dodging and weaving like Muhammad Ali at the Thrilla in Manila, never once addressing voter ID itself. It was amazing to sit here and watch them squirm and refuse to answer the question at hand: Do they support voter ID or not?

So I had to pause, and we have plenty of time to think this weekend and ask a fundamental question. One of those questions we didn't get to talk about much in med school, but the question I ask myself is: What actually sustains a Republic? What are we really fighting for?

Well, I think, No. 1, at the top of this is safe and secure elections.

These are not a Republican issue, and they are not a conservative talking point. They are the beating heart of democracy itself.

So, last night, I sat down and penciled out what I believe are at least seven of the sacred pillars that uphold our entire system of self-government. If I could, I would like to walk through them because, when any one of these pillars is weakened, the whole temple of liberty trembles.

First and foremost are free and fair elections. The sacred cornerstone of our Republic are safe, secure, honest elections defended by integrity, universal suffrage, the secret ballot, and the peaceful transfer of power. This is the voice of the people itself. Without it, democracy does not stumble; it dies.

Next is the rule of law, the unyielding bedrock of equality under justice. No person, no party, no elite stands above the law. Lose a single pillar and every other freedom collapses.

Next is the separation of powers with checks and balances. We see that every day up here, the masterful architecture of liberty itself, forged by genius, to chain ambition and prevent any single branch from devouring our freedoms.

Next is an independent and impartial judiciary, the fearless bulwark of due process and constitutional fidelity, the final guardian of justice protecting the

weak, the innocent, and the Constitution against the storms of fleeting majorities.

Next is the protection of fundamental rights and civil liberties, including free speech, a free press, assembly, association, and religion. These are sacred, God-given, and must burn undimmed forever.

Next is the sanctity of private property, the moral and economic foundation of human dignity.

Finally, political pluralism, transparency, accountability, and active citizenship participation.

Election integrity is not just one of these pillars. It is the foundation beneath all of them. Every debate in this Chamber, every vote, every piece of legislation, all of it rests on the assumption that the people in these seats were put here legitimately by the voters of their States.

I cannot get past the simple fact in this country that we have collectively decided you need a photo ID to board a plane. Remember, trust but verify. I walk up to the plane, and they all know I am Senator ROGER MARSHALL, but they make me verify who I am.

When you check into a hotel, when you buy certain medications, when you open a bank account, when you pick up a prescription, when you apply for government benefits, you have to show an ID. But with your vote—the single most important thing you do as a citizen—we are told that asking for an ID is somehow voter oppression, which certainly has not been proven to be true in the multiple States that already have voter ID.

Again, it doesn't make sense, and the American people know it doesn't make sense. That is why 80 percent of them support voter ID.

I am willing to come to the table. There are parts of this bill that we can work out. I am not asking anyone to take it or leave it, but, first, answer the premise of this entire debate. We don't get anywhere if you don't recognize the importance of voter ID.

So here is the question: Do you believe only American citizens should decide American elections?

I am going to say it again: Do you believe only American citizens should decide American elections? Because until we get a straight answer to that, nothing else matters.

What gives us the best chance right now is getting 10 Democrats to come across the aisle and do the right thing. Again, if 70 percent of their own voters support voter ID, you would think 10 Senate Democrats would do the same thing; that somewhere in that caucus are 10 Senators who are willing to listen to the people who sent them here. If we could get just 10 of them to stand with us—to stand with their own constituents—on this one thing, then let's keep talking. Let's work out the rest together.

So I am going to say it a third time and a fourth time. I have no regrets in saying it again.

Last night, Senate Democrats voted against voter ID. Now, I have only heard two Democrats ever publicly—on this floor or anywhere—say they support voter ID, only 2 of the 47 Senate Democrats. The national media needs to ask the rest of them directly on camera: Why don't you support voter ID? And when they dodge and deflect, that answer should be put out for the rest of America to see. The American people deserve to know their vote counts. They deserve to know that the person casting the ballot next to them has every right to be there. They deserve a system they can trust.

We are going to keep fighting because the American people deserve better than the answer we got last night. I yield to the Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, thank you to my friend and colleague the Senator from Kansas for his observations. It is often helpful to have the diagnosis of an actual medical doctor when prescribing a problem.

We have an illness within our election system. Our elections have been rendered infirm or at least very insecure by some of these features that I noted just a few minutes ago, including the fact that the 1993 NVRA, as passed by Congress, has been interpreted the wrong way—but conclusively—by the Supreme Court as prohibiting the States from taking any voter registration file that comes through the NVRA, meaning an application for a driver's license made at a DMV in which the applicant checks a box and signs their name, saying: Yes, I would like to also register to vote with my driver's license application, and I certify with my signature that I am, in fact, a U.S. citizen.

Once that is done, there can be no further inquiry according to the Supreme Court's incorrect but conclusive ruling in this 2013 case called *Arizona v. Inter Tribal Council of Arizona*.

And that, in short, is why we are where we are today. It is most of the reason why we need the SAVE America Act. It is because they said that the State cannot require—even where citizenship is believed to be lacking on the part of one or more applicants, as long as they have used the NVRA form at a DMV, the State can't do anything to follow up on it.

As I was noting a minute ago, some of these States do nothing themselves to follow up on the question of citizenship, and many of them—most of the blue States—have refused to share data with the folks at the Department of Homeland Security who run the SAVE database, which is designed to help weed out those who have been incorrectly, fraudulently, mistakenly, or otherwise placed in a voter registration file.

Again, if a State wants to allow non-citizens to vote in State elections, they may do so, and some States have allowed that in the context of some of their local elections as has the District of Columbia. I still know of no reason

why they would want to do that, but they may do so if their own laws allow it because the Federal Constitution and Federal law doesn't prohibit them from doing so.

Mr. MORENO. Will my colleague from Utah yield for a question?

Mr. LEE. I will yield for a question.

Mr. MORENO. There are just a few of us here in this Chamber, but I see my colleague from Connecticut. So I am going to ask the Senator a question, my colleague from Utah.

Would it surprise you to know that, just a couple of years ago, a Democrat State representative in Connecticut proposed a bill to allow all undocumented noncitizens the right to vote? It is estimated that there are 240,000 illegal aliens in the State of Connecticut; yet a Democrat-elected official proposed that bill. Would that surprise you?

Mr. LEE. It surprises me in the sense that it seems phenomenally unwise. It would have surprised me earlier in my lifetime. It would have surprised me even earlier in my time here in the U.S. Senate; yet something has happened in recent years that has eroded this longstanding, long-accepted assumption that only citizens vote in our elections.

I am not aware of any other country—certainly not any other country that any of us would want to live in, but probably not any other country that we wouldn't want to live in either—that would want to have or that would allow to have noncitizens vote in their elections because an election isn't much of an election if anyone can vote and you don't keep track of who is voting and you don't keep track of whether there are duplicative votes, especially as to what we are focused on here—persons voting who have no right to vote who, by voting, would not only be committing a serious felony offense but, by voting, would also be diluting the votes cast by lawful voters, by actual citizens of that country.

There has been a trend more in one party than the other, and you can guess which one. There has been a trend where people say, let's just let everyone vote, and toward thinking of a lot of things like this, like noncitizens voting in elections as being something of a victimless crime or perhaps, at a minimum, as sort of the required cost of doing business.

Remember how I said a moment ago how our mantra has been and should continue to be: Let's make it easy to vote and hard to cheat.

The Democratic Party has, in recent years, leaned so heavily on "let's make it easy to vote" that they often forget or, in some cases defiantly refuse, to finish the sentence. I am talking about hard to cheat.

Now, I understand the point. I understand that, perhaps, they are so enthusiastic to just make sure that everyone votes that maybe they don't care that some noncitizens might vote. I think this is very unwise, and it becomes es-

pecially untenable—especially indefensible—when we now have an estimated 30 million-plus noncitizens residing in the United States, 10 to 15 million of whom entered this country illegally between 2021 and 2025 alone.

So, yes, that is shocking in some ways that a Democratic lawmaker in a State not too far from where we now stand actually introduced legislation trying to open up the franchise like that because when you do that, that is not a victimless moment. If you were to create that, you would be diluting the votes of lawful citizens. But, again, a State may do that if that State's laws and that State's Constitution allow it. It would be unwise.

Nonetheless, by doing that, whenever a State does that, whether for statewide State elections or just for local elections within that State, it creates a problem. It creates what I would think of as more or less a clear and present threat, one that, unless acted upon, will culminate in widespread violation of the law.

As I was describing a few minutes ago, for those handful of States that have expressly allowed noncitizen voting in some of their local elections, that means individuals have registered to vote who are not citizens. Once they have registered to vote, they are registered voters. What is to stop them from showing up and saying: "I am a registered voter, and I would like to vote on election day," and they receive a ballot? And the way ballots in most States work, there is a ballot that has Federal elections and State elections and local elections all on the same ballot, the same document or sequence of documents.

So when the questions have been asked of those jurisdictions: What, if anything, are you doing to separate out those voter registration files from those voters who are noncitizens but, nonetheless, allowed to vote in local elections in your State, what are you doing to prevent them from voting in Federal elections?

Silence has been a response. A refusal to cooperate has been the response. That is chilling.

All right. Let's get back to what we were talking about a few minutes ago. They have been making a series of arguments against the citizenship obligation, the citizenship-related provisions of the SAVE America Act. And to repeat, we have made it really easy, far easier than the citizenship documentation requirements associated with new employment. If you are an American citizen and you have ever started a new job anywhere in the United States, you have had to fill out an I-9 form, and with that, you had to comply with a very rigid, specific set of document obligations. You had to establish either a U.S. passport, one that establishes your citizenship as an American citizen, or, alternatively, a U.S. birth certificate and government-issued photo ID or original Social Security card. If you can't do that, you are not going to

start your job unless or until you have been able to complete that.

Again, we made it a lot easier, very deliberately, to comply with the SAVE America Act. We have a list of other documents that are widely known and recognized by the U.S. Government as establishing citizenship, including a certain subcategory of driver's licenses that, in some States, these enhanced driver's licenses will affirmatively establish citizenship based on the documentation that was required at the time the driver's license was received. We included those.

But we also included this provision that makes it really easy for someone who has no documentation at all, is missing some documentation or even all of it. They can do so by an affidavit, an attestation just providing the basic details about how they became a citizen: when and where they were born; whether they were citizens at the time of their birth; and if they weren't citizens at the time of their birth, when and where and how, by what mechanism, they became naturalized citizens.

From the moment you do that, you shift the burden onto the State, and it is then the State's job to go and confirm or refute what you have done.

Now, if you were lying, they will figure that out. You won't be registered, and you may end up getting in trouble for having lied under oath with that statement. I assume most people wouldn't do that; very few would knowing it is a sworn statement. But if they don't conclude that it is false and conclude that it is true—it would be pretty easy to confirm once you have provided the names, the dates, locations—then you will be registered to vote. No additional documents, in fact, not a single document has to be produced by you, just that basic set of statements.

Again, that begins on line 22, page 12, of the legislation we are now debating. And yet over and over and over again I hear from my Democratic colleagues that are arguing against this how this is going to disenfranchise anyone who doesn't have a passport—as many Americans don't—and a passport costs a couple hundred dollars. And they then often make the logical leap, well, this means you are imposing a poll tax, something that has been prohibited by the U.S. Constitution for over 60 years.

This simply is not true. There is not a poll tax. There is not a single expense. This doesn't disenfranchise anyone, even if you don't have any documents. And it is far more permissive than what you have to produce every single time you start a new job in the United States of America as a U.S. citizen.

Here is another argument that is frequently being raised against the SAVE America Act. This is a fairly broad argument. It is a surprising argument for reasons I am about to explain.

The Democrats are waving the flag of federalism, purporting to be the champions—the newly invigorated champions—of State sovereign authority, of

the authority of the States within our Federal system. That is what I refer to when I mean “federalism.” I am referring to the 10th Amendment, the broad concept of federalism, the idea that Federal Government is as James Madison described in Federalist No. 45, a government with powers that Madison described as “few and defined.” And those powers reserved to the States he described as “numerous and indefinite.”

My Democrat colleagues, each time they bring this up, they use the same term. It is an awkward term. It is an outdated term. It is a misnomer, in my opinion. I don't like it. It is “States' rights.” This is a term that conjures images of George Wallace in the Deep South, the Jim Crow South. The Jim Crow policies that the Democratic Party, at the time, insisted upon—racist, oppressive, hateful policies designed to disadvantage Black Americans and to exclude them from many aspects of society, public life, and private life—undefensible.

They would often invoke this doctrine of States' rights, which was then and remains now a misnomer because States do not have rights; States have authority. Authority is kind of the opposite of a right. A right, in this context, is something that is a privilege, a protection against authority being misused against you. So they are kind of the yin and the yang. They are polar opposites of each other. They are not the same thing.

All right. I got that out of my chest. Now let's move on to the substance of this.

We will call this federalism or State sovereign authority. They purport now to be champions of State sovereign authority. This is really interesting. They say that the SAVE America Act—this very straightforward bill that just requires proof of citizenship at the time of voter registration and photo ID at the time you cast a ballot to prove that you are who you claim to be, the same person identified in your voter registration file—they claim that this is somehow incompatible with constitutional principles of federalism; that it is somehow unconstitutional as a Federal takeover of State authority to conduct elections.

Now, this argument would be laughable if it weren't so frightening and, frankly, hypocritical.

Remember that, in the first place, article I, section 4, clause 1, of the Constitution couldn't be clearer on this point. I don't know how any of these people could even make this argument with a straight face for this reason alone, let alone for the other reasons I am about to identify. But article I, section 4, clause 1 of the Constitution makes a couple things clear. First, they acknowledge—wisely, I believe—that elections would be conducted by States. They didn't want to set up a Federal election authority. It would be cumbersome. It would be unnecessary. It would be unwise—too much consoli-

dation of power, especially because this was always supposed to be a government of limited and enumerated powers.

So they said that not only for State elections, which, obviously, State authorities would manage, but also for the election of Federal officials, specifically election of U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives—Members of Congress. Their elections would also be run by State officials. They said that the legislatures of the respective States would have authority to establish the rules and regulations governing those elections, which they themselves would conduct.

But my Democrat colleagues conveniently leave out the following phrase in the same provision, in article I, section 4, clause 1, of the Constitution; that phrase being “but the Congress may at any time . . . make or alter such Regulations,” meaning those regulations, those rules and regulations governing specifically the State-run elections to choose U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators. It could not be clearer.

So that is all this is. We are using our authority—our very specific, very clear authority—to prescribe those rules and regulations.

It is not just in the abstract that this makes sense, not just in that technical, grammatical sense that we have that authority, and that is what we are exercising here. This is exactly the kind of thing that should be—and I believe must be, perhaps can only be—wielded by the Federal sovereign, not by State governments because what we are doing here is to establish citizenship.

Remember, we do have the power to say this, and we have, in fact, enacted laws saying that only U.S. citizens may vote. To give meaning to that, to render it enforceable, we have the power to ensure that that law is being complied with.

And the U.S. Government is also uniquely in a position to be able to ascertain who may be a citizen and who is not a citizen. No single State is going to be able to ascertain that question, nor is U.S. citizenship itself a creature of State law, as it is of Federal law. It is exactly the reason why we have various government Agencies that are involved in this, and they are managed, more or less, through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which, among other things, runs this database that already exists called the SAVE database that is created for, in addition to whatever else it may cover, this very sort of thing, so that States sharing information with the U.S. Government may cross-tabulate, cross-check, their voter registration files against U.S. citizenship data, uniquely in the hands of the U.S. Government, and easily ascertain who is a citizen and who is not.

That is an especially important thing to have, especially considering the fact that we had between 10 to 15 million people come into this country unlawfully just in a 4-year period alone—separate and apart from those who may

have already been here, just between 2021 and 2025—10 to 15 million people entering this country unlawfully. And there are an estimated 30 million-plus noncitizens residing in this country in almost every State.

Given that almost every State participates in the NVRA, in almost every State, any of those noncitizens—whether they are here legally or illegally—in light of the Supreme Court’s ruling in 2013 in *Arizona v. Inter Tribal Council of Arizona*, any one of those people in any NVRA State—which is almost every State of the Union—can go into a DMV, apply for a driver’s license, and by checking one box and then signing their name, they may register to vote.

So it is really important that we have that ability to do that. This information is uniquely in the hands of the U.S. Government, which is uniquely in a position to define and manage what it means to be a citizen and keep track of who is a citizen and who is not.

And yet these blue States continue, defiantly, to refuse to share information. They are actively subverting our ability not only to enforce Federal law but to even know when a violation has taken place or is taking place, and so that is stunning. That is what makes it all the more indefensible for them to oppose this and all the more laughable that they purport to be invoking the doctrine of federalism. They purport to be invoking the 10th Amendment, to be wrapping themselves in the Constitution by saying: This is an outrage; this is a Federal takeover of a State function. No, it is not. It is doubly and triply not a State function. It is a distinctly, decidedly, by designation of the U.S. Constitution, a Federal function.

Now, for the reasons why this is not just a laughable argument but it is also hypocritical, just a few years ago, many of the very same Democrats who now occupy this Chamber—in fact, nearly all of them were there at the time—and every single Democrat serving in the United States during the 117th Congress—that is the Congress empaneled on January 3, 2021, serving through January 3, 2023. Remember, that was a moment when the House and the Senate and the White House were all controlled by Democrats.

Every single Democrat in the U.S. Senate at that time—which are most of the Democrats who are still here—but every one of them that were here then tried to pass and supported a bill designated in the 117th Congress as H.R. 1, the so-called For the People Act, perhaps the most aggressive, intrusive, and independently aggressively overreaching Federal power grab over elections in American history.

Now, that bill was not a modest reform. Unlike the SAVE America Act, it was not there as an exercise of our very clear and very narrow power under article I, section 4, clause 1; nor was it, as the SAVE America Act is, a natural outgrowth of an existing Federal law—

the NVRA—nor was it necessitated by a quirk in the judicial interpretation of an existing Federal law—the NVRA—as this is.

Remember, that is the only reason we are even here. That is the only reason the SAVE America Act even became necessary, is because of the NVRA and existing Federal law itself imposes obligations on States based on the way it was later interpreted after its enactment.

So, in other words, I say to my Democratic colleagues: If you are offended by the SAVE America Act as a supposed Federal overreach, not only is that indefensible as a matter of Federal constitutional law—either the plain text of the Constitution or any Supreme Court interpretation thereof—but it also presupposes that if you are opposed to this, that you also think the NVRA is itself an unconstitutional Federal takeover of State election authority.

Now, if you think that, then we are going to have a very different discussion. But to my knowledge, not one of them has suggested or argued that the NVRA is unconstitutional; and if it is not, there is not a chance in hell that you can make the argument that the SAVE America Act is unconstitutional—not a chance.

Back to the For the People Act, H.R. 1 in the 117th Congress, it was an 800-page monstrosity, a blueprint for nationalizing every meaningful aspect of how States run Federal elections—that is, elections for Federal office—most importantly, elections for U.S. Senate and the U.S. House. And Democrats defended it by citing the exact same constitutional authority that they now pretend doesn’t exist. That is Congress’ power under the elections clause to set uniform rules for Federal contests.

Now, let’s recall a little bit about what H.R. 1 actually did—I should say what it would have done had it been enacted. Mercifully for all of us, it wasn’t.

Let’s talk about what it did. It didn’t just suggest a few changes. It didn’t just suggest some curative protections to existing Federal legislation. No, this is an entirely different beast—and beastly, it was. It imposed binding nationwide mandates with Federal court enforcement on matters of sweepingly, stunningly broad application. Among other things, it forced automatic voter registration at every government interaction, overriding State processes, overriding State law.

It mandated same-day voter registration everywhere. This is a big issue because States have a broad range of when they deem it appropriate to begin or end—especially end—voter registration prior to any election. Many States consider it reckless and an invitation—a recipe for voter fraud if they allow same-day voter registration. Other States don’t. You know, that has long been considered their prerogative to decide, but this would just have decided it for the entire country.

It would have required no-excuse absentee voting and minimum periods of early voting no matter what State law said. If some States wanted and previously had always had much more limited pre-election-day voting periods or none at all, it wouldn’t matter. It completely eviscerated their authority to make such decisions.

It would have stripped State legislatures of their traditional role—not just their traditional role, but their constitutional role—a role acknowledged in the U.S. Constitution itself and in the respective State constitutions—in drawing legislative district maps, specifically those mentioned in the U.S. Constitution—the congressional maps; and it would have done that by forcing the so-called independent redirecting commissions, taking away the authority that has always belonged to the States and to the State legislatures—as the Constitution—as designed, as the Constitution contemplates and ordains—and forced them to adopt these independent redirecting commissions whether they wanted to or not.

It would have severely restricted how States could maintain accurate voter rolls, banning removals based solely on failure to vote, limiting interstate cross-checks, and imposing cumbersome requirements before any cleanup of voter registration files.

As if that weren’t enough of an insult to federalism, to State sovereign authority, to good government, local self-rule, or any of the other things that we hold dear in our constitutional system, H.R. 1 went even further than that. It would have legalized unlimited ballot harvesting by third parties. It would have barred States from requiring witness signatures or notarization on mail-in ballots and forced them to count ballots received up to 10 days after election day.

Now, any of those things in isolation is a powder keg, is a huge, huge policy decision. Efforts to change anything like that in State law in any State legislature would end up being a very significant debate, but this just bulldozed all of it.

Particularly, when it comes to ballot harvesting—this is troubling. Ballot harvesting, when coupled with the existence of widespread, universal mail-in ballots, allows for a special kind of mischief, which fortunately is thwarted in many States, like my own, that prohibit ballot harvesting. And where it exists, it causes a massive risk of voter fraud; and yet this would have prohibited the States from banning it—every State.

It would have weakened voter ID laws by allowing sworn statements in lieu of actual identification, even if State law would itself have required something more. It would have overridden State felony disenfranchisement rules, gotten rid of bans imposed by States on people voting based on a felony conviction—that, too, has long been considered the unique province of the States. This bulldozed over that.

And they would have mandated out-of-precinct ballot counting, preregistered 16- and 17-year-olds to vote, dictated rigid redistricting criteria, banned mid-decade map drawing, and imposed Federal standards for polling equipment, drop boxes, curbside voting, and much, much more. State election officials were even subjected to new Federal restrictions themselves.

There were also provisions in there that, as I recall, would have forced every voting jurisdiction, every precinct—local, statewide, or otherwise—to become the effective equivalent of a section 5 preclearance jurisdiction. Let me explain what that means.

Under the Voting Rights Act, there are a limited number of voting jurisdictions in the United States with a history of racial discrimination. Those States, under the Voting Rights Act—or those jurisdictions, once they were deemed to have engaged in this, they had to subject changes to their legislative districts to some preclearance requirements, meaning before they could take effect, some Federal officials would have to approve them.

This would have taken every jurisdiction of the United States—in the North, in the South, in the East, in the West—regardless of whether they had any tradition, any history at all of any kind of racial or other discrimination and said: All of you, before you make any changes to your district boundaries, whatever, you have got to come to Washington, DC, and receive a “Mother May I” permission slip from Uncle Sam.

These were not just incentives. These were not just slight modifications. These were commands steamrolling over policies that have long been deemed the province of the States.

Now, every Democrat in the U.S. Senate at the time justified every one of them by arguing that Congress could “provide a complete code for congressional elections,” thus superseding State law. And they were right in one respect, that at least one provision of the Constitution—article I, section 4, clause 1—gives Congress some power, but they were dead wrong about the wisdom, the legality, the constitutionality of using legislative reforms like that one to turn States and localities into nothing more than administrative subdivisions of the Federal Government subject entirely to the will and the whim of the Federal sovereign.

Compared to all of that, the SAVE America Act is the precise opposite of that kind of overreach. It doesn't touch early voting. It doesn't touch ballot deadlines, redistricting, or campaign finance. It doesn't render any district subject—doesn't make any voting district or precinct or State—much less all of them—a preclearance jurisdiction. It doesn't force States to adopt same-day voter registration or independent redirecting commissions, contrary to State constitutions and the U.S. Constitution. It simply enforces

what has been Federal law for decades—most importantly, the Federal law that has been on the book for decades and says that only U.S. citizens may vote in Federal elections.

It requires basic documentary proof of citizenship at the time of registration with reasonable, very flexible, affordable—and, in fact, free—alternatives to those documentary requirements and a photo ID at the polls, the bare minimum commonsense demands that we make after years of open borders. It even helps States clean up their rolls by directing data sharing with the Department of Homeland Security.

If Congress could constitutionally force every State to count out-of-precinct ballots and legalize unlimited ballot harvesting under H.R. 1, it can certainly require proof that voters are actually Americans.

Now, of course, it can't do the former. H.R. 1 was blatantly unconstitutional for a whole host of reasons, not to mention its many policy defects. But my point is this: Every Democrat in the U.S. Senate saw no problem—no problem at all—with the constitutionality of H.R. 1. This is the equivalent of straining at a gnat while swallowing a camel. In fact, that comparison is almost an understatement. The difference isn't just in the magnitude, isn't just constitutional; it is also political.

(Mr. JOHNSON assumed the Chair.)

Democrats cheered Federal preemption when it was sweeping; when it expanded access and, in their view, as they saw it, their voter base; when they saw it as consistent with their own political interests; when they saw it as a chance to secure significant gains in elections.

They screamed federalism—or, as they put it, States' rights—the moment the focus shifts to election eligibility and integrity. And they scream it even where, as here, this is plainly well within what the Federal Government is authorized to do and plainly within the same statutory context that already exists, that has existed for decades, and that not one of my Democrat colleagues has called on us to repeal.

If the SAVE America Act is somehow unconstitutional as a Federal overreach, then the NVRA is a far worse infraction, and yet you don't hear them saying that because it is not true. This is selective federalism of the very worst kind. The same crowd that tried to nationalize American elections—truly nationalize them—is now engaging in this aggressive pearl-clutching exercise about State authority the instant we try to stop noncitizens from diluting the votes of actual citizens.

And, make no mistake, that is what is happening. That is what happens every time a noncitizen casts a vote. This is not a victimless crime. This is not a harmless infraction. This is not the voting equivalent of removing, however recklessly and wantonly and willfully, the “Do Not Remove” tags from a mattress.

The same crowd that tried to nationalize American elections is now engaging in this awful pearl-clutching about State authority the instant, the second, the millisecond we try to stop noncitizens from diluting the votes of actual American citizens. And the American people aren't buying this, nor should they.

Look, the Constitution does not recognize any political parties, and not only that, it certainly doesn't allow one party to federalize elections when it happens to help them and then invoke federalism as a shield when they are about to be held accountable, when people are about to be held accountable, when State officials are about to be held accountable for facilitating the wanton violation of Federal law.

So no—no—the SAVE America Act does not violate federalism. It vindicates the sovereign authority of the American people, the true sovereigns of our system, to choose their own government, and it does so with far, far more restraint than Democrats ever showed when the shoe was on the other foot, when they were pushing an 800-page monstrosity that was itself an indefensible Federal takeover of State authority.

Congress should pass the SAVE America Act without apology. This hypocrisy has gone on long enough. Their constitutional arguments here do not hold water—not at all, not for an instant.

You know, it is interesting that, as we stand here today, the Department of Homeland Security has gone unfunded, thanks to Senate Democrats, for over a month. They have been going without pay. How tragic that is that these individuals, who are working hard—they are having to work hard. They are not wealthy people. If you think of everyone from TSA agents to ICE agents and everybody else in the Department of Homeland Security continuing to have to work, these are not wealthy people. And there are so many of them who, in addition to not being paid, still have to work and have to work doing really hard jobs, sometimes risky jobs. This is not fair.

Then what is the parallel between the two? Well, I find it interesting that the same Department that has now been unfunded is the same Department that, among other things, oversees the SAVE database and the offices, the Agencies within the Department of Homeland Security that exist to help ensure election integrity and security, that are there to help States to review their voter registration files and identify those who are not citizens and thus shouldn't be voting. Those same offices, those same personnel themselves remain defunded.

During this discussion this afternoon, the Senator from Maryland was speaking about some of these incidents. Even though these things appear to be unrelated—on the one hand, the SAVE America Act and its merits which we have been debating, and on

the other hand, funding for the Department of Homeland Security—I sometimes think that they are not very unrelated at all, especially because they are defunding the very entity that could and otherwise would and should—and if we were able to enact the SAVE America Act, ultimately would—help protect our elections, to make sure that they are secure, to make sure that they are free from foreign election interference, which is exactly what happens when we allow foreign nationals, not citizens of the United States, to vote in our elections.

She referred to ICE agents, to ICE as a whole, as a “goon” squad. She accused ICE of being out there, deployed, and killing people. This is sad. This is tragic.

(Mr. MARSHALL assumed the Chair.)

Now, keep in mind there are about 22,000 ICE agents. A subset of those—about 6,000 of them—are responsible for apprehending and removing those removable illegal aliens that are in the country, so about 6,000 out of the 22,000. Then it is a much lower subset of the 6,000 that she might be referring to when she accuses ICE, a much broader Agency, of killing people and being a “goon” squad.

How many of those people were actually involved in any of the activity she has complained about? I don’t know the answer, but it is not 6,000. It sure as hell isn’t 22,000, and it sure as hell isn’t 260,000. That is the total number of employees going unpaid within the Department of Homeland Security. So this is collective punishment at its worst, at its most indefensible.

She and her Democrat colleagues stand here today, continue over a month into this shutdown—not concerned, blaming the collective for what she is complaining about with just a few, before investigations are even complete and before we know where, when, to what extent wrongdoing on the part of any agents might have been involved.

This is wrong. It is not just wrong, but I sometimes wonder, is this, in fact, a willful attempt to subvert the enforcement of our laws—not just our immigration laws but also our laws that govern our elections, that protect our elections from foreign election interference? As they say in Latin, “res ipsa loquitur”—the thing speaks for itself.

Before I wrap up, I want to thank our Republican leadership in the Senate. I want to thank my friend and colleague the distinguished Senator from Wyoming who serves as the Republican whip, and I want to thank my friend and colleague the distinguished Senator from South Dakota, the majority leader, Senator JOHN THUNE, for their leadership. I want to thank them for keeping us here through this weekend to keep us debating these matters.

We have no business going home—not for a weekend, not for a recess. We have no business going home until this

is done. We have to get DHS funded. We have to get the SAVE America Act passed. And yes, they are related. For the very same reason we need one, we also need the other. And for this very same reason that they oppose one, they oppose the other.

But the fact is, the American people are not with them; they are with us. The American people understand that it is not fair to punish the collective for what may or may not be the wrongdoing of just a few. The American people understand that it is not an act of aggression, certainly not an unconstitutional overreach, certainly not an egregious abuse of power, or anything other than common sense to require people who vote in U.S. elections to be American citizens and to end this barbaric practice to which we have been subjected for far too long and which we are told: Yeah, it is illegal for noncitizens to vote, but you can’t do anything about it. They have rendered it unenforceable. We are trying to fix that with a narrowly tailored piece of legislation.

Now, if one of them—even one of them—wants to talk about changes that we could make that would make them feel better about it, I am all ears. I have been listening to that for 3 days now—and longer than that, before we got on it. But since we got onto this bill about 3 days ago, I have been listening especially attentively for anyone to make a constructive suggestion from the other side or even an argument that is itself defensible in light of what the SAVE America Act actually does, in light of what Federal law actually says, and in light of what the U.S. Constitution actually allows, authorizes, and says, and I have yet to hear it.

Sometimes I wonder what it is that they actually want. Do they actually want our borders to remain open, as they were between 2021 and 2025? Do they, beyond this, actually want noncitizens to continue to be able to vote, even when we know that in some States they are openly allowing or even inviting noncitizens to participate in some local elections, even when they know that there are thousands upon thousands of noncitizen registered voters that have been detected just in the small handful of States that have, on their own, undertaken a review to see who is registered? They have found thousands, and that process is far from complete yet. How many more are there?

How long are the American people to be expected to suffer through a system that invites, allows, and perpetuates forces that will undeniably dilute and, by diluting, ultimately deprive them of one of their most sacred rights—their right to vote?

Finally, when we talk about constitutional protections of rights, my colleagues say again and again and again that because their right to vote is constitutionally protected—and it is, by multiple amendments, in multiple ways, by the Constitution—that that

somehow means that you can’t put any reasonable restrictions on it. Well, that is not true. That has never been true. We do have restrictions on them all the time. We also have restrictions on a lot of other constitutionally protected rights, and that doesn’t mean that you don’t have to prove who you are and that you have the right to do the thing you want to be able to do.

We already have to prove our citizenship every time we start a new job with the document requirements that are far more strict than those are here. We already have to divulge all kinds of information that is far more intrusive than anything required here.

In fact, on the subject of specifically constitutionally protected rights, the right to bear arms—do you know what you have to do when you want to buy a gun through a federally licensed firearms dealer? You have to provide ID, and you have to show that you are who you say you are. Then they run it through a database to make sure that, in addition to being who you say you are, that you also have the right to exercise the constitutionally protected right that you want to exercise by buying that gun.

It is the same exact thing. It is also a constitutionally protected right. And yet we allow it why? Well, because we have laws, and those laws decide how that right may be exercised, and we ban certain persons from wielding that right. For example, if you are an alien illegally or unlawfully present in the United States or you are a convicted felon or you fit into any of the other categories in 18 U.S.C. section 922(g), you are not allowed to purchase, possess, use, or probably even think about a gun. You will be prohibited from doing so.

They are apparently OK with that. If they are OK with that—and that is a constitutionally protected right—why aren’t they OK with this, when here, when somebody else exercises that right, they are undermining your vote, my vote, the vote of every American citizen?

We cannot allow that to happen. I will continue to come back to the Senate Chamber every day—day after day, week after week, month after month—if that is what it takes to get this thing passed, but it will pass. We will not stop until it does.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. 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.