

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It would take unanimous consent.

Mr. KENNEDY. This is a serious matter. Now, we have established that this resolution doesn't affect the House. It just says to the Senators: While we are in a shutdown, no Senator is going to be paid. You don't lose your money. You pick it up after it is over, after the shutdown is lifted.

We have established the fact that this went through the Rules Committee unanimously. Did I mention it went through unanimously, that every single Democrat and every single Republican said: Yes, KENNEDY; let's do this.

We have established that even though there are varying degrees of wealth among Members of the Senate—and I say that is great—every single Senator makes at least \$170,000 here. They are not going to lose a penny—not one single, solitary penny. Once the shutdown is over, they get their money. We have established that. We have established that there are 260,000—not 2,600, not 26,000—260,000 of our colleagues working in the department of health and hospitals that are not being paid.

And a lot of these people do not have immense wealth, but they are not being paid because of our conduct. And I think we have established that this is a chance to show, in a little bitty way—a minor way, a baby step—that we are going to share their sacrifice.

And there has been an objection. I heard that ruling from the Chair. But for the life of me, I don't know how you can object without seeking recognition, without having recognition. I have never heard that one, OK. We are getting into the foothills of la-la land here as far as I am concerned.

Now, I just made a motion. I want to bring this bill to be reconsidered. And all I am asking—I don't want to blindside my friend Senator SCHATZ. I don't play that way. I want to give him full opportunity. All I am asking is that somebody call Senator SCHATZ and let him know that I am going to move to reconsider and I don't want to do it behind his back. That is all I am asking. So I make that motion. Is there an objection?

Ms. BALDWIN. I object.

Mr. KENNEDY. Well, there you go. My good friend—the Senator didn't have—she didn't have recognition either. How is that possible?

All right. I am coming back, Mr. President. And I am coming back and I am coming back and I am coming back. Did I mention I will be back? And if a Member of this body disagrees with what I am doing, then, by God, they ought to come down here and stand up in front of the U.S. Senate and stand up in front of the American people and stand up in front of God and stand up in front of country and stand up in front of all these people—these good people that aren't being paid—and say: Here is why.

Maybe we need to change the Senate rules, Mr. President. I appreciate your patience.

And I would like to ask, Mr. President—this probably is an improper motion, too—I have got to delve a little bit more on this improper motion stuff.

I want to see the rule that says I can't do what I just tried to do, and I want to see it bigger than Dallas. I don't want to see that it is implied or is a penumbra, and I want to see the rule that says somebody can come into this body without recognition and be heard because I don't believe it, and anybody that believes that—no disrespect—shouldn't be driving.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. MORENO. Mr. President, just a parliamentary inquiry. Again, this is just somebody who has not been here a long time. I just want a clarification—a parliamentary inquiry: In order to speak before the U.S. Senate, my understanding is that the Senator has to yield the floor or complete his speech. Another Senator, if ordered to speak, has to seek recognition from the Chair in order to speak; is that correct or not?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. To gain recognition to the floor or hold the floor, that Senator needs to be recognized by the Chair in his or her own right. The Senator who has the floor does not lose the floor when he or she asks unanimous consent.

Any Senator in the Chair, including any Senator in the Chamber, including the Senator in the Chair, can object despite the fact they don't have control of the floor and that the Senator speaking at the podium who has been recognized continues to control the floor.

Mr. MORENO. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I move to have the quorum call be suspended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a motion to suspend the quorum call. Is there objection?

Ms. BALDWIN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Utah.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, moments ago, as we convened and before we cast votes getting ready to move forward with the confirmation of our friend and colleague the distinguished junior Senator from Oklahoma to serve as the next Secretary of the Department of

Homeland Security—it is important to reflect on the importance of this position and on the importance of the Department that he has been asked by the President of the United States to lead.

This is a Department that, 25 years ago, didn't exist. It was created, of course, in the aftermath of the horrific attacks on the United States homeland on September 11, 2001. It includes within it, among many other pieces, the apparatus that is used to control, as the name of the Department implies, the homeland of the United States; our ability to protect and defend our border, including our ability to protect and defend the border at the border and all the way through the interior of the United States, through the enforcement of our immigration laws.

This, of course, is one of the most fundamental and distinctively Federal powers granted to the U.S. Government by the Constitution. It is uniquely Federal not only in that it is given to the U.S. Government by the Constitution but that it has to be Federal. It would be impossible to do this without it being a Federal power because no one State could be charged with border enforcement.

If you had only the border States doing it, it would be unfair to the border States, and the border States would have to make policy surrounding immigration, border access, and so forth. And that would impact the other States as well. That is why the Founding Fathers were wise to put all of this in the U.S. Government.

So it bears mentioning here that the Department that our friend and colleague the distinguished junior Senator from Oklahoma has been asked to lead, the Department of Homeland Security, is a pretty important one to have funded.

It is indeed regrettable, to put it extremely mildly, that that Department has now been shut down for well over a month. And this doesn't occur in a vacuum. This occurs just a few months after that Department was shut down for a very lengthy period of time, starting in the fall, starting in October.

This isn't fair to the brave men and women who place, in many instances, their own lives, their own comfort, their own safety on the line, day after day after day, to defend the U.S. homeland, to defend our border, to enforce our immigration laws, and to perform so many other tasks that are essential to the security of the American people.

And so when we evaluate that shutdown and its impact, we have to think about some of the other things that it also affects, including, of course, but not limited to, TSA; including FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Authority; including the Coast Guard; and including USCSIS, CISA, and the entities within the Department of Homeland Security that operate the SAVE database.

The SAVE database is this entity that is already set up, and it is related

to the name of the legislation we have been considering: the SAVE America Act.

The SAVE database, of course, is what is set up within the Department of Homeland Security to help us ascertain the citizenship or lack thereof of persons who are already registered to vote in the United States.

Ideally, the information should be freely flowing on a very regular basis between the States, and, in particular, the secretaries of state, Lieutenant Governors, or whoever is the chief elections official in each State, to the Department of Homeland Security. They should be running their election data, their voter roll data through the SAVE database on a very regular basis, because by doing that, they can make sure that those who are registering to vote are, in fact, citizens of the United States.

If you wait too long, the task becomes overwhelming or it becomes more difficult. But if it is done on a very regular basis, it can become routine and relatively straightforward.

It is remarkable what can be done with these databases because, you know, we have got hundreds of millions of Americans. We have got—I don't know what the total number of registered voters is. I am guessing somewhere between 150 million and 200 million are registered to vote. That is a lot of names. That is a lot of numbers. That is a lot of voter registration files in 50 different States and the District of Columbia. But having access to this database allows us, in one central location, the benefit of being able to scrub through these voter registration files in every jurisdiction in America to make sure only citizens vote and to do so without its having to take weeks or months or years in order to ascertain. These are some of the many benefits of technology. But this, too, is part of the Department of Homeland Security, and this, too, is therefore affected by the shutdown. In particular, the hard-working men and women who run that Department, including that part of that Department, are now not being paid, not receiving the funding that they need, and that is, in fact, a problem.

Now, ideally, this would take place voluntarily, and the States, uniformly, would share the information because why wouldn't they want to comply with the law? Why wouldn't they want to make sure that they are not facilitating—inadvertently or otherwise—violations of Federal law, including provisions of Federal criminal law that carry with them serious felony penalties? You would think that they would want to be cooperating freely and sharing their data.

Some of the States do this—many of them do—but a whole lot of them, including and especially those with Democrat Governors and/or Democrat legislatures, are adamantly, defiantly refusing to share that data.

What does that tell us?

Now, it is not as though this would involve an enormous amount of effort on the part of those States. It is not as though they can blame it on being short-staffed or on not having the adequate expertise to send over that data because the work is done, largely, almost entirely, by Federal officials on the other end, and every State does have personnel on hand to manage and oversee the maintenance of these voter registration files.

So one must ask the question: Why would these blue States—a couple dozen of them—refuse so consistently, so defiantly to share that information? What is it that they gain from that? What is it that they would lose?

I can't really think of anything legitimate that they would lose by sharing the data. This is a service being offered to them by the U.S. Government. It is not like the U.S. Government is going to charge them a bunch of money to do it. It is not like it is going to require their personnel to do it. So why wouldn't they want that?

Well, before you answer that question in your own mind, let me feed you an additional data point that, I think, has some relevance here.

In a handful of those States—I believe it is three or four States and the District of Columbia at a minimum—they have legalized noncitizen voting within their States in some local elections. Now, why they would want to do this, I do not understand. I fail to comprehend why that is a good idea; it seems like a terrible idea. But no Federal statute prohibits it. Nothing in the U.S. Constitution prohibits it insofar as we are talking about a State or a local election for a State or a local office. In Federal law, neither the Federal statutes nor the U.S. Constitution prohibits that from happening.

So, assuming State law allows it and their State constitutions don't prohibit it, States are allowed to do this. But once they do it, it creates a problem, and it creates a strong inference—a strong presumption—of an ongoing, much bigger problem because, if you are one of those States that allows voters to register to vote and then cast votes in some local elections, that means they have a voter registration file.

Questions have been asked by Federal authorities of the State elections officials in those States: What is it that you are doing? Tell us the process by which you are able to secure a degree of confidence that those voter registration files belonging to noncitizens, who are, by operation of State law, allowed to vote notwithstanding their noncitizen status in local elections—what is it that you are doing to make sure that those same people who have registered to vote don't show up on election day in November or on a primary election day earlier in the year to cast votes in connection with Federal elections? Here I am referring primarily, of course, to U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives elections.

They have been asked that question, and they refuse to answer.

Now, just think about that for a moment. That is pretty chilling.

No matter how many noncitizen voter registration files might be found in those States, one can imagine a scenario in which it could and would make a difference. We can all think of elections, including Federal elections that many of us are familiar with, that have been decided sometimes on the basis of a few thousand votes or a few hundred votes or even a few dozen votes. It does happen, and you never know in advance when it is going to happen.

It is like my late father, also a lawyer, used to say about appellate arguments. It is something that both he and I spent much of our careers as lawyers doing—handling appellate arguments before courts of appeals.

He would sometimes get asked the question: Can the lawyer and the lawyer's argument at oral argument—because before any oral argument happens in the appellate litigation world in the United States, there is an extensive period of briefing. Sharon, my wife, likes to say that a brief—a legal brief—is oxymoronic; it is anything but brief. It certainly isn't brief to write. It is not brief to read, but you have several months of briefing.

Then there is a distinct point in time where the lawyers come together. They show up at the same time, on the same day, and the Court hears oral argument as distinguished from the written argument in the briefing.

And he used to get asked the question: Does oral argument make a difference or is it always decided on the briefs?

He would consistently say the same thing every time he was asked that question: It makes a difference sometimes. You never know when it is going to make a difference, but because we know it makes a difference sometimes, you have to prepare for each argument as if the argument in that case would make all the difference.

So, too, here.

We don't know which races, whether it is a State office, a Federal office, or otherwise—you don't know in which races the margin between fraudulently cast votes and legitimately cast votes might make a difference; so you have to prepare for each election as if it would make all the difference that you had cleaned up your voter registration files.

In this instance, we are not talking about the entire universe of fraudulent votes that could be cast. We are talking about the universe consisting of noncitizens. We know for a fact that this number nationwide is at least in the thousands, and we know that because there are a small handful of States—a growing number of States—that have cleaned up their voter registration files often with the help of the SAVE database at the Department of Homeland Security. On that basis alone, they have discovered thousands—somewhere between thousands

and tens of thousands—of noncitizen voter registration files.

So, when we know that those are out there—and those are just from the States that are run by Governors and legislatures that are willing to share this information with the Department of Homeland Security and are willing to undertake an effort to make sure that only noncitizens are registered to vote in a way that makes them incapable of voting in a Federal election—it really does matter that we get to the bottom of this question because we know that, if there are at least a few thousand to a few tens of thousands from the red States, how many more are there from the blue States?

I can't help but wonder whether there might be a close connection between the blue States being unwilling to share their data and the number of likely noncitizen voter registration files they will have in their databases because, after all, given how little effort it would take on behalf of those States in order to share that information with the SAVE database and the people at the Department of Justice and at the Department of Homeland Security who are looking for them, why else would they be so opposed to it?

So, from that, one can wonder, instead of thousands to tens of thousands, could we be talking about tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands? And if that is how many there might be today, how many more could there be given that we now have something north of 30 million noncitizens residing in the United States, including 10 to 15 million—maybe more—who came into the country illegally, unlawfully, just in 4 of the last 5 years alone, between 2021 and 2025, during the era of the prolonged Biden border invasion?

In other words, this could get worse. It could get much worse, especially with the number of States that have very late voter registration requirements, including a number of blue States that have same-day voter registration. These numbers could spike very quickly if we don't get to the bottom of this problem and do it very, very soon, which is why I think there is such an interesting connection between the three things that we are talking about right now.

We have been talking for the last few days, and we will continue, I hope, for weeks or for as long as it takes to get it passed, the SAVE America Act, but we are also, simultaneously, talking about that and the confirmation of MARKWAYNE MULLIN to be the next DHS Secretary, and legislation to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, to fund it now that it has been defunded for well over a month. There is a parallel between all three of these things.

In all three instances, our Democratic colleagues are dragging their heels. In all three instances, they are trying to stop something or a series of things that could result in our ability

to secure our homeland; to enforce the laws governing our border, governing the immigration and naturalization of this country; and, ultimately, safeguarding our elections.

These are not esoteric points. These are not hypothetical or hyperbolic points. These are about real on-the-ground facts—facts that continue to come out every day, and I expect that. Even in the next few days, as we are debating the SAVE America Act, I will not be surprised if we get even more data points indicating that this is not a hypothetical problem and that this is not a hyperbolic alarm bell that we are sounding. These are real—real—things that have to be dealt with.

So how then do our Democratic colleagues propose that we deal with this?

Well, they are saying that they will stop at nothing to stop the SAVE America Act. When you hear their arguments, their arguments sound overwhelmingly—they sound out on the basis of facts that are not in evidence, not only facts not in evidence but facts contradicted by the legislative text itself. They have erected straw man after straw man from within the contrived, imagined “parade of horrors” version of the SAVE America Act that is not actually in the SAVE America Act at all.

Meanwhile, they overlook provisions of the SAVE America Act—most to the point, the text beginning on line 22 of page 12 that makes clear, under the SAVE America Act, the requirements for establishing citizenship at the time of voter registration, No. 1, in addition to the fact that they do not require anyone now registered to redo his or her registration. You don't have to worry about that.

But the point I was getting to, which is second, is that it gives every American who is newly registering to vote under these new voter registration requirements of establishing citizenship—it allows them to establish that by attestation, through a simple affidavit. If you are a natural born citizen, you will provide one set of facts in your sworn statement: I was born in such-and-such a city. These were my parents. Here is the date when I was born—the basic essential facts that one would have to know in order to establish that you are a natural born citizen.

Alternatively, if you were a naturalized citizen—if you were born somewhere else, if you were not a citizen as of the moment of your birth by virtue of the circumstances surrounding your birth, therefore, not a natural born citizen, but at some point you became a naturalized citizen—you would need to provide a different set of facts about where you were born, who your parents were, when you came to this country, under what mechanism, and through what process, and on what date you were made a citizen of the United States.

You can do all of this through a simple affidavit even if you don't have any

of the requirements—any of the more typical, more common documents that are required elsewhere—including when every citizen starts any job anywhere in the United States as a U.S. citizen. You have to establish your citizenship. You have to do so with a set of documents that is much more rigid and far less flexible than what we allow for in the SAVE America Act because, to start a job, you have got to fill out the I-9 form. The I-9 form requires you to provide either a U.S. passport to establish citizenship or, alternatively, an original certified copy of your birth certificate, accompanied by a government-issued photo ID or a Social Security card.

Now, for the most part—I don't know how they get around the truly difficult cases there, but it has always been my understanding that, unless or until you can provide those specific documents under the I-9, you are out of luck. You are not starting that job until you can pony up with them. So you are going to have to track them down. You might have to spend a few dollars to get your birth certificate or if you end up going through the additional steps of getting a passport. Many Americans have them; many don't. They cost a couple hundred bucks. So if you are not doing international travel, there is a good chance you don't have one, and you don't necessarily want to shell out \$200 to get one. But you pretty much have got to do that when you are starting a new job.

But we wanted the SAVE America Act to be more flexible than that because, after all, we want to make it easy to vote while also making it hard to cheat. So, to that end, we allowed for this alternative method by which you can do a simple affidavit, and you can submit it to the State authority, shifting the burden to them. You are taking the load off of your shoulders and giving it to the State elections officials, who will then have the obligation of confirming or refuting the accuracy of the information you gave them.

Now, if you lied to them and you did that under a sworn statement under penalty of perjury, you could be in a fair amount of trouble, and I don't think most people will do it for that reason alone. But if you are telling the truth, they are also going to figure that out. And given the databases of documents that these State officials will have access to, it should be relatively straightforward for them to be able to confirm or refute citizenship.

So these arguments, these features of the legislation, get ignored over and over and over again. Instead, we hear these parade-of-horrors arguments that you are going to have to shell out 200 bucks to get a passport or you will be unable to vote—false; that if you lost your birth certificate, you won't be able to vote—false; that if you are a married woman who, after getting married, took on your husband's name and you can't find your marriage certificate, you won't be able to vote—false;

that this will somehow disenfranchise, render unable to vote, 21 million currently registered voters in America. That one is completely false, and it gets repeated over and over again. There is not a scintilla of truth to that one.

I understand, at least, where they get to the other ones, but this is just based on some survey done years ago, I believe, by the Brennan Center, identifying that there are about 21 million Americans who are not sure where their documents are that would establish their citizenship. That does not mean they would be disenfranchised. And that, again, completely ignores this provision in the text of the statute, beginning on page 22, line 12, of the SAVE America Act.

So a picture is beginning to emerge. They don't want to fund the entire Department of Homeland Security. We are talking about somewhere between 230,000 and 260,000 hard-working Americans, who are not making a lot of money. They are paid for their services, but they are not getting rich off of this. Many of them, I would imagine, are living paycheck to paycheck. They have got people relying on them. They have got mouths to feed at home—children, spouses—house payments, car payments, and utility bills mounting up.

They don't want to pay them because they are mad at the fact that the border is being enforced. They are mad at the fact that there have been some enforcement efforts in the interior of the country, some of which have resulted in tragedy.

And those are all being investigated right now. Inquiries are going on to figure out what happened. But even before waiting for the final outcome of those investigations, they are willing to shut it all down, to defund ICE and make it impossible for them to do their job.

Meanwhile, they are standing behind the entrenched unwillingness, defiant opposition on the part of these blue States, dozens of them, who are refusing even to share the most basic information—the most basic data—from their voter registration files, such as would allow for the detection and removal of noncitizen voters who are currently able to cast votes, including in Federal elections.

They then move on to making an invented argument, under the Constitution, that this somehow violates the principles of federalism; that it violates the 10th Amendment; that it is Federal overreach. That is absolute nonsense, as article I, section 4, clause 1 gives us, unambiguously, the authority to set needful regulations concerning the conduct of State-run elections for Federal offices.

By the way, that same provision of the Constitution—article I, section 4, clause 1—is that very same provision that was used and relied upon by Congress in 1993 when it passed the NVRA, the National Voter Registration Act, also known as the motor voter law.

And it is that same law, the NVRA, that was interpreted, two decades later, by the Supreme Court—wrongly, but conclusively nonetheless—as prohibiting the States from doing any follow up when somebody shows up to a DMV.

The whole point of the NVRA is to allow someone to show up at a department of motor vehicles office in their State, in any participating State—and that is nearly all of them that do participate—and you may, simply by applying for a driver's license, filling out the driver's license application, all you have to do on that driver's license application is check a box saying: Yes, I would like to register to vote. And then, at the very bottom, sign your name saying: Yes, I want to register to vote, and I am entitled to vote. There is no legal impediment to me voting. I am a U.S. citizen and not otherwise barred by law from voting.

And that is it. No specific information is required. No specific information is even allowed. Per this Supreme Court precedent wrongly interpreting the NVRA, you can't even ask them any additional questions to verify that.

Why? Why are they so defiantly, adamantly opposed to funding the Department that protects our homeland, that allows us to enforce border and immigration laws? And they are simultaneously adamantly opposed to legislation that would require people to go through the simple process of establishing who they are and that they are entitled to vote in U.S. elections. Why?

When you marry up the absurdity and the invented form and the hyperbolic nature and, ultimately, the lack of foundation behind the arguments that they raise with what they are doing, this is alarming, to say the least. It is damning.

We are a nation of laws, and we are a nation. You can be neither a nation nor a nation of laws if you don't enforce your border laws, if you don't enforce who may call themselves an American, if you don't enforce who may cast a vote to decide your laws.

We talk a lot about a lot of policy ideas here. We make a lot of laws here. Some would say too many, and they might be right. But this one is different. This is upstream from all of them. They might say it is a metalaw or a protolaw. It is upstream from so many others because we are talking here about the law that determines who will be able to make our laws when voters across this country are casting votes in Federal elections, deciding who will represent them in the U.S. Senate and in the House of Representatives. We want to make sure that those voters are kept in the family, that those votes are kept within the bounds of who is allowed to vote. Only American citizens are allowed to vote in them.

Now, if that upsets the Democrats, they should say so. I haven't heard calls from any of them calling to repeal existing legislation that prohibits

noncitizens from voting in Federal elections. It would be interesting if they raised that. That would be an interesting debate. That would be, at least, a more honest discussion, if they were to raise that, but they haven't.

They have instead said: We don't need the SAVE America Act because—and this one is a kicker—because it is already against the law. That, under these circumstances, is analogous to saying: We don't need a law allowing police to issue citations and monitor traffic at intersections governed by a stop sign because it is already against the law in our State to run a stop sign. And even though police officers, under the status quo, are prohibited from monitoring intersections and taking note of when someone runs a stop sign, we know that people don't run stop signs because it is against the law.

That is directly, closely, tightly analogous to what they are saying here. We don't need a law making our laws prohibiting noncitizen voting because it is already against the law. And we take that defiant, illogical, absurd position, even knowing that it would make it impossible to detect—and therefore prosecute and punish—anyone who breaks that law.

We have got to clear both of these logjams. We have got to get MARKWAYNE MULLIN confirmed. I was happy to cast my vote for him and support him through that effort. He is a man with a lot of energy, a lot of ideas, and it is going to take such a man to run the Department of Homeland Security.

We also have to get the Department of Homeland Security funded, and we have to fully enable the Department of Homeland Security to protect the American people—not just by paying them, which is long overdue, but also by giving them the authority to get the data they need from the States in order to make sure that only Americans vote in U.S. elections.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, we are down to the 34th day of this partial government shutdown. For 34 days, the men and women who are serving our Federal Government at DHS have been forced to work without pay and without certainty about their future.

As I said on the floor yesterday, this is the third time in the last 6 months that the hard-working Americans who work to keep us safe every day have had to worry about how they are going to pay mortgages, pay rent, buy gas, and bring home groceries to feed their kids. I think that is clearly unfair, and it is un-American.

And while the American people are standing in line for hours at the airport and watching this unfold on the evening news, they are asking a reasonable question: What do Democrats actually want to accomplish by shutting down the Department of Homeland Security?

Yesterday, I talked about some of the stories of TSA agents. They are not

getting paid. They are worried about their mortgages, their rent, putting food on the table. They can't send their kids to camp. They can't go on vacation. And I think, in 5 days, on the 27th, they lose a full paycheck.

But let's talk about some of the other people.

Let me talk about Ambria Britt. In a CNN story published yesterday, Ambria Britt, who has multiple sclerosis and cannot stand for long periods, told a reporter that she was forced to pay a stranger to push her wheelchair through the jammed line.

She arrived at Hartfield-Jackson Airport on Friday, expecting to use the accessibility line like she normally does. Instead, she found pure chaos. On Friday, in Atlanta, the line spilled out of the security checkpoint, past the main security screening area, and into the airport's atrium. Unable to stand, she had to pay a complete stranger to push her wheelchair through the jam.

She said: Normally, I just go straight through.

She told CNN: I just don't understand. Pay your workers, because we need them.

Ambria is right. People do not understand why Democrats are forcing this on them. I think we owe it to folks to expose the why behind this terrible shutdown because the answer matters.

Thankfully, my colleague from Vermont recently gave us an answer to this question during his recent appearance on C-SPAN's "Ceasefire" program.

Now, the junior Senator from Vermont is a wonderful person to work with. We have worked on bills together during my time at the Senate, and I always felt like I could have good conversations with him about the issues.

But what he said to C-SPAN is pretty revealing. He gave the rest of us a peek—a peek—into the thinking behind Democrats' deciding to shut down DHS. So let's take his statements one by one.

The junior Senator from Vermont began by saying:

In all candor, with what has happened with ICE, I think it is very hard for us to come to some agreement.

Now, that is honesty. It has been clear to me and a lot of people for a long time, that Democrats do not have any intention of working with Republicans to find common ground on reforming ICE operations.

President Trump has made offer after offer to Democrats to address their concerns with ICE. I know the junior Senator from Alabama has tried to meet with them multiple times. President Trump is trying to meet this moment with reasonable reforms to how ICE operates.

Unfortunately, my Democrat colleagues won't engage. In fact, they have only met with Republicans to negotiate one time.

Now, it is clear why. As the junior Senator from Vermont said, there isn't a belief among Democrats that they

will accept any term proposed by Republicans.

So we have now established that this shutdown isn't about working in a bipartisan way to solve problems.

Let's move to the next statement from my colleague from Vermont.

He said:

The other reality is that ICE got forward funded, about 3 years, in the One Big Beautiful Bill. So this is—ironically, it's not really affecting ICE.

Here, the junior Senator from Vermont is admitting that this shutdown, which Democrats caused by claiming that they needed to defund ICE to force bipartisan reforms, isn't actually impacting ICE agents at all.

Now, the folks at ICE that don't only work in law enforcement are being hurt. Now, there are a lot of people at ICE that are not law enforcement. They aren't covered by the money my colleague referenced in the Big Beautiful Bill. So the support staff, the public affairs staff, HR, IT professionals, leadership—none of them, it is my understanding, are being paid, in addition, more than 50,000 TSA agents that aren't getting paid—they are all being hurt by the Democrat DHS shutdown.

Just to make sure we are all keeping track, the junior Senator from Vermont said:

In all candor, with what has happened with ICE, I think it is very hard for us to come to some agreement.

Then he said:

The . . . reality is that ICE got forward funded . . . three years, in the One Big Beautiful Bill so this is, ironically, it's not really affecting ICE.

So in these two sentences, my Democratic colleague from Vermont has now said that Democrats don't have the intention of reaching a bipartisan solution with Republicans. And he knows that the Agencies at the center of this dispute—ICE and CBPs—are not running out of money. They are fine.

Now, there are people at ICE and CBP who are not getting paid, and yet here we are. TSA agents, most of the people at DHS, everyone at ICE who isn't law enforcement, they are going hungry. You heard the stories. They don't have the money to pay their rent, pay their mortgages, put food on the table, pay for dance recitals, pay for camps, pay for sports—none of these things.

Now, here is what he said next:

If we were able to open up the rest of government and focus on the ICE issue, it may allow us then to have a discussion that I think is overdue. The border is secure now. It wasn't under Biden. You say that and that's true.

So we know that. We know that, under Biden, the border was completely wide open and criminals just flocked into this country and not one of my Democratic colleagues said a word. They never want to talk about Laken Riley, Rachel Morin, Jocelyn Nungaray—murdered by illegal aliens.

Now, he ended his point by saying this:

It's ripe for us to have a sensible discussion about a reasonable immigration plan, in a reasonable way to deal with folks who don't have legal status.

Now, I am from a State that we have a lot of immigrants, right? I believe in immigration reform. I am always willing to have a conversation about it. I have actually proposed changes to TPS. I have proposed things that have always been blocked by my Democratic colleagues.

And we ought to fix our immigration system so the only people that come into our country are people who actually want to work, not go on American programs, and want to help build our capitalist country. I think that is the ones who should be allowed in. Unfortunately, that is not the type of reform the Democrats are holding out for. They want amnesty.

My friend, the junior Senator from Vermont, is talking about amnesty. He is talking about using a government shutdown, using the paychecks of TSA workers, using 3- or 4-hour security lines, using the pain felt by disabled Americans like Ambria Britt who had to pay a stranger to push her wheelchair through security as leverage—as leverage—to open a conversation about amnesty to people who are in this country illegally.

And here is the part that should make every American's blood boil: There is no Democratic proposal. I haven't seen it.

Mr. President, have you seen it? I haven't seen a proposal. I haven't seen anything—no plan, no bill, no written offer. Weeks and weeks of offers from the White House and dozens of failed Senate votes, and the American people still cannot read a single piece of paper that says what Democrats actually want.

The only thing Democrats keep harping on is banning ICE from wearing masks, so let's dig into that point now. This is important because it really exposes the disconnect between political posturing and human consequences. Democrat Senators introduced legislation to ban ICE agents from wearing masks during enforcement operations and required them to display their names or badge numbers at all times. House Democrats introduced a companion bill, and several States introduced or passed similar measures.

Now, on the surface, this sounds like accountability, right? I actually agree with making sure badges are visible for uniformed law enforcement officers. That seems like a commonsense idea to me, but let's talk about ICE agents not being allowed to wear a mask.

Now, there are radical anti-ICE activists. You might know that, Mr. President; I think most people do, right? They are all over the country. They have built and maintained websites that catalog photographs of alleged ICE employees organized by State, searchable by region. That should scare us. They encourage their fellow activists to hunt our law enforcement and give them all the tools to do so.

Now, here is what has already happened: ICE has reported a 1,000-percent increase—that is a tenfold increase—in assaults on officers. That is even more than tenfold, isn't it? Yeah, tenfold. And an 8,000-percent increase in death threats against officers and their families.

A Dallas gunman fired multiple rounds at an ICE field office from a nearby rooftop and used apps specifically to track the locations of ICE agents before the attack. In San Francisco and LA, a mob surrounded ICE agents in the street and at their offices. These agents were assaulted and threatened.

Now, ICE agents are just like you and me. They are normal Americans. They have got families, and they love their kids. If they have grandkids, they love their grandkids. They have great neighbors, great friends, and they are simply doing the job that they were hired to do to keep every American safe.

They are doing what police do, what sheriffs do: They are working every day to enforce the laws of this country that we pass, but many of my Democratic colleagues want to see them as monsters.

Now, here is the difference: The TSA workers, they are going to work every day enforcing the laws, trying to keep us safe, and they are under a lot of stress because they are not getting paid. The ICE agents might be getting paid right now, but they are being attacked by—Democrats act like they are monsters. Their families are worried about them. They are worried about getting a threatening midnight phone call because an activist website posted their loved one's photograph and home address, so their families are worried.

That is what the mask ban would enable—not accountability; exposure. And for people who are already doing their jobs under impossible conditions, that additional threat is not a policy debate; it is a danger to their life.

Now, let's be clear: I don't think any of us want ICE to wear masks. I wish they didn't have to. But if wearing a mask keeps a law enforcement officer and their family safe from being attacked by radical anti-ICE activists, I am all for it.

Now, I support measures that keep our police accountable to the people they serve and protect. I believed that when I was Governor. We started bringing body cameras in when I was Governor of Florida. The White House has proposed body cameras, and I completely agree with that proposal. Cameras create accountability.

When I just flew through the Denver airport, I saw a couple of the law enforcement officers. They had cameras, and they thought it was the greatest thing in the world—complete accountability for everybody, them and for the public. Cameras create accountability through recorded evidence and supervisor review without turning every of-

ficer into a target for harassment and violence.

Democrats still impress that they want to "have a conversation." They want to "discuss." Meanwhile, most of the more than 260,000 workers at the Department of Homeland Security are going without paychecks, and your gate security lines stretch around the block.

Now, Democrats can disagree with us on immigration enforcement, and that is their right. But shutting down an entire Federal Agency, refusing to pay the hundreds of thousands of people who simply want to show up and serve the Federal Government by protecting the American people all to force a so-called negotiation on immigration policy that we have never seen written down, that is not governance; that is hostage-taking.

And let me remind you: The average salary of a TSA agent—Mr. President, what do you think the average salary is? \$50,000. Now, these are the folks Democrats are withholding paychecks from, Americans making about \$50,000 a year.

What do we make? U.S. Senators, we make 174,000 bucks a year. And I have tried—I have had a bill—No Budget, No Pay. My Democratic colleagues have always blocked it because they refuse to go without being paid, but they are OK with other people not being paid. So while the folks at TSA are working-class Americans fighting every day to live their dreams, guess what the average net worth for a Democrat in the Senate is? About \$3 million.

Now, I am not here to shame anybody. I am glad they worked hard, they got rich, they have been successful in life. I worked my butt off, I have been very successful, and I don't apologize for it for a second. But in addition to donating my entire Senate salary every year, I am also not the one sitting here today denying a paycheck to the more than 260,000 hard-working Americans at DHS.

Now, I think my Democratic colleagues ought to have skin in the game. The last time Democrats shut down the government and hurt our Federal workers, one of my Democratic colleagues said that he couldn't go without his Senate paycheck because he has a mortgage to pay. Well, guess what? So does every Federal employee at DHS. They are either probably paying the rent or they have a mortgage. The people Democrats aren't paying right now, they have bills to pay.

It frustrates me, it makes me sick that a Member of the U.S. Senate that voted to say somebody else can't get paid, they said they have to get paid. I think that is insulting. Imagine how it makes someone at TSA feel to hear that: A U.S. Senator needs to get his paycheck when he is making 174,000 bucks, but you at DHS, good luck. I think that is pretty disgusting. I don't think, if Congress shuts down the government, Members should get paid.

Now, I have a bill to make that happen. I had a colleague that had a simi-

lar bill earlier today. My No Budget, No Pay Act would keep everyone in this Chamber from getting a paycheck if we can't provide them to the hard-working men and women who work in our Federal Government.

Look, I think there needs to be personal consequences for politicians that want to play games with other people's lives and cut off their paychecks, so I think we need to pass my No Budget, No Pay Act. Again, this is a simple proposal that says if Members of Congress can't complete our basic constitutional job of funding the government—the whole government, not part, not some but all of it—we shouldn't get paid.

So I urge my colleagues to consider this: What about the mortgages of DHS workers? What about their grocery bills? What about their kids' camp? What about their daughter's dance recital? I think we ought to care about them.

So I don't get it. I can't see how a Democratic colleague can get on a plane, fly home, probably go to the front of the line, look at these unpaid TSA agents in the eye, walk to the gate in front of all of them, pass Americans who just waited in line for 4 hours, and not feel some shame.

More than 260,000 American families are going without a paycheck, but my Democratic colleagues are still cashing theirs. Democrats shouldn't be shutting down the government and risking others' paychecks without being willing to put their paychecks on the line too.

So I am not going to ask for a UC, but I wish at some point we would pass my No Budget, No Pay Act so we all have skin in the game. If Republicans, Democrats—whoever—are going to shut down the government, then they ought to do the same thing that they are doing to other people to themselves.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. President, a few weeks ago, I rose in this Chamber in support of the SAVE America Act. I implored my colleagues to listen to the people who put us here, to restore their trust in our elections, to defend the integrity of what John Adams called "the primary right by which [all] other rights are protected."

Today, the rubber meets the road. We must continue our debate in front of