

MARKWAYNE MULLIN of Oklahoma to be our Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. The sooner he is on the job, the safer, the stronger, and the more secure America will be.

Markwayne is a servant leader in the truest sense. His hometown is Westville, OK, a population of only 1,300 people. He is the youngest of seven children. When he was 20 years old, he stepped up to save his dad's plumbing company. He turned it into one of the largest in the State of Oklahoma.

Markwayne is a father, a fighter, a Christian, and someone that others have known they can count on. He has served in both the House and the Senate of the United States. I am fortunate to have worked closely with MARKWAYNE on a day-to-day basis because he is a trusted Member of our whip team. MARKWAYNE is tough. He is hard-working. He works with others to solve problems. You always know where he stands. That is the way MARKWAYNE MULLIN is.

On the whip team, he has played a critical role in passing the largest investment in American security in 40 years. He has been consistent in his commitment to enforce our laws and to strengthen our border. Once confirmed, he is going to bring the same focus and urgency and consistency to lead that Department of Homeland Security.

At his confirmation hearing, MARKWAYNE laid out a clear vision. He said:

My goal is for people to understand we're out there, we're protecting them, and we're working [with] them.

That is exactly what he should do, and it is what he will do.

The Department of Homeland Security exists to protect the American people from danger. From counterterrorism to disaster relief to border security, that Department protects our communities from terrorists, from illegal drugs, and from cyber attacks. MARKWAYNE understands fully the full weight of that critical mission.

Markwayne also understands the importance of trust. He has made it clear that he will be open, communicative, cooperative, and committed to working with others to get the job done.

Even Senate Democrats have said they like MARKWAYNE—they may have disagreed with him politically, but they acknowledge his stellar character. Senator BRIAN SCHATZ of Hawaii said this month:

I like him personally.

Senator Chris COONS of Delaware says MARKWAYNE is "well liked." Senator PETER WELCH of Vermont served with Senator MULLIN here in the Senate as well as in the House, and he said of MARKWAYNE:

He's respected, he's honest, and he's competent.

At the confirmation hearing, Senator RUBEN GALLEGU of Arizona said MARKWAYNE is "upstanding" and qualified. That kind of respect speaks to MARKWAYNE's character.

As the Senate considers MARKWAYNE's nomination, we cannot ignore the situation facing the Department of Homeland Security today, right now, this very moment because, right now, the Department of Homeland Security is shut down. Senate Democrats shut it down by withholding its funding. That is the cruel fact. It is the undeniable fact. The fact is, Senate Democrats have voted five times to block full funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

Many employees are working without pay. Others have been furloughed. Families are struggling to meet basic needs. TSA agents are quitting. They are calling in sick in rising numbers. And as a result, wait times at major airports are rising as well.

We have seen terrorist attacks in New York, Virginia, Michigan, and Texas. Pro-Iran cyber hackers successfully attacked a major medical company in Michigan. The situation remains dangerous today. The warning lights are flashing red. And Democrats would rather pander to protect illegal immigrant criminals than pay to protect American people. MARKWAYNE MULLIN is ready to lead.

He is ready to serve with seriousness and character, and he is going to be a leader who makes our country safer, stronger, and more secure. He will secure our borders. He will fight terrorism. He will protect our cyber space. He will safeguard our communities. And he will support the individuals who keep our country safe.

Today, this Senate will confirm MARKWAYNE MULLIN. Then the Senate must fully fund the Department of Homeland Security because the safety and security of the American people depend upon it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

LAGUARDIA AIRPORT ACCIDENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, let me begin today by saying that my deepest prayers are with the families of the two pilots who were killed in a terrible collision at LaGuardia Airport this morning. The video and audio of the collision were heart-wrenching. It is like a punch to the stomach when you listen to it. It leaves you gasping for air.

I spoke with Chairwoman Homendy of the National Transportation Safety Board, which has always done an outstanding job, impartial, in investigating these tragedies. I spoke to Chair Homendy earlier today, and she told me the situation is under investigation.

She told me that over 25 investigators are on their way to LaGuardia right now to get to the bottom of what happened. We owe it to those pilots and their families to find out exactly how this accident was permitted to happen, and I will remain in constant communication with Chair Homendy and the NTSB as well as local authorities as the investigation unfolds.

My heart goes out to all of those affected by this tragedy. My heart goes out to the two pilots who were killed and to all the passengers who were injured at LaGuardia.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. President, on Homeland Security talks. Over the weekend—and for weeks now—Democrats have engaged Republicans in good faith to pay our TSA workers, to fund DHS, while also enacting commonsense safeguards to rein in ICE.

Both sides talked all weekend long. We had some constructive conversations, but there is considerably more work to be done, and Democrats are ready to keep negotiating. Democrats believe TSA staff should be paid now—now.

We tried to move forward this weekend to pay these workers, but Republicans have blocked pay for TSA workers in a rollcall vote where they all voted no on Saturday; and additionally, they have blocked pay for TSA workers seven times when Democrats tried to bring it up.

It is preposterous because the chaos at our airports is simply unacceptable. Still, Democrats are going to keep working in good faith.

Donald Trump, meanwhile, is trying to sabotage negotiations, demanding that talks stop entirely until Congress passes the SAVE Act, a bill that has nothing—nothing—to do with paying TSA workers and nothing to do with ending the shutdown.

That is right. Donald Trump is now saying: We will pay TSA only after Congress passes voter suppression.

What a ridiculous thing to do. What a callous thing to do. He doesn't give a damn about the American people. He cares about his own election. He thinks this SAVE Act—which isn't going to pass—will change how the election comes out, and he uses millions and millions of Americans as hostages.

How can our Republican friends on the other side of the aisle go along with this? It stinks on its face. You don't need any deeper explanation.

This morning, unfortunately, Trump doubled down in Memphis, saying explicitly as possible he won't pay TSA workers and he won't end this shutdown until the SAVE Act is passed.

Let's make it very clear: Donald Trump is the one standing in the way of paychecks for TSA workers with this ridiculous attempt to pass the SAVE Act; the SAVE Act, which would destroy a lot of what we know about democracy; the SAVE Act, which would disenfranchise 20 million American citizens in all likelihood from voting in the next election; the SAVE Act,

which is designed to do as Kristi Noem said, to allow people to vote who we like how they vote as opposed to others.

Well, Donald Trump, your latest temper tantrum is not going to work. The SAVE Act does not have the votes to pass this Chamber, and Democrats will fight it every step of the way. The SAVE Act has nothing to do with DHS, Homeland Security; it has nothing to do with TSA workers or making sure ICE follows the same rules as every other Federal law enforcement Agency in the country.

Every other law enforcement agency uses warrants when they bust—needs a warrant when they bust into your home. Every other law enforcement agency doesn't wear masks.

Trump and the Republicans are insisting that continue, and they are saying we are holding TSA workers and millions and millions of passengers hostage. And now all of the sudden, in addition to that, Trump says: I won't move forward unless we pass the SAVE Act, which isn't going happen, Mr. Trump. It is not going to happen.

Democrats' position has not changed. We want to pay TSA workers today. We are ready to meet with the White House today to keep talking. In fact, we were going to meet this morning with Tom Homan, but apparently the White House pulled that meeting because of Donald Trump's temper tantrum.

They are all scrambling around there in the White House. They don't know what to do. Their boss, the President, comes out with these idiotic statements every day, whether it is related to the war in Iran where he contradicts himself, whether it is related to the SAVE Act where he doesn't even know what it does, or related to what is happening in Homeland Security.

We hope that Donald Trump will stop derailing these talks and let negotiations continue. Democrats want to be reasonable, and we are going to keep working in good faith to reach a solution. We need to pay TSA workers ASAP. The American people want ICE to change its violent ways. They do not want to repeat the kind of violence we saw earlier this year in Minnesota. They certainly do not want to see ICE detaining passengers at airports and making things worse.

Donald Trump is tying himself in a triple knot on the Iran war, on the SAVE Act, and on TSA workers. And he makes—he tightened that knot around his waist last night by saying ICE should go to the airports, then by saying that he would not go forward unless the SAVE Act passed.

He is making it harder and harder for himself. He is making himself less and less popular with the American people, and he is causing tens of millions to wonder: What is going on in that man's head?

So that is the dilemma we all face, and it is the American people who suffer. They suffer at the airports. They

suffer as gas prices go up because of the Iran war. They suffer because he is threatening their democracy.

Now, let me talk about ICE at the airports. This morning, Tom Homan from the Department of Homeland Security said ICE agents have arrived at 14 airports—New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, and elsewhere. Everywhere ICE goes, trouble follows. We have seen that, and it is highly likely the airports will be no exception.

No one trusts that ICE is going to make things better. Patrolling airports is not in ICE's job description; it is certainly not what they are trained to do. Let's be clear: ICE agents performing the work of TSA officers are not going to make our airports any safer.

It is going to make them less safe because ICE agents aren't trained in airport security. These agents aren't familiar with the layout of the airports they are walking into. They don't know the protocols and procedures in the same way TSA workers do.

It is a simple solution, Donald Trump: Pay the TSA workers so you don't have to bring ICE agents in there.

ICE agents are going to miss things, and that is assuming they focus on security. What if they do what they have done in other cities and start harassing travelers, asking to check papers, check their citizenship, detain them without due process even if they are American citizens, just as we have seen them do for months now?

And I wouldn't be surprised if Donald Trump and Stephen Miller would encourage them to do just that at the airport.

In any case, ICE's mere presence is going to inflame the situation at these airports where tensions are already high. Every time a traveler walks to their gate or stands in line at security and sees an ICE agent lurking about, they are going to be reminded of Donald Trump's chaos. They are going to be reminded of Minneapolis, and they are going to think: The chaos is now coming to my city too.

So, Donald Trump, the more you keep ICE agents at our airports, the more you will be reminding people of how much chaos and fear ICE has already caused. It is a terrible idea that could backfire on the country and on Donald Trump.

Instead of trying to replace TSA workers with ICE agents, Trump should pay TSA workers right away, get Republicans to come to a deal before the chaos gets worse.

Let me repeat that because it is so simple. Instead of trying to replace TSA workers with ICE agents, Donald Trump should simply pay TSA workers and get Republicans to come to a deal before the chaos gets even worse.

IRAN

Mr. President, on Iran, Donald Trump's war with Iran now enters its fourth week. There is no end in sight. Instead of giving the American people a clear plan for how to move forward,

the President of the United States, the Commander in Chief, continues, unfortunately, to flail.

Over the weekend, Trump threatened to destroy Iran's major power infrastructure if Iran did not come to the table. Then this morning after all the blustering, all the threats, he appeared—Trump appeared—to retreat, suddenly claiming there are major points of agreement with the regime, even as Iran flatly denies it and there are no diplomatic talks.

What is going on here? This is not leadership from the Commander in Chief. He is either confused, lying, or both. That is what always happens. Whatever pops into his head at the moment, he speaks; and 2 hours or 2 days later, if he has a totally contradictory thought, he says that one.

That is not the way to solve our problems. That is not the way to get Iran to do what we want them to do.

He must look like a flailing fool to many of them.

A month ago, the national price of gasoline was \$2.93 a gallon. Today, it is \$3.94, up roughly a dollar in a month. Who is to blame? One man, Donald Trump. And this increase in gasoline is one of the sharpest monthly spikes Americans have seen since Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

Prices have been coming down. Then Trump started a war that most of the American people did not want, and he sent prices shooting back up.

Enough is enough. Senate Republicans need to hold hearings and bring members of the Cabinet under oath to explain what is exactly happening in Iran. We need accountability. We need transparency, but most of all, we need strategy and an endgame, something Donald Trump's war with Iran is dangerously lacking.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today is the 16th anniversary of an amazing event in the history of the United States.

Millions of Americans can remember a time when access to affordable healthcare was just not a reality in America. There was a time when, if you had a preexisting condition—you or your family—you could be disqualified from any health insurance coverage because of it. And being uninsured was a reality for those who just weren't healthy and wealthy enough to afford it.

Sixteen years ago today, it all changed when President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law, opening the door to quality, affordable health coverage for more than 30 million Americans. This transformed our healthcare system. Suddenly, no one could be denied insurance coverage because of a preexisting condition. Addiction and mental health coverage were no longer optional; they were required in the health insurance plans. Young