

having been involved in the debate on immigration for decades now, there are some basics that I believe, and most Senators of both parties agree. Let me see if they ring true to you as well.

We should never knowingly allow a dangerous person to come into this country—never knowingly allow a dangerous person to come into this country. And if they are in this country seeking legal status and citizenship and are dangerous or commit a crime, they are gone. I think most Americans would say: Well, that just makes sense. We don't want dangerous people here. And if they come here and want to be part of America for any period of time, they have to demonstrate that they will be positive, contributing to this society and our economy.

What happened to the previous administration with the border, I am not going to debate one way or the other. We are in the present dealing with the second year of this President's term, and we are dealing with the situation as of today. The question is, What are we going to do about it?

Because it turns out that President Trump's promise to go after the "worst of the worst" was a promise that was not kept. I know it personally from the city of Chicago because the ICE forces showed up in Chicago.

I went over to their facilities. I asked as a Senator to see some of the people who were being held. They refused me that opportunity. It was the first time ever. They said: This is too dangerous a situation. We can't let you see the people we have arrested.

Well, it turns out that the legal reports of the people who were arrested and the people detained and the people sent away did not just include a handful of people who were dangerous but many more who were not dangerous. They have not broken any laws, and yet they were deported.

Some of them were American citizens, arrested by the ICE Agency. And now remember what happened in the streets of Minneapolis. We all saw that video over and over again. Two innocent Americans protesting, as they have a right to do under the Constitution, were killed on the streets of Minneapolis by ICE agents.

When they were asked later on by the Agency who were these people, they said they were domestic terrorists. They called them domestic terrorists. And when they took a look at their background, it turned out it wasn't true. One of them was actually a nurse in a veterans hospital in Minneapolis.

And so we said to ourselves: What is going on here? Thousands of ICE agents descending on populations in cities like Minneapolis and Chicago, deporting people from those cities, and they don't fit the definition of dangerous people, dangerous criminals. We have to do something about it to clean this up.

And why would we have ICE agents wearing masks? Why are they hiding their faces? I will just tell you: If your

home State is South Dakota like the Republican leader or Illinois like myself, our policemen don't wear masks; our State troopers don't wear masks; our deputy sheriffs don't wear masks. What is going on here? I know what is going on, and you do too.

It strikes fear in the hearts of a lot of people to see those folks heavily armed with combat type uniforms wearing masks. It is to create fear; it is not for effective law enforcement.

What we have tried to argue on this side—the Democratic side of the aisle—is we ought to use the same standards for the ICE agents that we use for police in our own States. That makes sense to me. I have talked to a lot of law enforcement about this, and they say: Our people don't wear masks, and they don't need to.

Now, if they are undercover agents, different thing, keep them safe, do what you need. But that is a rare circumstance, a limited number of people that it applies to.

So we have gone back and forth for weeks now as to what to do to reform the ICE agents and those who are working for this effort for masks and deportation. I thought we were at least moving in the right direction, but we had limited success.

And so we said on 11 different occasions to our friends on the other side of the aisle: Republicans, join us in doing this. Let's fund everything else in the Federal Government, everything else in the Department of Homeland Security, and leave this one area, ICE agents and such, which we are debating, separate.

We offered that amendment 11 times, and 11 times they voted no. Now, they can explain why they voted no. I happen to think they believed it was politically right for them to stick with the President at that point.

But we have gone beyond that point now. Just 2 weeks ago, Senator THUNE from South Dakota the Republican leader came to the floor and asked for unanimous consent to pass a funding bill, which excluded ICE from being included into it, and it passed here.

It was sent over to the House of Representatives where there is a Republican majority; they rejected it. They said: We want everything funded or nothing. So they funded everything, which brought us to a standstill again.

Needless to say, this needs to be resolved and soon. The good news is that the Agencies at the Department of Homeland Security like the Coast Guard, CISA, and FEMA, and a lot of other Agencies which you may be familiar with are going to be funded, but we still have to work out the ICE agents part. That is an important element in this, and it should be done and done right to make sure that our constitutional rights are protected.

If any law enforcement agent in any State that you happen to live in decided that it was time to search your home and to crash down your front door to get into your home, they would

need a judicial warrant for that purpose. Arguments are being made by some that ICE agents should be excepted from that; I think that is wrong. If you don't have a court that says you have legal authority to tear down my front door and come into my home and arrest me, then you shouldn't do it. You need a judicial warrant, except in the most extreme circumstances, and that doesn't apply to what ICE is doing. So that issue still is out there.

That is the background that Senator THUNE was alluding to. He sees it differently than I do, but that is not new in the Senate. There are always differences of opinion. The question is, Will we come together now and try to work out those differences? We have 3 weeks, this week and two more, that we will be in session. This is an opportunity to get it done. No excuses. Both parties, Democrats and Republicans, let's get it done, starting this week.

I am ready to stand and volunteer for that effort if I can help, but it should be done, and done soon.

#### DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. President, earlier this month, President Trump announced that he was firing the Attorney General Pam Bondi. I would say it is no surprise. She has been politically controversial. She has done things in the little over a year that she served that are unprecedented. She transformed the Department from the Nation's preeminent law enforcement Agency into a political entity. Apparently, she didn't go far enough to please the President, and he fired her.

At the core of this MAGA makeover at DOJ was a systematic purge of career professionals. I have met with them, men and women working for the Department of Justice with years of experience, prosecuting cases, going after criminals and terrorists and the like. Hundreds of these experienced prosecutors were forced out, stripping the Department of decades of institutional knowledge and experience.

The acting Attorney General now, since Bondi was fired, is named Todd Blanche. He recently said that there remained no more employees in the Department of Justice and FBI that worked on the criminal investigations of President Trump. They have all been fired, forced out.

The impact over the last year can't be overstated. The Department recently said its National Security Division is facing unprecedented personnel constraints at a time when our country is embroiled in a significant international conflict in Iran.

At the same time, the Department under former Attorney General Bondi was quick to welcome individuals who were involved in violent efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

I mentioned earlier that I have been in the Senate for 30 years. There are moments I will never forget, and one of those was January 6. That was a time when we were counting the ballots in

2021, and those ballots were being counted by the Vice President of the United States, Vice President Pence. He was sitting where the Presiding Officer is now. I was sitting at this desk.

It was 2 in the afternoon. We were counting the electoral college ballots brought in from around the country. It was a rather routine process hardly ever controversial, but in this one something happened we will never forget.

I watched as the Secret Service came up and literally dragged Vice President Pence out of that chair and through that door outside the Senate Chamber. The rest of the Senators were sitting here. We were looking at one another: What is going on?

We knew there were demonstrators outside. We could hear them. We knew there were a lot of them. They had gone to a rally with the President a few blocks away from the Capitol, and now they had marched on the Capitol.

So at that point a member of the Capitol Police, a wonderful group of law enforcement agents who protect all of the visitors, the Gallery, as well as the Senators and staff, one of the members of police in uniform stood before us and said: Don't worry. This is a safe place to be. Stay right where you are. Other people will come in and join you, and we will let you know what is going to happen next.

We said OK. Ten minutes later the same individual came and stood before us and said: Forget what I told you earlier. In an orderly fashion, leave the Chamber as fast as possible. The demonstrators are right outside the door.

So we all went through that door, ushered downstairs and outside along with Vice President Pence. It was a terrible scene. We had 150 law enforcement agents with the Capitol Police who were protecting visitors to the Capitol as well as Senators, Congressmen, and their staffs; and many of those people were hurt, physically hurt.

As a result of that, the Department of Justice under President Biden investigated and had over 1,500 of them who were arrested and prosecuted, and many of them were serving time in jail for what they did on that day.

You have seen the videotapes. I am not going to describe them. Draw your own conclusions. But I can tell you inside, I have never quite seen the Senate in that situation as there was that day.

What happened when President Trump was elected to a second term? The day he was sworn in, he signed a full and unconditional pardon for all of the 1,500 who had been arrested for descending on the Capitol on January 6.

Regardless of whether or not they had been found guilty of a felony for hurting law enforcement agents, regardless of that, he gave full and unconditional pardons.

The impact of that was significant. More than 1,600 people charged and convicted of offenses related to January 6 were subject to the President's

blanket pardon. The Department of Justice hired a pardoned insurrectionist named Jared Weiss. This man who on January 6 was berating officers and calling them Nazis and Gestapo repeatedly urged the violent mob to "kill them"—this is on videotape—as Capitol Police officers were being attacked. Thankfully, he left the Department the same day Attorney General Bondi was fired.

An individual who descended on the Capitol, urged people to harm law enforcement agents trying to keep it peaceful, was then prosecuted, then subject to a pardon, then hired by the Department of Justice to serve as a senior adviser. He is gone, thank goodness.

While the Department's leadership prioritized installing Trump cronies and forcing out experienced attorneys, they quietly closed more than 23,000 criminal investigations in the first 6 months of the Trump administration.

To prioritize Trump's unpopular and cruel mass deportation campaign, the Department declined to pursue prosecutions in hundreds of terrorism, drug, and white-collar criminal investigations.

The National Cryptocurrency Enforcement Team, which was dedicated to investigating crypto-related fraud and money laundering, was disbanded under the former Attorney General. All this took place while the President pardoned his wealthy allies who have defrauded Americans out of millions of dollars, founded notorious dark web drug markets, and supported President Trump's family businesses.

This drastic shift away from the Department's core public safety mission highlights the indifference to the rights and safety of Americans.

I tell you this story because we now have a vacancy in the Attorney General's position. Todd Blanche is there on a temporary basis. We have to decide whether to fill the ranks. I think Americans can agree on the basics.

We want a Department of Justice which is not run for political purposes but to keep us safe in America, safe in our homes, safe in our neighborhoods, safe in our Nation. That is the bottom line.

Getting even with people who are fair or unfair to the current President is not the mission of the Department of Justice. It is the administration of justice in a nonpolitical way.

I certainly hope that in the weeks and months ahead, while we debate this issue, that we can go back to a Department of Justice that we can trust as an apolitical Agency doing its best to bring safety and peace to America.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, 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. 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.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, over the last 2 weeks, Americans were aghast watching two disasters unfold simultaneously: one abroad, one right here in this Chamber. Abroad, Donald Trump is escalating his ill-conceived Iranian incursion, threatening to wipe out an entire civilization, driving up gas prices with no plans and no end in sight.

And right here at home, congressional Republicans are keeping the Department of Homeland Security shut down because they cannot govern themselves, let alone govern this country.

Why? Because Stephen Miller won't let them. Stephen Miller, an unelected ideologue, is calling the shots on immigration policy in this country, not Congress, not Senators, not the Appropriations Committee—Stephen Miller.

Here is the bottom line: Stephen Miller and Donald Trump refuse to accept commonsense, bipartisan reforms to ICE and Border Patrol. Republicans would rather keep DHS shuttered than cross the man who has made cruelty the centerpiece of this administration's immigration agenda.

Republicans are rejecting bipartisan reforms—reforms rooted in transparency and oversight and rule of law—because they refuse to cross the one man whose agenda is built on cruelty.

So let's be clear: What have Republicans chosen? What have Republicans chosen? Not a clean funding bill with commonsense reforms, not bipartisan solutions. They have chosen—the Republicans have chosen chaos. They are dragging the Senate through a painful, arduous, and partisan reconciliation process, not because it is the best path but because it is the only way they can avoid accountability for how ICE and Border Patrol operate.

They would rather walk the plank politically, vote after vote, amendment after amendment, than show a shred of independence from Stephen Miller. That is not leadership. That is not governing. That is dysfunction, plain and simple.

And to make matters worse, they can't even agree among themselves on how to do it.

On the SAVE Act, Republicans continue to push forward on their effort to pass the SAVE Act. While Republicans claim it is a voter ID bill, the insidious truth is, it is a subterfuge for a voter suppression law that would disenfranchise millions of Americans.

The SAVE Act purges millions of Americans from voter rolls. The SAVE Act kills online mail-in voter registration. The SAVE Act rejects common IDs to register, forces Americans to register in person, and punishes married women. The SAVE Act does all of that.

This isn't about protecting elections. That is a lot of bull. Republicans are