

think of anything that is more “America First” than that.

The National Security Strategy as updated by the Trump administration—Secretary of War Hegseth, Secretary Elbridge Colby, and President Trump himself—is really historic. It is an “America First” foreign policy agenda that is already making the United States safer and stronger.

As we near the 250th birthday of this great country—the greatest country in the history of the world—President Trump has positioned our Nation to be the most powerful that it has ever been, and that is something that is really worth celebrating.

What a big difference just a couple of years has made. From historic weakness in the Biden administration—I will never forget the disastrous pull-out, the deadly pullout, the shameful moment of what happened in Afghanistan and what the Biden administration did to politicize and weaken our military. What a difference 2 years has made from that to President Trump restoring peace through strength through his actions, through what he has done to restore the military and rebuild the military, and also through this National Security Strategy.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his time with that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4293

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to ask unanimous consent in a few minutes that the Senate pass my legislation, the No Funding to Honor Crime Scenes Act.

Last month, America was shocked to learn that Cesar Chavez, who was famous for his leadership in the Civil Rights Movement, had a long history of preying on women and children. It is appalling that someone hailed as a hero for the rights of farmworkers was in the meantime molesting the very people he was supposedly advocating for. Perhaps it is even more shocking that his misconduct was actually widely known within his social and business circumstances and that the victims were encouraged to remain silent in order to protect this man’s legacy.

As a father of two daughters, I consider child sexual abuse one of the most heinous crimes you can imagine, which is why I have long been an advocate for victims of human trafficking and sexual assault.

America should not celebrate the legacy of Cesar Chavez, nor use taxpayer dollars to do so. It should also not pay for and maintain the Cesar E. Chavez National Monument, which stands at the very scene of some of his crimes. It must be closed. For this reason, I have introduced legislation to defund any Federal tribute bearing Cesar Chavez’s name and nullify President Obama’s Presidential proclamation that enacted this monument in the first place.

The No Funding to Honor Crime Scenes Act would direct the Secretary

of the Interior to immediately close the monument and sell any and all Federal land that includes Chavez’s home, his grave site, the memorial garden, and any contents of his personal office, which is where we know child sexual abuse occurred.

Not only would it close the monument glorifying this disgraced perpetrator, but it would go one step further to right the wrong by helping victims of abuse. My legislation would direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer any funds set aside for the monument to the Debbie Smith Act, which supports survivors by providing State and Federal law enforcement agencies with resources to complete forensic analyses of crime scenes and untested rape kits.

I have led the reauthorization of the Debbie Smith Act many times with bipartisan backing, and I would hope this legislation would receive that very same support here today.

Taxpayer dollars should never be used to celebrate the abuse of women and children.

I urge the adoption of the legislation.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 4293, which is at the desk; further, that the bill be considered read three times and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the sexual assault, the abuse that Ana Murguia, Debra Rojas, and Dolores Huerta have described is horrific, and it necessarily and profoundly changes Cesar Chavez’s legacy and how he should be remembered. I am extremely grateful to the women who have courageously stepped forward. Many, like Dolores Huerta, feared that speaking up would enable those who had always opposed the workers movement to erase it, along with Cesar Chavez, and I stand here today to ensure that is never the case.

The movement Dolores Huerta and so many others fought for was bigger than any one man, and when we learn shocking or terrible things about our history, the right answer is to tell the truth, never to hide it.

I am concerned that what my colleague from Texas is proposing could do just that—hide the truth about Cesar Chavez and, unfortunately, the incredible farmworkers movement with it.

The legislation that Senator CORNYN is asking us to approve today would not only abolish the Cesar Chavez National Monument, it could erase the foundational history of the farmworkers movement in the process. It would follow through on the threat that silenced the survivors of Chavez’s abuse.

Let me be clear. I agree unequivocally that we should no longer have a

monument named after Cesar Chavez, but we absolutely should not erase the monument’s telling of the story of the farm labor movement. That is a story that belongs to many people, including the survivors of Chavez’s violence.

Abolishing the monument would serve only to sweep his violence under the rug, and it would sweep the stories of Americans involved in the farmworkers movement under the rug with it. This is a movement that wasn’t just founded by a single man; it was a movement because it was propelled by the many. Among those leading it was Dolores Huerta, a native New Mexican and a hero to an entire generation of Hispanic and Latino men and women alike. If we erase this monument, we also erase her work, her legacy, and the countless other leaders in this photo from the monument.

The monument may be named after one man, but we can change that, and we can change that without erasing the history of tens of thousands of American farmworkers across decades, including the history of his victims. That is an effort that is, in fact, already underway—expanding the mission and scope of the monument to encompass more of the histories of the farmworkers themselves. This includes incorporating the stories of Filipino Americans in California whose long history of advocacy and activism for farmworkers’ rights deserves to be remembered and lifted up.

The rich legacy of farmworkers in building and sustaining this country is proof that a national monument dedicated to their story and their movement for fair labor practices should persist.

The question is, What should happen to this monument? What should happen to it next should include input from survivors and from other Americans involved in the farmworkers movement. I do not know, frankly, what they will say, but I do know what I have already heard.

Yesterday, I received a letter from multiple organizations that included the Hispanic Access Fund and the Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation. What those groups made clear is that they do not support abolishing this national monument, saying that it would “erase the nationally significant story of the broader Farmworker Movement, including the many leaders, activists, and workers who fought for dignity and fair wages.”

These groups just want a voice in what happens next, and they point out quite clearly that the legislation being considered now was crafted without having that conversation with all the affected communities.

That is why I will ask to amend my colleague’s proposal to instead temporarily close the monument and require the National Park Service to complete a new special resource study for the monument in consultation with all of those who are part of the farm labor

movement, including the survivors of Chavez's violence.

The study should consider what sites and properties are appropriate to include in a farm labor movement monument. This is what we need to ensure that the monument is focused on honoring and reflecting the full story of the farmworkers movement, not Cesar Chavez.

I would ask unanimous consent that the Senator modify his request to include my amendments at the desk; further, that the bill, as amended, be considered read three times and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection to the modifications?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, so if I understand the Senator correctly, on the same day that two Members of Congress have resigned as a result of sexual misconduct, we are going to not address this travesty that Cesar Chavez has inflicted upon his victims—women and children—out of concern for the farmworkers movement.

Now, I am happy to work with the Senator to try to reflect on that history, but you can't separate the name of Cesar Chavez from this movement because it is his house, and it is his grave site and memorial garden.

Our colleague says: Well, we are going to shut it down and do a study.

Well, that is not good enough. He also will strip out the money that would otherwise go to the Debbie Smith Act, which I have worked on for many years now, honoring Debbie Smith, who championed the testing of rape kits that had been sitting in evidence lockers for many years. This is a very important part of our service to these victims of sexual abuse.

I think it is entirely appropriate that the money that comes from this monument go to help fund future victims of sexual assault.

One of Cesar Chavez's victims was just 13 years old when he sexually assaulted her in his office, which is where this site is located. This is literally a crime scene. He was 45 years old and a world-famous political figure, but she was just a child. He used his home office to rape and molest her repeatedly over the coming years. She contemplated suicide and lived in terror for more than half a century before coming public about it. But thanks to her courage and the courage of many other brave survivors, we now know the truth about Cesar Chavez.

I say this with all due respect to the Senator from New Mexico, but his amendment is an insult to the countless victims of Cesar Chavez's sexual misconduct. Instead of taking action to end taxpayer funding celebrating this predator, for a monument to honor their abuser, his amendment would simply require the government to shut down the monument to public access while the government does a report. In

other words, his amendment would ask my constituents and all Americans to continue paying their hard-earned money to preserve this crime scene celebrating a serial child rapist.

This amendment would also deny justice to, as I said, future sexual assault survivors by stopping the redirection of funds to the Debbie Smith rape kit backlog elimination program.

In other words, his amendment would protect the legacy of Cesar Chavez and does nothing to honor sexual assault survivors. This is the kind of political gamesmanship that makes people hate Washington—pretending to be concerned about an issue but yet doing nothing, absolutely nothing, to address it.

We don't need a report or a further study to delay action. We know that Cesar Chavez's victims—from his victims that he was a sexual predator. I choose to believe those victims, and I hope the Senator from New Mexico does as well.

We should completely defund, permanently close, and divest this monument and use the savings to prevent future serial rapists from escaping justice.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection to the original request?

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think what we agree on is that Cesar Chavez should not be lionized and his name should not be associated with a monument in the United States of America and a unit of the National Park Service.

I also think we should tell that story, not sweep it under the rug, and more importantly, tell the stories of the victims and the stories of the people who made that movement successful in standing up for human dignity. We should engage the survivors. We should engage all the communities that were part of that movement. And we should take this as an opportunity to tell that story fundamental to the American experience.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we can do what the Senator from New Mexico suggests. We can have a discussion about what would be an appropriate way to recognize the contribution of farmworkers in this country without honoring a monster in the process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

#### WILDFIRE PREVENTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to sound the alarm on a crisis that is a freight train speeding toward the Western United States in the form of what could be one of the worst wildfire seasons in modern history.

I was home in Oregon this month where I received a fire briefing from officials in Southern Oregon. What I heard that day was just jaw-dropping. Snowpack is at historic lows at home.

Some parts of the State have less than 10 percent of their normal snowpack. Our beloved Crater Lake received its lowest snowpack in 100 years.

At the time when snowpack should usually be peaking, it is completely gone less than a month into spring. Western States, including Oregon, were already suffering from horrendous drought, and now this year's record low snowfall is going to make it worse.

Simply put, there is no water, and come summertime, Oregon is going to be like a tinderbox waiting to go up in flames. This is a recipe for disaster, but it has been made even worse by Donald Trump's failed leadership when it comes to preparing us to deal with wildfires. Last year, for example, DOGE took a sledgehammer to Federal wildfire programs.

Between funding cuts that bullied Federal employees into taking early retirement and pressure campaigns to leave public service, it was a tough time. Mr. President, 1,400 qualified firefighters left the Forest Service in the first year of the Trump Presidency.

These are known as red card holders. They might work in other areas of the Forest Service as technical support. They might work in administrative roles, but they are trained, qualified firefighters who can be called up in particularly bad years. That is this one.

And to make matters worse, firefighting personnel were caught in the crosshairs of Trump and Vance's immigration agenda of chaos and cruelty. While immigrants put their lives on the line to battle fires, Trump's immigration enforcement officers were actually arresting them and removing them from the fire line. Let me repeat that so there is no confusion: arresting firefighters in the middle of fighting fires—the safety of our communities be damned as long as Donald Trump gets a FOX News segment. These are immigrants who chose to put their lives on the line to defend all of us. And how were they repaid? Donald Trump repaid them by arresting them on the frontlines and throwing them in detention centers while the fires were actually still raging.

Locking up firefighters isn't an immigration agenda that makes us safer. It is so self-sabotaging, it makes your head spin.

The fact is, Donald Trump has actually kneecapped the ability to reduce fire risks altogether. Thinning and prescribed fire are proven, science-backed tools to reduce the risk in the woods. Each year, during the colder months, hazardous fuel treatment is conducted to reduce the build up of fuels in our forests that act as kindling for fires during the summer.

Last year, I asked the Trump administration for an update on how much treatment they had actually done in the woods. The Forest Service Chief confirmed to me in September that the administration's treatment levels were roughly a million acres below previous years.