

American cotton farmers produce the highest quality of cotton in the world. I mean, but they are undercut by all this foreign junk that we are bringing in. So there is a lot of work that goes into cotton production, and one thing about our cotton farmers, they work 365 days a year. They make the best product they possibly can, but, unfortunately, we are held to a standard that a lot of people and a lot of things that go on—whether it is textile mills or people that are involved in the cotton business use the foreign cotton, and we don't use near as much in our country.

So my point here is that Senator CINDY HYDE-SMITH of Mississippi and I, we are introducing a bill called the Buying American Cotton Act. Now, here is the reason we are doing this: We have to save our cotton farmers. If we don't do it in the next few years, it will be over. They will all be gone. And every American in this country, when you buy something with cotton in it, that cotton is going to come from a foreign entity.

We have to do something to help them, and there is a way to do it without costing a lot of money. There is a way to do it in this building. All we have to do is pass the Buying American Cotton Act to incentivize folks to buy American cotton and bolster our American cotton producers instead of arguing about bailouts when our cotton farmers go under and they need help. Of course, we always, as the Federal Government, try to help them out, but you can't help them out enough where they can really survive in a long period of time.

So what we want to do is get away from the subsidy part and give them an opportunity through the Buying American Cotton Act to give tax credits when people buy American cotton. That is all we want to do. When people buy American cotton, they get a tax credit for it.

If you buy Brazilian cotton, you don't get a tax credit. We have to do something to help our farmers—especially these cotton farmers. When farm income improves, everything else improves. The safety-net programs go down, not to mention the additional economic activity that a strong rural economy will contribute to when you get this tax base done with farmers making a profit. Again, they haven't made any profit going on 4 or 5 years.

Instead of spending money—that is the reason we did this bill. Instead of spending money, we wanted to make sure that these farmers don't need a subsidy at the end of the year. If we give tax credits to entities that buy American cotton, we will not have to pay subsidies anymore. This is an end-all solution to helping the cotton farmers across this country.

Cotton is not just for T-shirts and stuff either. Cotton is for medical supplies, you know, military, critical materials that we use across this country. Cotton plays a key part in national security.

A nation that cannot supply its own basic materials is a nation that has surrendered its independence. And so that is why I am up here today. We are getting ready to celebrate our 250th anniversary, and our farmers have been a huge part of that. For 250 years, we grew our own food; we cut our own timber; we caught our own fish. We did everything we possibly could. But what have we done? Corporations have run out the private sector in this country—the small businesses in this country. They moved it to corporations out of this country, and they have put us in harm's way. They have really put us in harm's way.

So the Buying American Cotton Act puts our farmers in a situation where we do not have to, as a government entity, bail them out every year when they are losing money because they won't lose money, because if we buy their cotton in this country—we are the biggest buyers of cotton all over the world, the United States of America, so let's help our cotton farmers.

And one other thing I want to say about this: I have talked about this several times on the floor. It is getting pretty serious, and it is something that, again, we look at it and say: Oh, it is not going to continue to happen.

Just recently, we estimated that China has bought and owned, as of today, 300,000 acres of American farmland. I want you to think about that—300,000 acres that the Chinese own. Who is our biggest adversary? China. And we are allowing them to buy American farmland in this country, and a lot of it is by our military bases. Now, I wonder why that happens? And I don't think we are stupid, but we are crazy if we continue to let this happen.

It is an urgent and national crisis, and we have got to make sure that we keep an eye on this. And we understand there are some States that are going and telling China now that they cannot buy farmland because they run it through different entities. And that is one thing that we need to make sure that at the end of the day, that we keep an eye on this.

But I want to come up here today and let people know, our farmers are in the fourth quarter, OK? And if we don't have a good year this year, we are going to have a serious—serious—problem with our farmers going out of business. And when farmers go out of business, they are big contributors to our country when it comes to tax base, buying things, producing things, and making our country much stronger.

So I plead with people: Please start understanding what is going on here because if we don't put our foot down and we wait too long and our farmers are gone and they have sold their land, we have got a big problem ahead of us.

And, again, I think it is a huge national security threat when you are having to buy everything out of the country. Again, go back to one thing: Did we learn anything from COVID? Evidently, we didn't. And next time we

look up and you are going to have to buy everything coming from another country—especially when it comes from ag—we have got huge problems.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Democratic whip.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to speak to two or three topics. One of them is the current procedural situation in the Senate and, for that matter, the House.

It has been more than 60 days since the White House and congressional Republicans allowed funding to lapse for the Department of Homeland Security and for the government to partially shut down. This has turned out to be the longest government shutdown in American history.

Day after day and week after week, Senate Democrats came to the floor and proposed funding all of the Department of Homeland Security except two specific Agencies—ICE and the CBP agents. Do you remember that, Mr. President?

In one instance, my colleague from Oregon Senator MERKLEY sought unanimous consent to pass legislation to pay all TSA employees. Unfortunately, the Republican majority objected.

In another instance, my colleague from Connecticut Mr. MURPHY sought to pass legislation to pay members of our Coast Guard. Republicans objected to that too.

In all, Republicans blocked bills to fund TSA, FEMA, and the Coast Guard a total of 14 times. Why would they block the funding of these critical Agencies? Because the White House and my Republican colleagues refuse to sit down and talk about the future of ICE and whether the rules that apply to law enforcement all across the United States will apply to ICE.

It is an Agency that we have seen in realtime terrorizing communities like Chicago and Minneapolis across this country with increasingly violent and militarized enforcement operations. You can't miss the ICE agents. They wear masks. The only law enforcement Agency in the United States that I know of—Federal, State, or local—where their officers wear masks. Many of them, historically, didn't even have a name tag to identify who they are. They are a paramilitary force created by President Trump and Stephen Miller to harass people who may be here illegally when it comes to immigration.

All of this occurred when the chaos at our airports grew and essential workers went unpaid. Instead of agreeing to reforms, the White House took Executive action to skirt accountability.

What has happened to ICE? After the killings in Minneapolis and the violence in Chicago and other cities, ICE virtually disappeared. When the director of the Department of Homeland Security was forced to resign, we had a new director come on board—the Senator from Oklahoma. What has happened to him? They have gone radio silent.

The only evidence that the ICE agents are still around and working was when they were dispatched to airports. And for some reason—it may be part of the current charm offensive for ICE—they were told they don't have to wear a mask if they are in an airport. This makes no sense at all if you buy their explanation that the ICE agents are so vulnerable.

What happened when they were in the airport? It is reported that they arrested and detained over 800 people.

Remember what ICE was supposed to do? It was supposed to make us safe—safe in our homes and neighborhoods, safe across the United States. The President said over and over again: ICE is going to go after the worst of the worst. Rapists, murderers, terrorists, the criminally insane—we are going to go find them.

So what has happened in the months that ICE has been on this crusade? One out of seven people that they have detained or removed from the United States actually had a serious criminal record. It made no difference; the Stephen Miller plan is to put fear in the hearts of all the immigrants to the United States, and that is what they set out to do. It is not a question of safety in the neighborhoods; it is a question of whether or not we are going to tolerate immigration in America.

I think there ought to be some basics in a bipartisan agreement when it comes to immigration. Let me tell you what I think those basics are. We should never knowingly allow a dangerous person to come into this country. Second, if there is a person in this country that is seeking legal status and they do something serious, like commission of a crime or they are dangerous, they are gone—gone. Third, we cannot absorb at any one time all the people in the world who want to come to the United States. We need to have an orderly system. I think those three elements are the starting point of a bipartisan conversation.

When it comes to the future of immigration, I was involved several years ago with the Gang of 8—four Democratic Senators, four Republican Senators—among them, John McCain and CHUCK SCHUMER. We sat down for months and wrote up a bill: comprehensive immigration reform. It was supported by business and labor and

the agriculture groups, and by and large, it was bipartisan from start to finish. More money was put into border security than ever in the history of the United States.

That bill passed the U.S. Senate with a bipartisan vote. That should have been the beginning of a conversation that leads us away from where we are today, but what happened? It was sent to the Republican-controlled House of Representatives and, for a variety of political reasons, went nowhere.

It is time for us to return and visit that issue again for a comprehensive immigration reform plan. We have to tell Stephen Miller to cool it.

As far as I am concerned, to turn ICE loose on more and more communities is just to make people fearful and not solve the problem we face. We have to work together to solve it with a comprehensive plan, and we should be started on that immediately.

IRAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I will also tell you that when it comes to the future involvement of the United States, we have a serious question in the Middle East. I cannot tell you what the objective of the President is when it comes to the war in Iran. If you take a look at what happened today—we had a rollcall vote on my colleague Senator DUCKWORTH's motion that would have given Congress the authority to declare war, as the Constitution states in article I, section 8. It was defeated on a partisan vote once again. We have tried this two or three other times.

This is an effort to make sure that we have a conversation about the war in Iran. Do you know how many public hearings we have had in Congress about the invasion of Iran? None. Not one. We are virtually in a war that has gone on now for 70 days or so, and we have not debated it.

What is the purpose of our invasion of Iran? The President has given six, seven, eight different explanations, depending on the time of day. One day, it is to close the Strait of Hormuz; the next day, it is to open the Strait of Hormuz. One day, it is to get regime change in Iran; the next day, it is to reject the regime that is governing in Iran. The next day, we are going to eliminate missiles. And it goes on and on. You can't keep up with it.

The problem, of course, is that there is an impact on families all across the world but especially in the United States when it comes to the cost of living. When you ask American families "How are you doing?" they say "Not so well, thank you."

When we take a look at the cost of raising a family these days, we see the cost of groceries hitting an alltime high; we see our utility bills going up—in Illinois, they have gone up 15 percent this year over last year; we see the cost of gasoline going through the roof. It is over \$4 a gallon in Illinois and in some parts of Chicago, over \$5 a

gallon. That is a real hardship on working families.

Why are we in this mess with gasoline? Because of the invasion of Iran and the disruption of the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz into Europe and beyond. That is the reality of the President's invasion.

Did anyone in the White House or the Department of Defense sit down and measure the impact of what it would mean if we invaded Iran on the global economy? This morning, I heard on the radio someone predicting the possibility of a global recession.

Was that part of your calculation, Mr. President?

We don't know because we can't understand what the President's motives are on a day-to-day basis when it comes to the future of Iran.

Do we want Iran to have a nuclear weapon? Of course not. What have we done about it? Under the Obama administration, we negotiated international inspectors to go into Iran to see whether or not they were developing a nuclear bomb. I met with some of those inspectors on a regular basis. They were getting doors opened and questions asked and answered, photos being taken, and a reporting at the time.

What happened with President Trump in his first term? He eliminated the agreement that created the inspectors. Then what did he replace it with? Nothing. Nothing until he invaded Iran 2 months ago.

We need international inspectors in place to make sure that Iran does not develop a nuclear weapon, and we certainly are not moving in that direction with the President Trump invasion.

So we have the situation in which the President's chaos and cost-of-living increases and confusion have really created problems for families across the United States. It is time for us to remember that our goal is to make it better for those who are raising children and trying to feed a family. This war in Iran is not the answer to that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

IRAN

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, we are now 46 days into President Trump's war on Iran and Lebanon. This war is wrong. This war is hurting the United States, our citizens, and our security. This war is destabilizing the Middle East and spreading to Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Jordan, and, of course, not to mention Lebanon.

This war has imperiled our economy, imposing unsustainable burdens on the American family. The average American family will pay \$2,000 more for gas each year if prices stay this high. The average Vermont household will pay another thousand dollars to heat their home this year. Farms across rural