

Reed	Shaheen	Warren
Rosen	Slotkin	Welch
Sanders	Smith	Whitehouse
Schatz	Van Hollen	Wyden
Schiff	Warner	
Schumer	Warnock	

NOT VOTING—3

Moran	Murray	Tuberville
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE RESOLUTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the executive resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

An executive resolution (S. Res. 690) authorizing the en bloc consideration in Executive Session of certain nominations on the Executive Calendar.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
H.R. 4371

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to seek unanimous consent that the Senate pass H.R. 4371, the House companion to my Kayla Hamilton Act, which passed the House with bipartisan support.

This bill is named in honor of Kayla Hamilton, a young woman who was viciously murdered by an MS-13 gang member. This criminal entered the United States as an unaccompanied minor and was released into the custody of an unvetted sponsor.

Kayla's death is a tragedy. I had the honor of meeting her mother Tammy Nobles—one of the Angel Moms who came and testified at a hearing I held last summer.

Kayla's murder highlights how irresponsible the Biden administration was in handling unaccompanied minors entering the United States during President Biden's 4 years in office. By some accounts, there were as many as a half a million unaccompanied minors who came into the United States during the Biden administration's open border policy and then were placed with sponsors, many of whom were unvetted. Many of these so-called unaccompanied children were 17-year-old boys—almost fully grown men.

Unfortunately, many of the children—the more vulnerable children—

were released to unvetted sponsors, and that should be illegal. If we are going to care about our children who are the most vulnerable among us, which is really how a society is judged—how we treat the most vulnerable people in our society—then releasing children to unvetted sponsors should be a crime. While Health and Human Services has reformed its policies under President Trump, the careless and, I would say, reckless way that unaccompanied minors were handled by the Biden administration was shameful.

My bill requires HHS, Health and Human Services, to obtain information about potential sponsors and any person who lives in the sponsor's household before a child is placed with them.

It was common practice for the Biden administration to so call vet the named sponsor but yet not everybody else living in that household who could be a sexual predator or could have another criminal record or could be a threat—an immediate and real threat—to that child.

But this bill requires HHS to obtain information about potential sponsors and any person—all persons—who live in that sponsor's household before a child is placed with them, and it bars criminal alien sponsors from being allowed to assume custody of these children.

This bill also requires Health and Human Services to conduct mandatory checks on all unaccompanied children, including considering whether an unaccompanied child poses a danger to themselves or the community—contacting the consulate or embassy or their home country and vetting them for ties to criminal organizations. As I said, some of these children were very vulnerable, but others were almost grown men in many instances. And without proper vetting of these unaccompanied children—a child, of course, is anybody under the age of 18—that, in and of itself, is a danger that should stop.

It is only common sense that we should not place our children in the custody of criminals, and we should also vet the unaccompanied minors themselves, including for ties to gangs and existing criminal histories.

I urge the adoption of this legislation.

Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4371, which was received from the House; and, further, I ask that the bill be considered read a third time 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 Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. I think Senator CORNYN and I share a goal—actually, multiple goals—one is to adequately protect children who are crossing the border by themselves to make sure

that they are in adequate, humane, and appropriate placements; but also to vet individuals, including young unaccompanied minors who are crossing the border to make sure that they are not a danger to themselves or to others.

I am going to object to this bill today. It is a pretty comprehensive rewrite of a lot of the laws relative to the detention of minors. And while I think we can probably come to some common ground here, as I read this bill in preparation for the Senator's unanimous consent request, it looks as if it has a number of measures that would actually be seriously detrimental to vulnerable kids, kids who pose no threat to themselves or to others.

Let me just give you one example, and it is a pretty significant problem with this bill that maybe we could clear up. This bill does not allow for unaccompanied minors to be immediately reunited with their biological parent if their parent is a TPS holder, if their parent is applying for asylum, if their parent is a refugee, if their parent is here on a student visa. And so there are going to be a whole bunch of kids who are not going to be reunited with their parent—which I think we have always agreed is the proper course, if possible—because of some of the underlying provisions in this bill. So I just think that this has to go through another round of edits and work before it is ready to come to the floor.

I will also note that this administration sold us on their new immigration policy based on the fact that they were going to be going after "the worst of the worst." They are going to be going after immigrants who pose a danger to the community. I think that is what Senator CORNYN's goal is here, to make sure that we aren't bringing into the country young people that might present a danger to others.

But, of course, the facts do not back up the administration's claim. What we have learned after a year and a half is that this administration is not going after "the worst of the worst." Eighty-five percent of the people they are detaining have no criminal history at all; 95 percent of the people they are detaining have no history of violence at all. They are roaming American streets just looking for anybody with an accent.

So I am all for an immigration policy that tries to target the very, very small number of people entering this country who may pose a danger to Americans. The reality still is that immigrants commit crimes at rates lower than natural-born citizens.

But we are in league on the underlying goal. I just think this bill doesn't get there; and, in fact, this bill may do a lot of harm to kids who pose absolutely no threat to themselves or to others. And for that reason, I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as I listen to our colleague, he basically says: The perfect is the enemy of the good.

So the good thing about this legislation is it would protect a lot of innocent, vulnerable children, something the Biden administration turned a blind eye to during 4 years of its open border policies.

There is untold misery and hardship for these children who came here to the United States because the Biden administration said: If you come by yourself, we are going to turn you loose and let you into the country. So desperate parents sent their children from far-away places to come to the United States, only to be placed with individuals who were not properly vetted and certainly households that could have involved sexual offenders and other predators—and crimes. We don't know how many of them were recruited into gangs, trafficked for sex or involuntary labor. This is a catastrophe that I think we have only begun to understand.

Now, thank goodness, Tom Homan and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement have rescued many of these children, but nowhere near the number that have been released into the country by the Biden administration.

I don't know how much longer we can continue to turn a blind eye to the harm being caused to these children under the pretense of open borders and generous immigration policies. It is hardly generous to condemn a child to a life of sex trafficking or to be an object of harm from a person who wants to take advantage of them for labor or sexual favors or you name it.

So I think it is beyond disappointing that we have an objection to this, and I find the excuses given by our colleague from Connecticut to be just insufficient.

By not vetting the sponsors who received these unaccompanied children, the Biden administration encouraged and incentivized the irresponsible treatment of these kids. We don't know if they went to school. We don't know if they got the healthcare that they need in order to stay healthy. We don't know. And the Biden administration took the outrageous position that it is not their responsibility. Once the kids came to the United States and were placed with the sponsor, the Biden administration went: Our job is done.

And now it is up to the child protective services in the various States to look after these kids. Well, we know child protective services in the States are generally overwhelmed anyway. And to say that we have to wait for a child to be killed, raped, murdered, denied access to basic healthcare and education services before we can help them out is outrageous.

The only way to prevent this from happening in the future is to enforce our laws and to know who the adults are who are claiming these children and make sure they aren't a threat to their health, safety, and welfare.

Our children should not have to continue to pay the price for adults who break the law. And releasing minors into the custody of criminals is certainly not the answer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. SHEEHY. Mr. President, we saw last weekend a terrible event and, yet again, a product which is of a self-governing society, which is sometimes—we get mad at each other, and sometimes that anger expresses itself at our elected leaders in tragic ways—in a third assassination attempt against our President at a venue that we also saw President Reagan, over 40 years ago, also was attacked at this venue. Unfortunately, that attempt was almost successful. Thank God it wasn't.

Presidents of both parties have been subject to violence throughout the course of our Republic, and that is part of what comes with being a self-governing nation—is that things can get messy. And, unfortunately, that is a reality of democracy and of living in a Republic.

But we don't have to make it easy, and we should be able to host—as the most powerful Nation in the history of the world, we should be able to have events in our Nation's Capital anchored by our President of either party, of Cabinet Members. We should be able to host heads of state without the expectation that gunfire will erupt at our places of gathering, that our Nation can host other nations here without them having to worry about being gunned down at an event that is hosting the President of the United States.

Our State Department issues travel advisories for other countries for exactly these reasons, and yet it happens right here in Washington, DC.

So it is incumbent upon us to make sure we can protect not just our own people, but also members of our government who are protecting and leading the greatest Nation in the history of the world.

The President has the statutory authority to make modifications, to make additions to Federal facilities, particularly the White House. And the ballroom project has long been considered by Presidents of both parties throughout the years. And the White House has been modified by Democrat and Republican Presidents alike, to make sure that our residence for the head of state can be safe, can be efficient, and can be a place of honor to host foreign heads of state, as well as our very own citizens.

Unfortunately, recently the district court decided in a partisan ruling that the President did not have the authority to do this. This is incorrect. The President does have the authority.

And the events of last weekend reminded us why both parties need to be able to have a head of state, an elected

President of the United States, that can host events in a safe, secure location; that can host an appropriate number of people and not have to worry about violence erupting.

The ballroom project, as proposed by President Trump, would create a safe and secure location entirely funded by private donations. No taxpayer dollars are being spent. At a time when we are worried about our national debt, our ballooning debt, and we are trying to explain to Americans how we are going to make their lives more affordable, we should not be spending their money on a project like this, and we are not. This is private donations.

And, today, I am proposing the unanimous consent of a bill that would enshrine the already existing right of this White House—of any administration, of any President of either party—to make modifications to the Presidential residence. And in this case, modifications that are for the express purpose of a safe, secure venue, paid for by private donations, not taxpayer dollars.

And this legislation specifically includes language to ensure no donor can receive favorable treatment from any administration or any legislative body in exchange for these.

These are donations from companies who have benefitted from the greatest economy in the history of mankind. These are companies who recognize they are lucky to be American companies doing business in our Nation, and they are giving back to this great Nation by helping ensure our head of state can host functions in a safe, secure, and world-class venue.

I ask for support for this bill. I ask for support for the American President to be able to host world-class events because we all deserve to be safe and secure, and this facility never has been so needed than the events last weekend illustrated, but now is the time to do this. I hope this passes. I hope my colleagues allow this to pass so we can green-light this project to move forward.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of my bill, which is at the desk; I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid be upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

As the Washington Post has pointed out, this is an all-consuming, favorite project of the President. It is a massive, giant ballroom to be built on the ruins of the East Wing, the "People's House."

I certainly agree that security for the President is absolutely essential, but this project was not conceived as a security project. It was conceived as a massive ballroom so large that it turns the White House into an auxiliary