

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

dwelling unit. It is like the big mansion is the ballroom, and you have this little, tiny house one-fourth the size that is the White House. That is this gilded project the President was undertaking to put his Louis XIV “I am a monarch” stamp on the President’s grounds. But we took an oath to a Constitution that doesn’t have a monarch, and it doesn’t have a King, and Trump is not Louis XIV, so I have a number of concerns about this.

First, my colleague mentioned that it is going to be paid for by private donations; however, a number of his colleagues have been advocating fiercely that it be paid for out of our Treasury.

Certainly \$400 million buys a lot of support for education and housing and healthcare—24,000 kids going to Head Start, 52,000 children being able to benefit from childcare, and the list goes on.

The argument has been made that this would be a great place for State dinners, but we already have a great place for State dinners. We have the State Dining Room at the White House that seats 140. We have the East Room that seats 200. And State dinners are intimate affairs—appropriately so—a conversation between leaders of our House and Senate and the executive branch, along with the leaders visiting from overseas—not a massive “Let’s turn out 1,000 people or more” because of the size of this. Recognize that this is a 3.6 million-cubic-foot ballroom—about four times the volume of the White House. So State dinners certainly aren’t a justification for this.

When it comes to security—well, the judge that took a look at the legality issues found that there wasn’t authority for the President—in fact, this very bill being proposed by my well-intentioned colleague from Montana creates the legal authority that is lacking, and that is why it is being proposed—to be able to create that framework that makes it possible to overrule the court’s ruling. But that judge did find that the security work being done below level could proceed because that part was related to the President’s security.

This project is also about, in the President’s mind, holding inaugurations. I am going to tell you that is probably one of the worst ideas President Trump has ever come up with—hide away the inauguration in a ballroom as opposed to doing it on The Mall.

I know that President Trump is very sensitive about the fact that a whole lot more people attended Obama’s inauguration than his inauguration, so maybe he wants to see those moved inside to avoid any future embarrassment as he ponders whether he is running for a third term, which is not allowed under our Constitution. But what this type of ballroom does do—it is a massive fundraising scheme—a massive fundraising scheme. You can seat 1,000 people at once, all those people who make those massive donations

and all of their friends, all those people who donate to campaigns. Oh, let’s invite them to come be at this massive ballroom. But that is not a great idea.

Philip Kennicott put it this way:

Trump has previously been unable to convince the American public that the White House needs an ornate entertainment venue that would dwarf the historic mansion. Now he seeks to convince them he can’t be safe without it. This suggests he plans to leave behind not just a radically transformed White House complex but a different conception of the presidency.

And what is that conception? That conception is the President has the powers of an authoritarian ruler—of a King. They have a fancy name for it; it is called a unitary executive. And the President has proceeded to utilize 10 different strategies to undermine the checks and balances of our Constitution.

But building this Louis XIV, gilded ballroom for fundraising and to symbolize that the President is a King—hell no.

Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Ohio.

AMENDING RULE XXXVII OF THE STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE TO PROHIBIT SENATORS FROM TRADING ON PREDICTION MARKETS

Mr. MORENO. Mr. President, as you know as somebody who led an incredibly distinguished business career, integrity and confidence are the key building blocks in any institution.

We take a solemn oath here to our Constitution and to represent our constituents free of any conflicts of interest whatsoever. When we come here on the Senate floor, our constituents have to know that our only guiding light is what is best for our States, what is best for the people of our States, and what is best for the United States of America.

Engaging in any way in a prediction market or trying to place bets where we might have insider information deteriorates the confidence our constituents have in us. So it is extremely important that the public know that from this day forward, there is no chance that any Member of Congress—Member of the Senate in this case, in this resolution I am going to propose—will be involved in any prediction market whatsoever. I am presenting a resolution that makes that crystal clear.

By changing the standing rules of the Senate, what we are doing is allowing our constituents to know once and for all that no Member of the U.S. Senate, no Member of the staff of the U.S. Senate can ever use that inside information as a way to monetize this job whatsoever.

So I am very proud that we have unanimous support, hopefully, from every single Member of the Senate to do that.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of S. Res. 708, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 708) amending rule XXXVII of the Standing Rules of the Senate to prohibit Senators from trading on prediction markets.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MORENO. I ask unanimous consent that the Padilla amendment at the desk be agreed to; that the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

I point out that the amendment goes broader for us as Members of the Senate. It is not intended to change the definitions of any of the types of contracts that we are talking about. This is about making certain that we have the integrity we need to show our constituents.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 5442) was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

On page 2, line 1, strike “No Member” and insert “No Member, officer, or employee”.

On page 2, line 2, insert “swap,” after “contract.”

On page 2, line 3, insert “of an excluded commodity, as defined in section 1a of the Commodity Exchange Act (7 U.S.C. 1a),” after “delivery”.

On page 2, line 5, insert “or contingency. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to apply to insurance for which the insured holds a lawful insurable interest” after “event”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

It is the sense of the Senate that the House of Representatives, executive branch, and judicial branch should establish restrictions similar to those under section 1 relating to participation in prediction markets.

The resolution (S. Res. 708), as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, is as follows:

S. RES. 708

Resolved,

SECTION 1. PROHIBITION ON PREDICTION MARKET TRADING BY SENATORS.

Rule XXXVII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph 15 as paragraph 16; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph 14 the following:

“15. No Member, officer, or employee of the Senate may enter into, or offer to enter into, an agreement, contract, swap, or transaction that provides for any purchase, sale, payment, or delivery of an excluded commodity, as defined in section 1a of the Commodity Exchange Act (7 U.S.C. 1a), that is dependent on the occurrence, nonoccurrence, or the extent of the occurrence of a specific event or contingency. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to apply to insurance for which the insured holds a lawful insurable interest.”