

I am not going to go into the suggestion of Mr. Pulte to head our intelligence Agencies. I will simply just say: totally unqualified.

The current administration has repeatedly targeted political opponents. We have seen it all across the board, including former Fed Chair Jerome Powell, former FBI Director James Comey, and New York attorney general Letitia James. It has attacked independent institutions like the Privacy and Civil Liberties Board. I know that because I had a hand in creating it. We said if there is going to be all of this surveillance going after enemies of the United States, let us make sure there is a Board of five people who will be watching these activities and reporting the excesses to Congress if changes need to be made.

What did the Trump administration do to the five-member Privacy and Civil Liberties Board I just described? They removed the three Democrats on the Board so it couldn't function.

The courts have a responsibility here as well. They fired career law enforcement officials and public servants at the FBI and the Department of Justice. They have cleaned shop. These people would have been responsible that a program like 702 be lawful and non-partisan. They are gone, removed by this administration—so the watchdogs that we built into the system to make sure that no President, no administration, goes too far in the exercise of their responsibilities and duties.

Yes, we want a safe America, but, yes, we want it to be a lawful country too. We want it to abide by the Constitution, and those of us who swore an oath to uphold and defend it have the first responsibility.

In the hands of a government that has treated the Constitution as an afterthought, Congress should not place blind trust in the hands of an administration which clearly can use this surveillance power for political purposes.

It is not hard to imagine what this President and his handpicked FBI Director Kash Patel could do with unchecked surveillance powers.

Are my fears of Mr. Patel warranted? Read his words, his own book that he wrote about his view of government. And just for convenience, he provides not an index but a list of his political enemies—his political enemies. Now, this man is the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and has the power of the surveillance, which I have described to you. Trust him? It is not hard to imagine why this President chose him for political reasons.

What happens when the administration uses section 702 to spy on Americans, perhaps those who protested the murder of two innocent people in Minneapolis during the ICE raids? They used to spy on Black Lives Matters protestors. Is it hard to imagine that they would extend that to those who question the masked ICE agents' activity?

What happens if journalists have their texts and phone calls snooped on because they dare to report controversial news about this administration's misconduct?

Any Member of Congress who wants to ensure there are checks on this out-of-control administration should not vote to reauthorize the authority of 702 without meaningful guardrails. I want 702 to continue to be strong, to be legal, to be constitutional. We can make it such.

SAFE ACT

Mr. President, fortunately, Congress does not need to choose between protecting national security and preserving Americans' constitutional rights. We can do both. As Senator WYDEN said, we can have liberty and security.

That is why I went along with my Republican colleague from Utah Senator MIKE LEE. We have introduced a bill called the SAFE Act, which would reauthorize section 702 with basic, practical safeguards to protect privacy and civil liberties.

Specifically, our bill would require the government to obtain a judicial warrant before accessing the contents of Americans' texts, emails, phone calls, and other private communications, with notable exceptions for emergencies and special circumstances.

That is exactly what we believe the Constitution requires of us because the Founders, rightly, understood that no administration should be given a blank check to invade a citizen's privacy without the oversight of an independent judge, without the protection of the Fourth Amendment.

Some argue there is simply not enough time to enact significant reforms before section 702 expires. They are wrong. This is a perennial claim every time this debate rolls around. I have heard it over and over: Gosh, it is a shame we can't correct the mess of 702, but we have got to move on for other important business.

Even if the authority temporarily lapses, which I don't believe it will, the surveilling program can continue under existing law, as it has in the past.

The time to finally protect Americans from warrantless surveilling under section 702 is now, not later—not next time, now with this Congress and this Constitution.

We have heard false promises too many times before. And with power in the hands of this President, we just can't afford to wait any longer. If Congress cannot protect Americans' constitutional rights under these circumstances, when will it do it?

I oppose the reauthorization of warrantless surveillance powers under FISA section 702 without guardrails to better protect the privacy of Americans. I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I cannot be the only Member of this body to notice that several words and phrases are used a lot less on the Senate floor these days. Among those words and phrases are "open borders," "illegal crossings," "catch-and-release," and "migration surges."

You see, these terms have been dropped from our debates and are no longer in the news because President Trump and Republicans in Congress helped largely close the border—close the border to illegal immigrants.

With support from this President and this Republican Congress, our law enforcement personnel ceased catch-and-release and stopped the record migration surges.

This—this—is what the American people elected us to do: to end the chaos at the southern border and block the flow of illegal immigrants into our communities. And we did these things so effectively, it has almost gone unnoticed.

Of course, there were some Members who denied there was a crisis in the first place. There were all sorts of commentators who decided to look the other way. The numbers from one administration to the next tell a different story, though. Let's revisit those numbers.

From 2021 to 2024, over 10 million illegal immigrants crossed the southern border, and this was by design. You see, President Joe Biden paused deportations. He laxed requirements for asylum seekers. He ended construction of a border wall. If you go down there today, you see remnants of it. He suspended "Remain in Mexico."

The previous administration created an influx of illegal immigrants and, in the process, endangered public safety and taxed resources in communities along and far from the border.

These policies also undermined Americans' faith in legal immigration. They undermined faith in legal immigration. Yes, my constituents understand we are a nation of immigrants, but our faith was shaken because the previous administration prioritized lawbreakers over those who wished to come to America legally and embrace our values.

As soon as he was inaugurated, President Trump increased the number of troops along the southern border. He began deporting illegal immigrants, and he reinstated "Remain in Mexico."

And Republicans in Congress, we did our part too. In the Big Beautiful Bill passed by this Congress and signed into law by President Trump a year ago, we increased resources to secure the border and to combat drug smuggling and human trafficking across the Nation.

The bill contained funding for additional Border Patrol agents. As a result, the screening and vetting of illegal immigrants increased markedly. And we increased funding for the Department of Justice, and that enabled the hiring of additional immigration

judges to clear out the backlog of asylum cases.

Now, today, the results speak for themselves. These numbers are compelling. They are breathtaking. In November 2024, there were 106,333 reported border encounters. In January 2025, the number dropped to 61,465. Think about that. From November 2024 to January 2025, the number dropped from over 106,000 to 61,000. It was down to 8,000—8,326 to be exact—by the next month.

And a year later, in April 2026, apprehensions on the southern border were 94 percent lower than the monthly average during the Biden administration presidency. Imagine that: 94 percent lower.

What about the seizure of drugs? The seizure of drugs—cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, fentanyl, and marijuana—has increased, by weight, 60 percent—60 percent—since just April of 2024. And we just marked an entire year of zero releases at the southern border.

Now, a nation that does not control its borders—that cannot enforce its laws—is a nation that willingly surrenders its sovereignty or, as Ronald Reagan once put it:

A nation that cannot control its borders is not truly a nation.

Abandoning our right to determine who participates in that process—indiscriminately allowing all comers to enter our country—it endangers our citizens, it burdens our taxpayers, and it makes a mockery of the rule of law.

It is also dangerous to the immigrants themselves, many of whom perish on their way to our southern border. Americans realized this, even if some of their leaders did not. And this is why President Trump and congressional Republicans acted with a bias for action so that we might end the border crisis.

And how can you tell? The relative silence in the mainstream media and on this floor from many of our Democratic colleagues tells you all you need to know.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

C-SPAN2

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today we mark 40 years since C-SPAN began its coverage of the U.S. Senate, bringing the work of this body directly into people's living rooms. It doesn't seem very radical right now. We are all used to it. But back then, it was revolutionary.

C-SPAN's commitment to providing a crucial connection between the U.S. Senate and the people we serve has remained strong ever since that day 40 years ago. That commitment can be seen in the incredible volume of coverage since June 2, 1986, when C-SPAN2 was born. And the presiding officer on that late spring day? Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY.

Altogether, C-SPAN2 has recorded more than 43,000 hours of Senate sessions, capturing more than 169,000 Sen-

ate floor speeches—169,000. These recordings have preserved the voices of 359 different Senators, including 185 Republicans and 167 Democrats and 7 Independents.

These hours include memorable moments like that of Senator Bob Dole on that first day of televised coverage, saying, "No longer will the great debates in this Chamber be lost forever"; of then-Senator Tom Harkin, author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, closing his farewell speech in American sign language; or of the Dalai Lama serving as the Senate guest Chaplain in 2014. All of those moments would have been lost to history, but they were captured by C-SPAN.

As we celebrate these last four decades of coverage in the Senate, think back to 1986. Prince, whom we sadly lost 10 years ago, had recently released his eighth album, "Parade"; the film "Top Gun" was released; and, yes, the Bemidji State Beavers of Bemidji, MN, won the Division III men's ice hockey national championship. But back then, Senators were hesitant to embrace C-SPAN2—the lighting wasn't great in those first few years—but they eventually came around to see this great asset to our democracy for what it is: a way to shine the light on the work in the Senate and a way for Americans, whether they agree with us or not, to stay up to date on what is happening.

When there are big votes or big debates going on, people tune in or they see the clips and the coverage later. It is not just the people who are able to come to Washington—as exciting as that is—to sit in the Chamber, as some people are doing today, but what this does is extend it to everyone.

Last year, on its 39th birthday, Senator GRASSLEY and I passed a resolution celebrating all that C-SPAN2 had accomplished. In our resolution, we urged all television providers, including streamers, to carry C-SPAN because we need to make sure that access to C-SPAN keeps up with changing technologies so that every household in America can see their elected Representatives—the work they do, the positions they take, the votes they make. Since our resolution passed, YouTube TV and Hulu have begun carrying C-SPAN on their platforms. Now we need to extend that beyond.

C-SPAN's live coverage across multiple platforms continues to keep the American people informed and keep them engaged with their democracy.

Thank you again to Senator GRASSLEY for working with me to highlight C-SPAN's critical role, and thanks to him for presiding over the Senate on that first day of coverage 40 years ago. I am sure he doesn't look one bit different today. And thanks to everyone who has had a hand in C-SPAN's continuing, important role in our democracy over the last 40 years.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from Louisiana.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, we both know that there are people in Washington who like to muddy the water to make it look deep. They don't want the American people to know the truth because, for these people to which I am referring, truth is a concept that does not interest them. Politics does.

Now, there has been a lot of controversy in and around the U.S. Senate for the last 2 weeks. If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that the Senate has been functioning like a broken arm with the bone sticking out. That is not anybody's fault, in my judgment, on my side of the aisle. It is certainly not the majority leader's fault.

So I want to try to refocus us on the issue. I don't really want to talk about the ballroom or the Anti-Weaponization Fund or any of the myriad of issues that my Democratic friends tried to inject into our discussion.

I want to talk about the issue, and the issue is this: Are we going to fund the Department of Homeland Security, or are we not?

Part of DHS, as we call it, as you know, Mr. President, is funded. But a very important part is not: the Border Patrol and ICE. We are paying them as best we can out of another pool of funds that is about to run out of money. Why are they not funded? Because my Democratic colleagues have refused.

At one point my Democratic friends agreed to fund Border Patrol and ICE. And then they changed their minds, and they said: No, we are not going to do it, which forced Republicans, if we want to see that portion of DHS funded, to proceed under what we call reconciliation where we don't need Democratic votes. I regret that that is the case, but we are doing what we have to do.

Why are we having this controversy? I don't get it completely. I don't. Unless you are industrial-strength stupid, you know that illegal immigration is illegal. And that is what our Border Patrol agents and ICE agents do—they enforce the law. And we have a problem with respect to immigration.

During the Biden administration, with the encouragement of some—not all, but with the encouragement of some but not all Democrats, open the borders. They said: Come on in. And about 8 to 12 million—some say 20 million—people did.

Some of them were good people and are good people. They are still breaking the law. Some of them who are here are not. They are rapists and they are murderers and they are sex traffickers and they are drug dealers and they are pedophiles.

We don't know which is which. We don't know where they are. And it falls to the responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security, in part through Border Patrol and ICE, to find out.