

coming out of the White House. But there are others sitting on the other side of the aisle, the Republican side, who I know feel differently who would be willing to sit down and work.

Is it possible for a partisan U.S. Senate to write a comprehensive immigration bill that both sides agree on? The answer is clearly yes. There were eight of us, four Democrats and four Republicans. I was on the Democratic side with SCHUMER and a couple other Senators, and the Republican side was led by John McCain. We put together a comprehensive immigration bill and brought it to the floor, Democrats and Republicans, and passed it with over 60 votes.

It can be done, but you have to have people who are willing to sit down and say: Let's be honest about it. Keep the bad guys out, but give those DACA kids, for example, a chance to be part of America's future.

That is what I think is the middle ground most Americans would agree on. It is still something I think we should aspire to.

I don't know where we are going next on this immigration matter, but I worry about what is going to happen to a lot of people that I represent in Chicago. They are so frightened in the Hispanic communities in Chicago that they have stopped going to church, and some won't send their kids to school. They are just afraid of what is going to happen—somebody is going to be arrested, somebody will be deported or, like Marimar Martinez, God forbid, be shot on the street because they look too Hispanic.

That is the reality of where we are today. We are a better nation than that. We can do a better job than that. We can't leave the debate where it is: Who is in favor of law enforcement and who isn't?

I am in favor of law enforcement. I certainly was in favor on January 6 when the insurrectionists mobbed this Capitol and ran us out that door of the Senate because they were coming into this Chamber, rifling through our desks, aping for cameras. That was the reality. They attacked the law enforcement in this building that protected all of you, still protects you to this minute, and protects me and everyone else who works here—the Capitol Hill police. A hundred and forty of them were victimized by those insurrectionists.

Some people are trying to rewrite history and say this didn't happen. They have a problem. It is called videotape. Videotape tells the story, and we all saw it.

So let's respect law enforcement for the job they are doing. Let's not give them impossible tasks. Let's not ask them to wear masks, for goodness' sake, so people don't know who they are. America is better than that.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, President Trump announced that

he intends to nominate his former personal attorney Todd Blanche to serve as the next Attorney General of the United States.

When Blanche was under consideration to be Deputy Attorney General, the No. 2 position at the Justice Department, I reminded him of the importance of DOJ maintaining its independence from the President and the pull of politics.

Regrettably, over the past year, he has disregarded that call and erased that line, placing loyalty to President Trump above all else and damaging the independence and credibility of the Department in ways that will have ramifications for decades.

It appears that blind loyalty has paid off for Blanche, which is exactly how President Trump incentivizes his appointees to compromise their integrity.

How did Blanche earn the nod? I will tell you.

During his brief audition as Acting Attorney General, Blanche took the weaponization of the Department to new extremes.

He presided over the creation of a \$1.8 billion slush fund that would funnel money to allies of the President, including January 6 insurrectionists who beat up cops, in a purported legal settlement between the President and the government he runs.

It gets worse.

As part of that settlement, the IRS is permanently barred from auditing past tax returns of President Trump, his family, and related companies.

Let me state this another way: The President of the United States sued the government he runs in order to get cooperating Federal agents to give away taxpayer dollars to the President's political allies and permanently shield the President, his family, and his companies from accountability for any past tax crimes.

And Blanche acted exactly how President Trump expected him to: He advanced Trump's personal interests at the expense of the American people.

While deploying the Justice Department as a shield for the President and his cronies, Blanche has also used our top law enforcement agency as a sword against Trump's political opponents.

He brought a paper-thin indictment against the Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights organization that has a long history of exposing violent White supremacist extremists who are allies of this White House.

And he brought DOJ's second baseless, vindictive indictment against former FBI Director James Comey. This prosecution was personally ordered up by the President, who despises Comey for overseeing the investigation of Russia's interference in the 2016 election.

Blanche's misconduct as Acting Attorney General is just the most recent link in a chain of controversies that has surrounded Blanche during his tenure at DOJ—controversies that demand transparency and answers.

Last week, appearing before the House Oversight Committee, former Attorney General Pam Bondi told lawmakers, "[Todd Blanche] was in charge of the process and the entire release of the Epstein files."

Setting aside Bondi's failures in leadership on this issue, Blanche's direct role in the Department's failure to follow the law and protect the victims and survivors of Epstein's abuse is disqualifying.

These failures follow the inexplicable transfer of Ghislane Maxwell, Epstein's coconspirator, to a minimum-security prison after Blanche personally conducted an inappropriate and ineffectual 2-day interview with her.

Such a move is unprecedented for someone convicted of the crimes she committed and rightly received bipartisan scrutiny.

Survivors deserve an Attorney General who will ensure transparency and fairness in the justice system; instead, many of them were exposed while the network of people around their abusers remained redacted.

When Blanche appears before the Senate Judiciary Committee for his confirmation hearing, my Democratic colleagues and I will press him for answers and urge him to comply fully with the Epstein Files Transparency Act.

Consider Blanche's own words when, at an April press conference, he made clear that he was so devoted to President Trump that he would serve him in any capacity, even if he was not chosen to be the Attorney General nominee.

He said that if he was not nominated, his message to the President would be "[t]hank you very much, I love you sir." He added that "I don't have any goals or aspirations beyond" serving Donald Trump.

That should tell the American people all they need to know about where Blanche's loyalty lies.

That love manifests as slush funds, partisan prosecutions against those the President feels have slighted him, and redirecting DOJ resources from protecting the American people from grave threats to treating the American people as grave threats.

Blanche has helped Trump achieve the goal that he couldn't in his first administration: fully warping the Department of Justice, the Nation's top law enforcement agency, into his personal law firm; corruption with doors wide open; political loyalty to the extreme; and a willingness to ignore the values of the Constitution.

When the Senate considered the confirmation of Todd Blanche to be Deputy Attorney General a year ago, I voted no.

The independence of DOJ has been decimated under Blanche's authority. I had no confidence in him before, and after everything we have seen, I doubt we can have confidence in him now.

After his fingerprints were found all over this so-called "Anti-Weaponization" fund, a few of my Republican colleagues signaled he may

face hurdles on the road to confirmation.

Will any of them muster the courage to join Democrats in actually holding Blanche accountable and demanding answers regarding the host of concerns I have outlined today? Time will tell.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, 87,000, that is how many lives were at risk in August 2024 when Austrian security services thwarted a devastating terrorist attack on a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna.

Many of these lives could have been young girls from around the world, including Americans. Now this tragedy was halted because, thanks to section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, Austrian authorities were able to cancel the concert and apprehend the plotting terrorists, all because U.S. intelligence Agencies were able to share critical intelligence gathered under section 702 authority before the attack occurred.

In 4 very short days, title 7 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, including this essential service, expires. We can't let that happen.

Section 702 happens to be our most nimble and effective intelligence collection tool. Section 702 equips our military with a strategic advantage. It protects our troops overseas, and it keeps terrorists, foreign adversaries, and dangerous illicit drugs from harming Americans, enabling over 90 percent of synthetic drug disruptions.

It helps our intelligence and law enforcement community to defend our homeland from attacks, and it is essential for protecting our cyber security infrastructure.

Title 7 then is critical to our national security, but it doesn't just protect us from security threats; it also protects us from government abuse and government overreach.

Now, if title 7 expires, not only do we lose section 702's utility, we also lose all of its civil liberties, privacy, transparency, and accountability measures. There is a dangerous assumption that the program will function seamlessly if this statute expires on Friday.

Well, I hope the certifications issued a few months ago will still apply in the event of the statute lapsing. This is not a certainty. There will be high-stakes litigation and a very real possibility that intelligence collection will cease, at least temporarily. And in this work of intelligence gathering, minutes do matter. Letting 702 lapse is a real gamble that we can't afford to take.

So let's be very clear, if section 702 lapses, our adversaries will benefit greatly and Americans will suffer. In other words, we will be less secure in our safety as well as our privacy. Over the last few weeks, I have worked

closely with Senators COTTON and WARNER, the administration, the national security community, and Members of the House to develop a product that delivers meaningful reforms while maintaining section 702's essential operational effectiveness.

This product is bipartisan, bicameral, and it strikes the right balance. The reforms in our bill build on the substantial reforms passed by the Congress in 2024. Again, I want to be clear that the reforms of 2024 that goes by the acronym RISAA are working. FBI query compliance is at 98.9 percent, with the remaining noncompliant queries due to typos and other harmless errors.

This isn't the same program plagued by abuse a few years ago that civil libertarians rightly condemned and by their condemnation brought about some of the reforms in the 2024 bill. Because our bill builds on what the House sent us a few weeks back, it retains and strengthens the provisions and the good progress made by our colleagues in the other Chamber and, at the same time, adds 11 additional reforms that deliver real transparency and accountability.

So let me list just a few. First, it requires the Justice Department to rescind and replace the Department of Justice memo drafted by the previous administration that, quite frankly, illegally restricts congressional oversight access to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.

Now, why the previous administration didn't want to carry out the transparency requirements of the last Congress, I don't know, but they didn't do it.

Secondly, it gives Congress a voice in the amici appointment process by requiring leadership to submit a bipartisan list of candidates to whom the FISC court is obliged to give the highest preference.

Third, it levies criminal penalties on those who willfully violate querying standards.

Fourth, it limits and clarifies the definition of an "electronic communication service provider," thus addressing a concern of civil liberties groups across the political spectrum.

Fifth, it requires the FBI monthly to submit U.S. person query justifications to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court and the Civil Liberties Protection Officer for review.

And, sixth, it requires noncompliant queries and abuse to be referred to the inspector general.

Now, there is other points that could be made, and I could go on, but I think the point is very clear when it comes to transparency and accountability that we have added to what was started in 2024.

There is no doubt that this bill is a compromise. That is how things are done in the U.S. Congress and, particularly, in the Senate. This bill isn't the clean reauthorization called for by the administration. This bill also isn't the

maximalist approach called for by some skeptics of this program.

This bill reflects what the American people expect and the American people deserve: the reauthorization of a very important national security tool but coupled with meaningful guardrails and transparency.

If title 7 lapses, not only will these thoughtful and thorough reforms fail to become reality, but we will lose many of the key reforms instituted in the last reauthorization of 2024.

This section 702 is the most transparent and most scrutinized intelligence collection in history. If it lapses, so does Congress' essential insight into and oversight of its functions.

So we owe it to our constituents to protect them from threats, from terrorists, and other adversaries, but also to defend their privacy and civil liberties. Our bipartisan, bicameral, thoughtful bill accomplishes both goals.

I appreciate the collaboration with my colleagues Senator COTTON and WARNER, and I appreciate the collaboration and engagement from the administration and from our national security partners.

I am grateful for the engagement from the House of Representatives. We got this bill to a very good place, and it is the kind of a bill that should have significant support from both sides of the aisle.

Now, we need to finish this job. We need to put aside partisanship and do what is right by the American people. We need to advance this bill to the President's desk and reauthorize this very critical program.

My Democratic colleagues should recognize that walking away from this deal isn't hurting President Trump; it is hurting the American people.

I hope my colleagues appreciate this bill for what it is, and I pray that we can consider this bill later this week. And I urge everyone in this Chamber to vote yes on reauthorizing section 702 in this very careful and very thoughtful way now before the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Democratic leader is recognized.

ANTI-WEAPONIZATION FUND

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, well, just about everyone in America hates Trump's slush fund, but every Senate Republican but one is culpable for allowing Trump to go forward with the slush fund. Again, people in America hate the fund. Every Senate Republican allowed Trump to go forward with the slush fund. They supported a reconciliation bill that had no restraints on Trump's corrupt slush fund even after Democrats forced vote after