

proposed Senate HSGAC title of what became S. 2, the Secure America Act. This proposed text included language concerning screenings of unaccompanied children in Section 3(a)(6) that was identical to Section 90004(a)(6) of Public Law 119-21, the fiscal year 2025 reconciliation bill commonly known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act.” The May 4, 2026, HSGAC title also included language to provide funding for the purposes under title IX of Public Law 119-21, therefore carrying forward section 90003 regarding detention capacity and section 90004(a)(6) of that law.

The Trump administration is currently relying on provisions of Public Law 119-21, which are identical to section 3(a)(6) and referenced by section 4 in the proposed May 4, 2026, HSGAC title, to contravene legislative provisions for the identification and screening of unaccompanied children and to override a settlement agreement governing the care and custody of children detained in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection—or CBP—custody. For instance, the Department of Justice cited section 90003 of Public Law 119-21 in district and appellate briefs where they assert the authority to detain families indefinitely in family residential centers. In its implementation of section 90004(a)(6) of Public Law 119-21, CBP has changed its screening of unaccompanied children. Under this new processing mechanism, CBP claims it is now permitted to ask unaccompanied children from noncontiguous countries to withdraw applications for admission to the United States. Such substantive policy overrides would not comply with the Byrd rule.

Given the administration’s position on the fiscal year 2025 reconciliation bill, the minority challenged section 3(a)(6) and section 4 of the May 4, 2026, HSGAC text as violating the Byrd rule because the administration would again incorrectly claim that this language constitutes congressional authorization of their new policies related to unaccompanied children and family detention. The Parliamentarian sustained the Democrats’ challenges to section 3(a)(6) and section 4, as indicated by a May 14, 2026, press release published by the U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget. Senate Republicans then released a subsequent version of the HSGAC title, specifically the text reported out of HSGAC on May 19, 2026, and the Budget Committee on May 20, 2026, which removed the offending language regarding unaccompanied children in section 3 and the reference to Public Law 119-21 in section 4. These changes reinforce that neither congressional intent nor statutory authorization should be read into, or inferred from, either Public Law 119-21 or the Secure America Act, to change the implementation of immigration law or override settlement agreements, including the TVPRA and the Flores Settlement Agreement.

On May 4, 2026, U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee Chair GRASSLEY released the proposed Senate Judiciary Committee title of what became S. 2, the Secure America Act. This proposed text allocated funds to the U.S. Departments of Justice and Homeland Security through fiscal year 2029. It included language in section 3 to provide \$2.5 billion for the purposes provided in the title as well as in part II of subtitle A of title X of Public Law 119-21.

Since its passage, the Trump administration has relied upon section 100051(8) of Public Law 119-21 to set aside legal protections enshrined in the TVPRA for unaccompanied children. The TVPRA limits voluntary withdrawal to children from contiguous countries, and it states that, absent “exceptional circumstances,” children from noncontiguous countries must be transferred to Office of Refugee Resettlement custody within 72 hours of entering CBP custody and placed in full removal proceedings. In a recent letter to Senator WYDEN, however, CBP Commissioner Scott wrote: “The language in Section 100051(8) of [Public Law 119-21] makes it permissible to allow certain [unaccompanied children] who are screened and determined to be eligible—including those from noncontiguous countries—the opportunity to withdraw their application for admission and voluntarily return to their country of origin, if they choose to do so.” In another telling example, the administration relied on section 100051(8) in attempting to overturn a 40-year-old permanent injunction requiring that unaccompanied children receive written notice of the right to a hearing in immigration court and access to a telephone to call a responsible adult or lawyer. As with the HSGAC title, however, such substantive policy changes would not comply with the Byrd rule.

Given the Parliamentarian’s determinations with respect to the HSGAC title, and in light of the positions taken by the administration that provisions of Public Law 119-21 override the TVPRA, the minority then challenged the proposed text of section 3 in the Judiciary title. That text was also amended in the subsequent version released by Senate Republicans ahead of floor consideration. In order to meet the requirements of the Byrd rule, proposed section 3—which became section 203 of S. 2, the Secure America Act—was narrowed to remove references to provisions related to the treatment of unaccompanied children. The final language allocated \$2.5 billion to the purposes provided in the Judiciary title or for paragraphs (3) or (7) of section 100051 of Public Law 119-21 only. Further still, to avoid future misapplications of funds issued through the budget reconciliation process, in section 202(9) of S. 2, the Secure America Act, provisions funding certain immigration enforcement actions emphasize that such funds must be utilized “in accordance with existing laws.”

These changes reinforce that provisions in either Public Law 119-21 or the Secure America Act are not intended to change the implementation of immigration law or to override settlement agreements, including the TVPRA and the Flores Settlement Agreement.

#### GREAT APES

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, my predecessor Senator Patrick Leahy is known for many groundbreaking pieces of legislation over the course of his 48 years in the Senate. But he was also responsible for many initiatives that are not so well known, and I want to speak briefly about one of them.

From 1989 until his retirement in 2023, Senator Leahy served as either chairman or ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department of State Foreign Operations, and Related Programs which among other things funds U.S. assistance around the world. During those years, he built a record of strong support for programs to protect tropical forests and endangered species, which are under siege from illegal logging, mining, industrial scale agriculture, urban encroachment, and wildlife poaching and trafficking. One of those programs established by Senator Leahy was to protect our closest ancestors, the four species of great apes: orangutans, gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos.

Each of these species faces the threat of extinction in the wild due to habitat loss and poaching. Some are killed for meat; others are captured and sold as pets. On the islands of Borneo and Sumatra, the only places where orangutans live, the rainforests are being cut down at a furious pace to make way for vast palm oil plantations. Habitat loss and poaching are similarly threatening the survival of the other three species of great apes in Africa.

By the end of President Trump’s first term, funding to protect great apes had reached \$45 million annually. The funds were administered by USAID and used by nongovernment organizations in Indonesia, Rwanda, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for anti-poaching initiatives and strengthening law enforcement in local biological reserves and along international borders; promoting sustainable land use and forest management to safeguard areas critical to great apes; and working with local villagers to develop sustainable livelihoods and reduce reliance on poaching or destructive agricultural practices. USAID also partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through its Great Apes Conservation Fund, which provided grants for field projects in Africa and Indonesia.

In addition, the State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs has supported programs to strengthen the capacity of local law enforcement in Africa and Asia to combat wildlife trafficking and

the money laundering, corruption, and violent crime associated with it.

While these efforts have helped stem the precipitous decline in the numbers of great apes, their survival in the wild remains far from assured. Transnational criminal organizations, catering to a rapacious Asian market for wildlife parts, are reaping huge profits from the illegal wildlife trade. These organizations are often also involved in trafficking drugs, weapons, and human beings. The ever-increasing demand for timber, minerals, and food in Asia, Africa, and Latin America is destroying wildlife habitat at an alarming rate. Rainforests are being transformed into polluted wastelands from mining, massive farms of oil palm and soybeans, and grazing land for cattle. Great apes, which like many species need large areas to forage for food, are being squeezed from all directions.

Despite the administration's disastrous decision to shut down USAID and destroy the careers of thousands of talented and dedicated USAID employees, Congress has continued to provide funding to protect endangered species, including great apes. But the amount of funding has been sharply reduced, and it remains to be seen whether the State Department will manage the funds in the manner intended by Congress.

Orangutans, gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos are the only existing examples of our earliest apelike ancestors who first began walking upright nearly 4 million years ago. Despite having existed for millions of years and sharing 97 percent of our DNA, great apes today are entirely dependent on us for survival.

I have urged the Appropriations Committee to increase funding for great ape conservation while there is still time to protect them from extinction. I also urge the State Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to recognize what is at stake and to resume and significantly expand their efforts to protect great ape habitat and combat poaching and trafficking.

And finally, I urge the leaders of Indonesia and the central African countries that are home to great apes to recognize their unique responsibility to ensure the survival of these animals by protecting their forest habitat; greatly strengthening enforcement of anti-trafficking laws; supporting programs to rescue, rehabilitate, and return to the wild great apes that have been trafficked; and educating their people about the need to protect great apes and the forests they depend on.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### RECOGNIZING LEAH JEAN BOUTIQUE

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa

small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to honor Leah Jean Boutique of Wright County, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Founded in 2018 by Brittany Leah Howieson and Donna Jean Ahrends, Leah Jean Boutique was established to provide families in Clarion with a welcoming, locally owned storefront offering curated children's items. Attached to their salon, the boutique was created not only to meet the needs of local families, but also to help sustain and strengthen small-town Main Street commerce in north Iowa. Brittany and Donna, who first met when Donna taught Brittany in beauty school years earlier, later expanded their shared entrepreneurial vision into the boutique now recognized throughout the region for its personal customer service and carefully selected products.

For nearly a decade, Leah Jean Boutique has provided high-quality apparel, toys, pet products, and gifts that help customers celebrate both everyday moments and special milestones. As a woman-owned small business, Leah Jean Boutique has built its identity around a "for moms, by moms" philosophy rooted in firsthand experience and trust. Brittany and Donna personally select and test the products offered in the store, helping Iowa families navigate an increasingly overwhelming retail environment filled with countless online options and inconsistent reviews. Their emphasis on quality, reliability, and personalized attention has helped establish Leah Jean Boutique as a trusted destination for folks throughout Wright County and the surrounding communities.

Beyond its retail offerings, Leah Jean Boutique reflects the strong community-minded spirit that defines Iowa small businesses. Brittany and Donna remain actively involved in local organizations and community initiatives. This includes leadership roles within their Philanthropic Educational Organization, P.E.O., Chapter, participation on the Committee for Golden Apples for Teachers program, Brittany's service as president of the Clarion Development Alliance, and organizing family-oriented community events that support downtown Clarion and surrounding communities. Their continued investment in local engagement demonstrates a commitment not only to entrepreneurship but also to strengthening economic vitality and preserving the sense of community that keeps Iowa's small towns thriving.

I am pleased to recognize Brittany and Donna at Leah Jean Boutique for their dedication to Clarion and Wright County. I look forward to their continued success and wish them the very best in the years ahead.●

##### RECOGNIZING BLUE FOX THEATRE

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, Idaho's small businesses are the backbone of our economy and our communities.

These small businesses not only employ our friends and neighbors but also provide invaluable goods and services that showcase Idaho's ingenuity and shared values. They are an intrinsic element of the Gem State and deserve to be celebrated.

I am proud to launch my seventh annual Support Local Gems, a successful statewide initiative, on June 12, to encourage Idahoans to support the small businesses that make our State thrive. As a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am pleased to honor Blue Fox Theatre in Grangeville during Support Local Gems as one of Idaho's Small Businesses of the Month for June 2026.

Cory and Haley Kooole, who also operate the local Napa Auto Parts, purchased the historic Blue Fox Theatre in 2024. The pair have worked to maintain the theatre's long legacy and keep movies running while expanding the business to serve the region beyond entertainment. Supporting a wide range of community-centered events and charitable causes, including fundraisers for the local veterans center, medical benefit dinners, and memorial gatherings, the Blue Fox is well ingrained in the fabric of the Grangeville community.

Originally opened in 1930, the Blue Fox Theatre is an iconic landmark and gathering place in Grangeville for nearly a century. Its famous neon marquee won Idaho's statewide historic sign competition earlier this year, and the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1999, emphasizing the theater's enduring role in Idaho's past and present.

The Blue Fox Theatre was built during a pivotal moment in American history, as the film industry transitioned from silent movies to "talkies" and the Nation entered the Great Depression. The original owner Al J. Wagner took a huge financial risk in building the theater in rural Idaho. That gamble paid off. Opening night was a full town event, complete with live music and front-page coverage in the local paper.

Over the decades, the Blue Fox overcame numerous challenges that forced many small-town theaters to close their doors. In the early 1940s, the building survived a fire that collapsed the roof and destroyed most of the interior. Rather than abandoning the theater, the Wagner family rebuilt it with much community support. The theatre also survived significant changes within the movie industry, competition with television and multiplex theaters, and the shift from film reels to digital projection. Through it all, the Blue Fox persevered.

Cory and Haley see the theater not only as a business but as the perfect avenue to invest in the people of north central Idaho. They prioritize community over profit, using the theater to preserve history, help neighbors, strengthen community ties, and invest locally.