

until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly conference meetings and that all time during leader remarks, recess, and adjournment count postcloture on the Flowers nomination; and finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Tuesday's session of the Senate, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that following the remarks of my Republican colleagues, the Senate proceed to legislative session and that the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

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

The Senator from Tennessee.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, several of my colleagues and I are going to talk tonight about the importance of passing the SAVE America Act, and this is an issue the Senate should willingly take up.

Having voter ID is something the vast majority of Americans support. Whether they are Democrats or Republicans or Independents or Libertarians, everyone thinks you should have to show an ID when you go to vote.

It is incredible that we are on the floor having to make the case for this legislation. The bill's provisions are really common sense, and, as I said, this is something the American people have said: We want this. We want to preserve one person, one vote, and preserve the integrity of the electoral system.

Now, the legislation that is before us would really accomplish three major objectives in securing our elections.

It would require voters to present an ID to cast a ballot. Now, as I said, this is overwhelmingly popular. You have got 83 percent of all Americans.

Now, for my colleagues across the aisle, 71 percent of the Democrats support this. They want people to have to prove that they are indeed who they claim to be.

Also, our legislation would require people to be a U.S. citizen in order to vote in our elections, and it would require the States to remove noncitizens who have somehow ended up on their voter rolls.

These are all common sense, every one of them—common sense. There is nothing objectionable about these measures. It is common sense. And these are sensible, easily understood, and easily implemented ways to make certain that we are protecting our electoral system.

Many Republican States already enforce these safeguards. Tennessee, my home State, leads the Nation in election integrity. Now, if every State was

like Tennessee, there would be no need for the SAVE America Act. But for years, we have seen blue States practically invite fraud into their elections.

Fourteen States—including California, New York, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Minnesota—do not require any form of ID to vote. Many more States accept ID that is nonphoto.

Now, think about that. In 14 States, if you live in one of those States, you do not have to prove anything in order to go vote in their elections. It is open season.

So my question would be: How does that type of system—no ID required, just come on and vote. Everybody welcome. The polls are open. It doesn't matter if you are a citizen or a noncitizen. Come cast your ballot.

So you have got these States that require no ID, and you have got other States that will have nonphoto ID that they will accept. Now, at the same time, two dozen States—and, again, they are overwhelmingly blue—that is, 24 States refuse to work with DHS to compare their voter rolls with the Federal SAVE database, which verifies the immigration status of registered voters.

Now, that is a system—that is a database—at the Department of Homeland Security, and this SAVE system has that listing of noncitizens who were in our country—people that are on student visas, people that are on work visas, people that are permanent legal residents, people that are in the country illegally.

But do you know what? Not a single one of those individuals is entitled to vote.

So, free of charge, any State can log into this system—President Trump has made it easy for the States—and then they can take their voter roll, and they can check it against the SAVE system. States that do this have found thousands of individuals. Maybe they have got a driver's license, and maybe, during that process, they registered to vote. But they are not entitled to vote. So those are the individuals that need to be removed from this system.

I will point out that there is no other—no other—developed nation that leaves their elections so vulnerable to fraud and manipulation.

So to defend themselves, Democrats claim that voter fraud is very rare. Well, President Trump's Thursday night address on election integrity showed just how much voter fraud we have.

According to a DHS review of State voter rolls, there are approximately 278,000 noncitizens registered to vote in our elections. The last three Presidential elections were decided by fewer than 270,000 votes.

The President noted that this figure is likely an undercount because Democrat States refused to share their voter files with the administration.

Democrats do not care. They are perfectly content with voter fraud.

Indeed, as we have said many times: Let's make it easier to vote and harder to cheat.

And the Democrats continue to fight us on this. Their leader CHUCK SCHUMER claimed that the legislation, the SAVE America Act, was dead on arrival here in the Senate, meaning not a single one of them—not a one of them—agrees with 71 percent of the Democrats, 83 percent of the American public. They just don't agree with them when the people are saying: We want the SAVE America Act.

So I just have to ask: What are they afraid of? What are they really fearful of? Are they afraid, if it is only citizens voting, that they are not going to win? Do they think they have to have people that are not citizens registered to vote in order to win an election?

Now, when we talk about the SAVE America Act and talk about it in total, we have said: Look, whatever it takes to get this passed—if we have to pass it one piece at a time, that is what we will do.

And our friends on the other side of the aisle need to explain to the American public why they are so opposed.

Now, Senator HUSTED's bill, for example, would enact only the voter ID provision of the SAVE America Act. That is a good thing. That is a great first step. Just prove that you are who you say you are. When you go to the poll to vote, prove that you are who you say you are when you request a mail-in or absentee ballot.

We also have the Election Security Partnership Act, which I led along with Senator Lindsey Graham, and this is something that would incentivize States to submit their voter rolls through that SAVE system at DHS.

This is basically: We are going to pay you to do the right thing. We are going to actually incentivize and give you more money on your grants if you will do the right thing and obey the law.

Now, we have many more bills that we can do to secure our elections. Every Member of Congress should support these measures, and Republicans are going to do everything possible to get them across the finish line as we are celebrating our Nation's 250th anniversary. It is imperative—imperative—that we pass these bills in order to preserve the integrity of our electoral system.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, imagine your shock if, while on your way to the theater, let's say—I don't know—maybe you are going to the opera. You are planning to pick up your tickets at will call. You arrive at will call at the appointed moment and say: Yes, I am Senator PETE RICKETTS. I am here to pick up my opera tickets.

They gave them to somebody else.

If you found out that the theater was handing out tickets at will call without any form of ID, you would probably be a little disappointed—you or any

other American, any other human in that circumstance—realizing that it is important to find out whether you are who you claim to be before you are given something, something where your identity matters.

The same could be said of a whole bunch of other human transactions, ordinary human interactions involving day-to-day transactions that any of us could be expected to engage in multiple times every single week. One day, maybe it is theater or opera tickets. Maybe the next day, it is withdrawing money from a bank.

You show up, and money is gone from your account because your bank stopped requiring people to show ID. They can come along and claim to be someone they are not and take someone's money that is not theirs.

The mere fact that we have a lot of people that are allowed to vote doesn't diminish the seriousness of not requiring people to prove that they are, in fact, who they claim to be when they show up to exercise that important right.

Some people, when denying that there is any need for us to act here, will throw up things and say: Well, that is fine for the bank or for theater tickets or for the pharmacy. But this is an important constitutional right. It is a fundamental right.

My response to that is: Yes, exactly—and that is exactly why we need it.

The fact that it involves a protected, fundamental constitutional right is a reason why we need to make it easy to vote and hard to cheat. That is exactly what the SAVE America Act does. It is exactly what it would do.

When I set out, about 3 years ago, to write this bill, along with my partner in the House, Congressman CHIP ROY from Texas, that was our mantra: Let's make it easy to vote and hard to cheat.

Never, at the time, could we have predicted how much attention this would get, and never, at the time, could we have predicted the absurdity of the arguments that would be raised against this because, if you are careful—if you listen carefully—what you will find is that there is not a legitimate argument against the Senate passing the SAVE America Act—no, not even one. The arguments that you will hear against it, over and over and over again, are based entirely on contrivance, on pretext, on false statements and false assumptions.

Look, at the end of the day, the SAVE America Act is about reestablishing, restoring trust in U.S. elections. That trust needs to be restored, especially in light of the facts that we have discovered just over the last few days.

As of just Friday, the Department of Homeland Security announced that there are 278,000—that is over a quarter of a million—noncitizens registered to vote in U.S. elections in just four States alone. This doesn't count all of them. This is 278,000 noncitizen votes, just in the States of California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Nevada

Now, that is a problem. When you add to that the other States that have refused to cooperate, that have made it very difficult for us to ascertain how many noncitizen votes they might have registered in their States—they are not cooperating. That is one of many problems that we face here.

Fortunately, this is a problem that Congress can solve. It is a problem that it can solve and, therefore, must solve.

Among those who make an argument against this, sometimes, you will hear the argument—one that I find especially galling and especially disingenuous—that, “oh, this somehow tramples on the authority of the States,” which some mistakenly refer to as States' rights.

I don't call them States' rights. States don't have rights. They have authority. A right is a privilege against the exercise of authority. It is the inverse polar opposite of a right; therefore, I don't call it States' rights. It is State authority.

This, Mr. President, emphatically does not trample on State authority. How do we know that? Well, because the Constitution delineates the relative responsibilities of the States and the Federal Government. And in one particularly poignant and relevant provision—article I, section 4—the elections clause of that provision states that Congress may, at any time, by law, make or alter what we will loosely describe as laws establishing the time, place, and manner in which Federal elections will take place, except as to places of choosing Senators.

So we have the authority to do this under the Constitution, not as to State races but as to Federal races, principally U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate races. We have that authority; article I, section 4 gives that to us.

Moreover, if those who mistakenly argue that this somehow tramples on State sovereign authority, if there were any doubt about that, which there is not because article I, section 4 puts that issue to bed quite nicely. But if there were, then the entire predicate of existing law, making the SAVE America Act necessary in the first place, would also be invalid. Every time I hear this argument made, I wish, like anything, that those same people making this argument would acknowledge that if the SAVE America Act is somehow unconstitutional, so, too, is the National Voter Registration Act.

The National Voter Registration Act enacted by Congress in 1993 created a system whereby people can vote at a DMV in their home State. Now, when somebody goes into a DMV to register to vote in that State, all they have to do is check a box saying: Yes, I am applying for a driver's license, but I would like, simultaneously, to register to vote with this application. After all, you have got some of the same features there. You have got to prove your identity. You have got to establish your residency, what your address is. And so

it made a certain amount of sense to provide this option for American voters to go and register at a DMV.

The problem is that that is all you have to do, is check a box saying: I would like to register to vote. And then at the end of it, you sign your name in a conclusory statement to the effect that I am entitled to vote; I am a U.S. citizen, and I am not prohibited, for one reason or another, from voting, and so I am allowed to do it. But that is all the verification that is allowed.

And in a move that, I believe, is incompatible with the text and original understanding of the statutory language, the Supreme Court—about 20 years after the NVRA was passed, the Supreme Court of the United States interpreted the NVRA, mistakenly but nonetheless conclusively, as prohibiting the States from doing anything to verify the citizenship of someone registering to vote at a DMV using an NVRA-supplied form.

Now, the Supreme Court was wrong. Justice Alito explained in his dissent in that case—*Inter Tribal Council v. Arizona*—why that was wrong. Nonetheless, it remains the conclusive interpretation of the NVRA, and it is why the SAVE America Act is necessary because what we have got now, Mr. President, we have got an estimated 30 million-plus noncitizens residing in the United States. We have got a system of laws under the NVRA that makes it really easy to go into a DMV and fill out some forms, check a box and sign your name and say I want to register to vote. That is how we got 278,000 registered voters who are noncitizens just in those four States alone: California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Nevada, to say nothing of the tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of others in other States who may have done the same thing.

It is phenomenally easy to cheat. It is stunningly easy to register to vote as a noncitizen, in some cases, without really realizing what you are doing, much less that you are committing a very serious felony offense by doing that.

So that is the whole reason why the SAVE America Act is necessary, is because of the NVRA and, specifically, the Supreme Court's butchered interpretation of it prohibiting the States, even where they have actual doubts, from asking someone to verify their citizenship at the time they register to vote.

So, if the SAVE America Act is unconstitutional, then so, too, is the NVRA, in which case, we don't need it—at least not nearly to the same degree as we do. But, of course, neither the NVRA nor the SAVE America Act is unconstitutional; they are both squarely within the authority provided to the U.S. Congress under article I, section 4 of the Constitution.

So, as a result of all this, it is clear that Congress can fix this problem. We have the authority to do it. So what is the holdup? Well, it certainly isn't the

American voter because the American voter, by a margin of like 3 out of 4 or 4 out of 5, depending which poll you look at, believes that it is important that people who show up to vote ought to have to prove who they are. And they ought to, at the time they register to vote, have to establish their citizenship and, thus, their eligibility to vote in the first place. We are talking about 75 to 80—some as high as 85 percent, depending on which poll that you look at. Those are Democrat voters and Republican voters alike, all agreeing that this is a problem, and it is a problem that Congress can and should fix. So what is the holdup?

Well, it is hard to say what the hold-up is? But I can summarize it this way: It is Senate Democrats. The SAVE America Act is popular literally everywhere in the United States of America, except in this Chamber and except among Democrats in this Chamber. Everywhere else it is a no-brainer. Everywhere else it is popular. It is only here that they don't want to pass it.

Why? Why don't they want to pass it? Well, one could argue that if you benefit from the status quo, you don't want any change to that status quo, especially if you benefit from it in a way that is likely to go away if you change the status quo. These are all fancy ways, Mr. President—nice ways—of saying: Perhaps some of those who are opposed to it might be afraid of what happens if they are not allowed to rely on noncitizen votes, even though Federal law flatly prohibits noncitizen voting in U.S. elections. That is not a good reason to oppose this. It may be a reason, but it is not a good reason. It is not a valid reason. It is not a legal, moral, ethical, or constitutional reason. It is just a reason, but that is about where the reason stops because every other of their arguments cannot withstand scrutiny.

For example, a number of them will say things like the following: If we pass the SAVE America Act into law, there will be anarchy, there will be lawlessness, dogs and cats living together in the streets, Book of Revelations stuff, apocalyptic nightmares unfolding everywhere. And they back this up by arguing, quite absurdly, that women and minorities will be unable to vote—oh, and also rural Americans and also young Americans and also older Americans because, at any given moment, these same people who are opposing the SAVE America Act—the 47 people in this Chamber, more or less—those are the same people who may stand to benefit if we don't pass it because the status quo benefits them. And they should not be able to benefit from this by not passing something.

The effect is that if this were to pass, this wouldn't disenfranchise anyone. Why? Well, because the kind of proof that we require—proof of citizenship and proof of identity—it is based on the same sort of document that every American has to provide routinely in the most mundane, routine encounters.

Let's break them up into two pieces. Remember, there are two pieces of the SAVE America Act. Part 1 deals with establishing citizenship. Part 2 deals with voter ID.

Let's deal first with the proof of citizenship. When you show up to register to vote, if this were to pass into law today—which it should pass today. It is that popular with the American people, and it is that lacking in any legitimate argument against it. If it were to pass into law today, then your existing voter registration would remain valid indefinitely. Nothing about that would change.

It would only be that the next time you have to register to vote—because you have moved or something like that—then you would have to show up, and you would have to provide some type of proof as to U.S. citizenship. The law would allow you to do this using the same exact documentation that every single American has to supply every single time he or she starts a new job as a new employee with a new employer. You fill out an I-9 form, as every man, woman, and child in America has to do every time they start a new job as a new employee. You have got to fill that out, and you have got to provide proof of citizenship, and you do that either by showing a U.S. passport evidencing citizenship or, alternatively, an original copy of your birth certificate, coupled with a couple of other documents, including I think a Social Security card and/or a government-issued photo ID.

Those who argue against it argue, among other things, well, this will disenfranchise women because—at least married women who have changed their name after getting married, taking on their husband's last name, this would disenfranchise them because they won't be able to vote. By that logic, that would suggest that married women who have changed their name after getting married, which, I think, the last time I checked is most women in America, would also be unable to work. They would be unable to get a job. They would be unable lawfully to start a new job as a new employee for a new employer ever if their parents didn't have the clairvoyance to be able to guess, at the time of their birth, what their husband's—their future husband's last name would be 20 or 30 years in advance. Of course, this is absurd. This doesn't exist. This is an entirely contrived concern. And moreover, in this and every other area where this kind of argument comes up, the people making the argument ignore the text accompanying lines—beginning on page 12 of the House-passed SAVE America Act, line 20 and the text that follows from it, makes clear that even if you can't find any of your own documentation, whether it is because you never had it to begin with or your dog ate it or your crazy Aunt Madge raided the stash of family documents and burned it—I don't know. For whatever reason, if you don't have,

never had, can't find your proof of citizenship, the SAVE America Act has you covered. You turn to that text accompanying line 20, starting on page 12 of the SAVE America Act as passed by the House of Representatives and it makes clear, even if you can't find any of that documentation, you can by a personal attestation write down the basic facts supporting or giving rise to your citizenship, and the burden then shifts to the State registering you to vote to confirm or refute your assertion as to citizenship: I was born on such and such a date in this American city to parents A and B. They are both citizens, so I was a citizen also. Or if you are a naturalized citizen, not a natural-born citizen, you would state the terms and conditions, the date or date range when you were naturalized, and the basis that you used to become a U.S. citizen; and the burden would then shift to the State to confirm or refute your characterization.

So those arguments reveal that people who are arguing against this, in addition to already being very wrong that this somehow tramples on State sovereign authority, that this somehow amounts to an improper or unconstitutional Federal takeover of election law, which has long been the more or less semi-exclusive domain of the States, that that doesn't hold up; neither does the “you are going to disenfranchise all married women who have taken on their husband's name,” that doesn't fly either.

There are other arguments about how it disenfranchises this or that racial group or urban Americans, rural Americans, old Americans, young Americans. They all fall for similarly self-evident reasons because at the end of the day, this law really does make it easy to vote and hard to cheat.

All right. So we have covered that step 1—step 1 of the citizenship verification part. Future voter registrations, when you show up to register newly to vote, you would have to provide proof of citizenship using the same documentation that you use every time you ever start a new job. And if you don't have that, you can do it just through a personal attestation, which you swear on a simple affidavit, outlining the facts and circumstances that make you a citizen, shifting the burden to the State.

SAVE America also gives authority to Federal officials to require the States—many of which are refusing to cooperate right now—to share their voter registration files so they can routinely help them scrub those voter registration files, to remove people who were illegally added as voters because, again, Federal law prohibits noncitizens from voting in U.S. elections.

That leads to the next line of argument frequently used by those who want to hinder the SAVE America Act's path toward victory. They make these stunning—astounding—claims that we don't need it. We don't need it. Why? Well, because it is already illegal to vote.

This has to be one of the dumbest arguments I have ever heard, and I have been here 15½ years in the U.S. Senate. I have heard some dumb arguments. This might well be the dumbest one that I have ever heard—not just against this bill but against any bill—that because X is already illegal, we don't need any law making sure that the law making action X illegal is, in fact, enforceable.

That is the dumbest argument ever. It is like saying: We don't need traffic police to enforce the law because it is already illegal to go too fast or to run a stop sign.

If you leave in place no mechanism, no means by which those laws can be enforced, then those laws quickly become dead letter. I will get more into that in a moment as to the enforceability point.

But the fact that we have got an existing law that makes it illegal is a reason to pass the SAVE America Act; it is not a reason not to pass the SAVE America Act.

Look, for a long time, Americans have been told a number of lies. Among other things, they have been told that, you know, noncitizens don't vote in U.S. elections because they can't. We know that is not true. We have got documented instances where some have voted.

We have now got documented instances where 278,000 people, who are not citizens, registered to vote in just these four States: California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Nevada—to say nothing of the tens or hundreds of thousands of others in other States who may be similarly situated.

But for years, Americans have been told to stop asking questions about all kinds of things. Trust the system, we were told. Trust the experts. Trust the machines. Trust the machine itself.

If you expressed concern about election security, at least between the years of—I don't know—2020 through 2026, you were told that you had no credibility, and you were dismissed as a conspiracy theorist.

The reason I frame the date range as I did is that if you were saying this back in 2016 or 2017, you weren't dismissed by the mainstream news media, by the radical left news establishment in this country. You weren't dismissed as that. Why? Well, because that is what Democrats were arguing and the mainstream news media is, of course, the communication apparatus of the Democratic National Committee. So the dates matter.

If you questioned the vulnerabilities in electronic voting systems, you were told that there were none and that you were an evil person for suggesting that a voting machine could ever be abused.

If you worried about foreign interference in elections, you were accused of undermining democracy itself—ignoring, of course, the fact that we are not a democracy; we are a constitutional republic. Yes, the difference matters. I won't elaborate as to why now, but it does.

Many of the same government Agencies that have spent years insisting that there is nothing to worry about, they quietly produced intelligence at the exact same time they were denying that there was any problem. They were quietly producing intelligence saying exactly the opposite.

According to newly declassified assessments released by the White House, our own intelligence community has concluded that Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and even nonstate actors possessed the capability to compromise American election infrastructure.

These assessments specifically identified voter registration databases, electronic pollbooks, and election websites as the most vulnerable targets.

According to the White House, Communist China acquired approximately 220 million American voter registration files, including names, addresses, phone numbers, political affiliations. This, of course, is enough information for them to be able to build detailed profiles of nearly every American voter and—while building profiles—figuring out what might sway those who are swayable, who they might be able to sway and how they might be able to do it.

The intelligence reportedly says Beijing created an entire unit dedicated to exploiting that data. Now, look, if China hacked the personnel files of the Pentagon, this Chamber would be in an uproar. We would hear of little else. If China stole the banking information of 220 million Americans, Congress would cancel its recess. It would do nothing until it had solved the problem.

But, somehow, we are expected to just shrug our shoulders and do nothing when they target the American voter, when they target that which is most uniquely, sacredly given to American citizens. The exclusive right to vote, as an American citizen, is the quintessential ingredient. It is the tell-tale sign. It is the “without which, not,” the “sine qua non” of the American citizenship experience.

And we are supposed to just ignore it because they targeted the American voter? No, sir, not on my watch. We are not going to just ignore that. We cannot. Consistent with our oath to uphold, protect, and defend the Constitution—which every one of us has taken the same oath in this Chamber—we can't simply ignore it.

Now the White House has released intelligence describing how the Maduro regime in Venezuela allegedly developed methods to manipulate electronic vote totals in ways that are designed to carry out the job, while simultaneously evading detection, even after an audit.

The point is that hostile governments are actively developing ways to do precisely that. Responsible governments prepare for threats before they become catastrophes. They don't just wait until after they happen and say: Oh, shoot, sorry—especially when it is

something as important as maintaining the integrity—real and perceived—of our voting systems.

All you have to have is one truly botched election, and it could be very difficult to unscramble that egg, to put that genie back in the bottle. Sorry to throw too many metaphors in there at once, but the point is that you can't undo what happens when somebody uses their own technological sophistication to take advantage of vulnerabilities—known vulnerabilities—in our election security system. So a responsible government does not wait until after that happens.

Some of these same documents that have been released by the White House also described a photo registration investigation in Michigan. According to FBI records, canvassers admitted to signing other people's names to register to vote, to submitting registrations for people who didn't exist, to receiving gift cards based on how many applications for voter registration they produced.

Now the FBI believed crimes had occurred; yet the investigation sat. It sat and it sat and then it sat some more. And the American people deserve an answer.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, approximately 278,000 noncitizens were identified on the voter rolls in just those 4 States that I mentioned—in California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Nevada—4 States, not 50. We don't even know how many others there are in other States because a whole bunch of States—mostly blue ones—utterly refused to share their records.

Even knowing that this is a problem—especially knowing that it is a problem—what does that say about those States and about those election officials who refused to share information with those elements within our government that are there to do one job, which is just to make sure that we don't have illegal voting occurring? What does that say about them? What does that say about the need for the SAVE America Act?

Now, given what we have learned from President Trump and from the Department of Homeland Security—just in the last few days—we must pass the SAVE America Act. If you were on the fence on it before, that is one thing. I don't know how anybody could even be on the fence about it after learning that information shared by President Trump and by the Department of Homeland Security late last week.

Meanwhile, opponents to this legislation are doubling down, and they keep repeating the same lie: Noncitizen voting is illegal, so we don't need this.

Exactly. Now robbery is illegal. We still lock the bank, and we still hire a night watchman. Identity theft is already illegal. Yeah, well, we still verify identities. Fraud is illegal. We still investigate fraud. And we have all kinds of laws and all kinds of law enforcement personnel assigned to do things

to make it more difficult for people to defraud their fellow citizens.

No serious person believes that declaring something illegal in and of itself eliminates the need to enforce the law—especially whereas here the law itself is written, it has been interpreted by the courts conclusively in a way that makes it impossible to enforce.

The SAVE America Act closes that gap. It makes it possible to enforce the law. It requires proof of citizenship to register to vote in Federal elections.

The reason this bears mention is because States do have the power—I don't know why any State would want to do this. States do have it within their discretion to allow noncitizens to vote. There are a small handful of local jurisdictions that have done that.

I cannot for the life of me fathom why that would be a good idea any more than any corporation would see fit to have nonshareholders vote in shareholder elections, nondirectors vote on a matter considered for a vote in a board of directors. You don't do that.

Citizenship has to mean something, and citizenship means, first and foremost, that you have got the right to participate in this body politic in our system of government in the United States, and you can't have that stripped away from you.

Well, there are many ways that it could be stripped away from you. One of the most common, pedestrian, and overlooked ways in which you can have that stripped is by having your vote offset, by having it nullified, neutralized.

In other words, if you vote and if at the same time somebody down the street from you is voting, who is not supposed to vote, that person has diluted your vote. That person has cheapened what it means to you to be a citizen. And they may have completely offset, neutralized, and nullified your vote. That is not acceptable. It requires proof of citizenship to register to vote in Federal elections.

And then we get to step 2 of it. Step 2 of the SAVE America Act is just about the voter ID. After you verified citizenship with a new voter registration, after you have had the coordination process occurring between Federal officials—the Department of Homeland Security who run the SAVE database and the States—then you get to the step 2 of the SAVE America Act where you just require people, the day they vote, to show up and provide a valid photo ID in order to prove that they are who they say they are.

This is nothing radical. This is nothing extraordinary. This is nothing that millions of Americans don't already do every single day to board an airplane, to cash a check, enter a Federal building, pick up a prescription, go to the doctor, pick up tickets at will call, or do any of a whole host of other things.

Many of us were at airports across America today. I boarded a plane this

morning in Salt Lake City. When I boarded that plane, there were hundreds—thousands, in fact—of people wanting to get on an airplane. Every one of them had to prove who they were. They had to prove their identity. Not one of them, while doing so, was saying: Gosh, I am being disenfranchised—while doing it.

They understand that this is part of what we have to do, that there are times in life when you have got—where who you are matters and whether you are who you claim to be really matters. This is one of those moments.

And, again, the American people overwhelmingly agreed because it is just common sense. Mr. President, 83 percent, according to one poll, support voter ID. That is among all registered voters. Among just Republicans, that number jumps as high as 95 percent. I don't know who those remaining 5 percent were among Republicans who said they don't think you ought to have to have that.

My guess is that a significant percentage of them meant to answer the question the other way. And another significant percentage of those 5 percent are probably actually Democrats who just wrongly identified as Republicans for one reason or another. But this is still a minimum of 71 percent of Democrat voters who believe this is a good idea.

The only people who find this controversial in any significant numbers are right here, Democrats in the U.S. Senate.

So here is the question before the Senate: If hostile foreign governments are targeting our election systems, and they are; if China possesses hundreds of millions of American voter files, and it does; if the overwhelming majority of Americans support voter ID, and they do, then what exactly are we waiting for? What is it that is so critical, that is so essential, that is so timely, that is so time-sensitive that we are not debating this right now? Why don't we pull this bill up right now and debate it and announce that we are going to debate it until it passes?

If we were to do that, it would pass. It might take us a few days, it might take us a few weeks, but it would pass because the same animating desire, the smell of jet fumes, would eventually work its will, work its magic, and put our Members into a state of intoxication or sanity, regardless of how you might perceive it, where they would eventually negotiate this thing to the point that they could accept it because they know that with every passing day, when they filibuster this, this bill gets more popular and they get less popular. If you add to that the fact that they shouldn't be able to go home until we are finished with this—none of us should. If we were truly doing our job here, then the 60-vote cloture standard wouldn't be perceived as the insuperable obstacle that it has been described wrongly as being here today.

For a very long time, this Chamber operated without so much as a cloture

rule—even after the cloture rule was adopted in 1917 for the first time. Still, breaking a filibuster usually didn't involve a cloture vote. Most of the time, it just meant the Senate would come in and say: OK. We are debating this bill until it passes. If you want to filibuster it, you are going to have to speak. If you stop speaking and nobody else shows up to speak against it, then we will call the question, and we will do so in a simple majority vote.

It is only in the modern Senate that we have gotten our entire bearings wrong on what the filibuster is. Its whole purpose is to facilitate and prolong robust, meaningful debate—the modern filibuster, in which we look at it as a simple vote-counting exercise. Unless you can count to 60 on day one of a bill's consideration, you consider it failed. It is not just that it doesn't amplify it; it doesn't further the purpose of the filibuster. It undermines its very purpose. Rather than protecting robust debate, that renders debate obsolete.

Shame on us if we can't see that. Shame on us if we don't take the steps necessary to extricate ourselves from the sharp, clinging talons of the so-called zombie filibuster—the name I have assigned for the use of the 60-vote cloture standard as a de facto 60-vote passage standard, which it is not, which it was never meant to be, which, if it were, it would arguably run afoul of the Constitution because the Constitution makes clear—when you are setting a supermajority threshold as the minimum standard, it makes clear where that is.

There are several instances—including when you are proposing a constitutional amendment, you are ratifying a treaty, trying to overcome a Presidential veto, for example—where a two-thirds supermajority is required. Otherwise, it is a simple majority. And that continues to be the case under the Senate rules today. It is just that we think of the 60-vote cloture standard as synonymous with the threshold needed to pass. It is not.

The reason we talk about this, the reason I contrast what I call the real filibuster, the talking filibuster, against the zombie filibuster is that in the case of the zombie filibuster, nobody even has to work for it.

The way it always worked before and after they first adopted the cloture standard for the first time in 1917—although it was set at a three-fourths supermajority back then—they would just continue to debate it. That is what we should do here.

If you want to filibuster, you can. You may do so. But you should have to stand here and speak. And when nobody else shows up to speak against it, that is over, and you call the question on the bill, and you call it not at 60 votes, you call it at 51. That is what we ought to be doing. We should put this bill on the floor, and we should debate it until such time as it passes.

Now, are there other options? Heck yeah, there are, and I support pretty

much all of them. One option would be to attach it to a continuing resolution or a spending vehicle. Another would be to attach it, as the House of Representatives has done, to the National Defense Authorization Act.

When we received the National Defense Authorization Act that was passed by the House of Representatives last week, the Senate refused to bring it up. They refused to bring up even the Senate committee-processed version. They refused to give what we call front-end cloture or cloture on the motion to proceed.

See, this illustrates the problem I am pointing to. We are now into, what, our third, fourth instance of prominent pieces of legislation this year that have been unable to pass. Remember how the Department of Homeland Security was at least partially defunded for many months out of this fiscal year? The same thing happened there—we couldn't get the 60 votes, so we kept punting it.

What we should do every time that happens, just as it happened yesterday—or last week when we tried to get on the Defense Authorization Act—Democrats didn't vote for it, so we couldn't get the 60 votes on it. We should have continued trying to debate it and announced that we would stay on it until we could get the 60.

But regardless, even if you don't do that with a large bill like the National Defense Authorization Act, you should do it with a small, simple, overwhelmingly popular bill like the SAVE America Act. It would work. It would work. But we have to do the hard work to do it.

All right. So we have talked about attaching it to a spending bill or a defense authorization bill or some other must-pass vehicle. Another option under consideration involves budget reconciliation. Budget reconciliation has the obvious advantage in that there is no cloture in the context of budget reconciliation, but it has to be budgetary, meaning it has to bring about changes to mandatory outlays or to revenues.

Well, the SAVE America Act itself as a whole is properly perceived as a policy bill, not a budgetary one. There are features, there are elements of the SAVE America Act that are themselves arguably budgetary or at least could be made such in a budget reconciliation vehicle, and I look forward to working on that as well.

One way or another, we have to get this done. The American people are asking us to act. The President has asked us to act. The only thing standing in the way of this bill passing is the Senate and specifically our slavish devotion to the zombie filibuster. But, really, our slavish devotion to the zombie filibuster is not about the zombie filibuster or any kind of filibuster at all; it is slavish devotion to the truncated, predictable, light-duty legislative workweek. It is that coupled with the cloture standard that has created

the modern zombie filibuster mess in which our Democrat colleagues were able to keep the Department of Homeland Security at least partially defunded for months and months out of the year.

Now they want to use the same trick to make sure that our elections are not secure. Shame on them. Shame on all of them. Shame on anyone who is trying to do that.

For that matter, now that it has become abundantly clear that we have identified 278,000 noncitizen voter registrations just in those four States alone—California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York—I challenge those who are not yet on board with the SAVE America Act to come up with something else that will fix the problem because it is no longer an excuse—it is no longer acceptable to simply ignore it. We know too much now. We can't ignore this problem. If you don't like the way we have written this, tell us what your alternative is, but doing nothing is not an option.

So, look, we have been told meanwhile that there simply isn't enough time to debate SAVE America Act until it passes. Sorry. We would love to, but we can't.

I am sorry, this falls on deaf ears. This is absurd. To whatever degree we do not have time, it is because we are choosing not to give it the time that it needs, that it deserves, that it requires. And shame on all of us for betraying our oath to the Constitution and our own commitment to our own voters. We are expected to look out for them, to defend them, to respect them enough.

We have to give a crap—just enough of a crap in order to tell our voters, to say: We are not going to allow your vote to be offset by someone who is voting illegally.

That is the least we can do.

After this week, under the current schedule, the House and the Senate won't both simultaneously be back into session in the Capitol until—wait for it—September 14. Mid-September. This is the last week, absent some change in the respective Chambers' meeting schedules, the last legislative week until mid-September, which will take us to just—what is that?—6 weeks before the November election? That is unacceptable.

We don't have a lack of time; we have a lack of spine. Don't ever confuse lack of time with lack of spine because they are two very different things. If we truly lack time, that would be one thing. We have time. We are just choosing not to use it. We are choosing to use it differently and, I would add, very poorly if we don't take this up. Take it up now and stay on the bill until it darn well passes.

The Senate should stay here tomorrow, this weekend, next week, through weekends and long-scheduled recesses—as long as it takes. If opponents want to block it, let them do it in public. If Democrats want to fili-

buster this bill, let them stand and speak like actual Senators actually filibustering because that is what filibustering is. If they don't show up to do that, then we call the question, we call the vote, and we do so with a simple majority because that is what our rules allow us to do with votes when they don't filibuster. But you can't have the benefit of filibustering if you are not willing to filibuster.

Let them, as they are filibustering, explain why they are insisting that proving citizenship is somehow unreasonable in elections that are reserved for U.S. citizens. Let them explain why showing voter ID is simply too much to ask even though Americans show that they are comfortable showing ID in countless everyday interactions.

The American people are watching, and they should be. They know that this is not about Republicans. It is not about Democrats. This isn't about the last election or the one before that. No, this one is about the next election and every election that comes after that. It is about the future. It is about whether the American people can stand and look at our election systems and have the confidence they need when they lawfully cast their ballots. They need to be able to stand with a degree of confidence that their ballot, their vote won't be canceled by fraud, diluted by ineligible voting, or jeopardized by a system that Washington spent years insisting was beyond reasonable debate when, in fact, it was not.

American elections belong to American citizens. The SAVE America Act would make it easy to vote and hard to cheat.

We must pass the SAVE America Act. If we fail to do so, neither history nor today's voters will smile upon us.

I am now happy to turn the time over to my friend and colleague, the distinguished Senator from Ohio.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. HUSTED. Mr. President, I have greatly valued the opportunity to join my colleagues tonight in discussing the SAVE America Act and many aspects to the bill, but I want to focus on the election integrity aspect of the bill.

The people of Ohio have twice trusted me as their chief elections officer, having served two terms as Ohio secretary of state. In that time, I oversaw the Presidential elections in 2012 and 2016 and also the midterm elections in 2014 and 2018, so many primaries, local elections, and special elections.

I tell you all that because I know how to administer elections. I have done it. When Ohio was a very purple State, we were the focus of the Nation. I administered those elections, and I made my mission clear: Make Ohio a State where it is easy to vote and hard to cheat. That is the balance we are all trying to achieve. We want voters to cast ballots. We also want them to do it in a manner that is not a burden to them. I am going to explain why photo ID is not a burden to voters and why,

actually, in the end, it is an enhancement.

In Ohio, we implemented the photo ID requirement at the polls, and with the photo ID requirement intact, there was no evidence of voter suppression. In fact, with all of those election integrity measures in place in the 2024 Presidential election, we produced the second highest turnout in the last four Presidential elections.

So the bottom line is, the evidence suggests that the inclusion of photo ID, actually, is no impediment. Frankly, it could be argued that it makes the system easy to understand and enhances turnout.

Photo ID doesn't just protect election integrity, though. It does more. It makes our elections work better.

I want to make this case to my colleagues tonight that, if you don't want photo ID because you don't believe it is important for election integrity and you don't think that election integrity is enough of a reason to do it, well, I am going to point to the fact that photo ID also provides an ease for election administration. It makes it run better. It makes it run better, and I am going to give you a prime example of this.

Look at what happened in California's recent elections. We all remember what happened there. Some of the State's most important races took more than a week to determine the outcomes, and officials spent weeks finishing the count. During that time, the reported leaders in each election—in those very close races—changed several times. You would hear reports: Well, this candidate is up. Now this candidate is up. This candidate is in the lead.

And then, all of a sudden, they lose.

Every additional day in that debate that went on for over a week, about who actually won those elections, undermines the confidence in those elections. That speculation—justified or not—creates and undermines election confidence when voters have to wait for more than a week to get an answer about who won an election.

And I asked a California official why. Why did it take so long to count votes in California? The answer I, frankly, found to be pretty astonishing. This individual said the answer was simple: Every mail-in ballot has to go through a manual signature comparison with the signature on file.

So let me explain what that means. Instead of asking a voter to present a secure photo ID, which would clear it up right at the very beginning, California asks thousands of election workers to spend days trying to determine whether two signatures match or not.

That is their system for determining whether or not the individual voting is actually the right person?

California turns election workers into handwriting experts when the rest of America has settled on a far, far simpler way to verify identity, and that is photo ID. We don't need to

make the election workers handwriting experts. We can simply show a photo ID and say: Hey, we know who the person is who is casting the ballot. They are a valid voter. Let's give them a ballot.

It has been said many times. But please, we ask for a photo ID when we get on a plane. We ask for a photo ID when we open a bank account or a credit card, to check into a hotel, to buy alcohol, or to get prescription medications. This is not a burden on the American people.

But when it comes to protecting the most fundamental right in our democracy, some States are still comparing signatures by hand. That defies common sense.

A secure photo ID is faster. It is simpler. It is more objective. It helps election officials do their jobs more efficiently. It delivers results more quickly. And it gives Americans greater confidence that the eligible voter casting the ballot can legally cast that ballot and have it counted.

Election laws should make it easy to vote and hard to cheat. Requiring a photo ID does both. It is pretty simple. It protects the integrity of our elections, it improves the efficiency of our election system, and it strengthens public confidence in the outcome.

And I tell you. I have heard many Democrats say that they don't support the SAVE America Act. However, I did listen to the minority leader CHUCK SCHUMER say that their objection as Democrats is not to photo ID. Again, I listened carefully to my colleagues—I tried to pay attention—to get clues from them about what they might support. So, when the minority leader said that they didn't oppose photo ID, I thought that would be a great opportunity to take a simple slice of the SAVE America Act—photo ID—put that together in a bill and present it. Clearly, based on his comments, I thought we would get bipartisan support. But that wasn't true, apparently, because, even after we proposed that legislation, he objected to it.

I have and will continue to give my colleagues on both sides of the aisle the option to put their words into action. I have and will continue to put forward a clean, simple, straightforward bill to require photo ID in American elections—nothing more. It works in 36 States, and I promise you that, in States like California, where they have no photo ID law and it takes weeks to count ballots, their elections not only will have greater integrity, but their elections will be administered much more efficiently.

Believe me, there is no more unifying issue for Americans on election integrity than photo ID. The vast majority of the American people supports requiring a photo ID. You see it in poll after poll after poll. The vast majority of Americans thinks it is just common sense because they do it every single day as they live their lives and conduct business.

Americans deserve confidence in elections, supported by election integrity measures like photo ID. We can make it easy to vote and hard to cheat. Passing photo ID requirements are common sense. It is the right thing to do for election integrity and the right thing to do for voter confidence.

I will close with this: This is a rare bipartisan issue for Americans. It is rare that you have Americans, in this polarized world that we live in, who can all say—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—that we support the idea of photo ID for election integrity. They have united around it, and I think all of our constituents are wondering why we can't pass this simple legislation.

I hear it all the time as I travel across Ohio. Voters say: Hey, pass photo ID. Pass the SAVE America Act. You can do this. We should do this.

I agree. I think I have voted for it six times already, and I look forward to voting for it for seven, eight, nine. However many times it takes to get it done, we will get it done. If a few of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would join us in supporting the will of the American people, we could get it done sooner. We can give the American people election integrity, the efficient administration of elections, and boost public confidence in elections. Ultimately, more trust in our elections gives us more trust in the government and in the people that we are electing.

Let's get this done. It is long past time to get the photo ID portion of SAVE America passed. Let's do it. The time is now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The other, more handsome, Senator from Ohio.

Mr. MORENO. Mr. President, that may be a rule XIX violation.

(Laughter.)

We have heard a lot of arguments tonight, and I feel badly for the people at home, honestly, because they are only hearing one side of the argument, and I think most Americans want to hear both sides of an argument. I think that is what makes the U.S. Senate—at least theoretically—interesting, because this is billed as being the most deliberative body on Earth.

Yet, 2 hours ago, there were 40 Democrat Senators who came to this Chamber—who walked into this Chamber—and voted. Yet there isn't a single, solitary Democrat Senator sitting here today, this evening, listening to any of this conversation. You can't really persuade people if they are not even willing to listen to the conversation or, quite frankly, to even debate the issues.

So I thought what we would do tonight is, maybe, debate it for them.

So, if you could summon your inner Democrat Senator—I would ask my colleague from Utah and my other colleague from Ohio to summon their inner Democrat Senator and start with No. 1.

The objection that I have heard of this conversation—we heard it at committee the other day—is how this bill absolutely rips apart States' rights.

You talked about that, Senator LEE, in your conversation. I am not going to repeat what you said because you said it much better than I could ever say it, but I will point out that, back in 2023, the Democrats wanted to pass a bill called H.R. 1. H.R. 1 means it was the No. 1 bill proposed by the House of Representatives at the time. There was a Senate version called S. 1, meaning it was the first priority of the Senate's.

As the Presiding Officer knows, I think we are up to S. 7000 right now. There have been lots of bills introduced. But this was the first one—meaning top priority. What was that bill called, you ask? It was called the For the People Act.

Personally, I don't know how anybody could be against a bill that is called "For the People" because you would have to be against being for the people. It is pretty good. I know, in the car business, they accuse us of bait and switch and false advertising. I think the FTC would take that one up in a heartbeat as false advertising.

What did the For the People Act do? What did H.R. 1 do? It nationalized our elections. It literally took all of the power away from States and concentrated it here in Washington, DC.

You think: Was this done to improve voter integrity?

Oh, no, no. You would be grossly mistaken. This was about eliminating States' rights to enforce voter ID, proof of citizenship, controls on mail-in balloting, controls on how people register to vote.

So imagine, just a few years ago, Democrats wanted to nationalize elections to strip away voter integrity, and now they are saying it is an affront to States' rights to insist on simple voter ID and proof of citizenship.

Would you consider that hypocrisy, Senator LEE?

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in colloquy.

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

Mr. LEE. Whether you call it hypocrisy and inconsistency or something else, it can't be reconciled with what they themselves have done.

Now, I have got a copy right here of a significant portion of that bill, the bill offered up by the Senate Democrats in 2021 during the 117th Congress—the so-called For the People Act. I mean, what is not to like if you are for the people? And if you are against that, apparently, you are against the people. Maybe we should have thought of that when we named the SAVE America Act. But, regardless, that horse is out of the barn.

This is a part of that bill, and it is the specific part of the bill in subtitle 1, section 1709 that requires voter ID.

You see, the Democrats themselves had their own voter ID act, their own voter ID legislation. This is not State

legislation; this is right here in this Chamber. They wanted to pass their own voter ID law.

Now, theirs is a little different than ours. Theirs is a little bit more permissive. They allow all sorts of other things, like—depending on how you read it, you could argue that a library card without your picture on it would even suffice under this. I wouldn't draw it quite like that, but the point is they were going to do something to require voter ID.

Even though we might draw the boundaries a little bit differently than they do—and we, in fact, do in ours—they were doing the very same thing that they are now condemning us for doing because, if the SAVE America Act is commandeering a State issue on the part of the Federal Government, then so, too, was the For the People Act. If it is wrong to have—and if it is disenfranchisement to require—voter ID, then theirs does that, too. It is just that ours is well written. Theirs was a little bit sloppy. But, you know, it was a step, maybe, in the right direction.

The point is, they have no leg to stand on when claiming that the Federal Government has no business doing this. Why? Well, because, first of all, it flatly contradicts article I, section 4 of the Constitution, which plainly does give us that authority to operate within the space as it relates to Federal elections. And, secondly, this is something they themselves have already done.

Mr. MORENO. So I think we should let the Democrats respond to that point. It is a good one.

Mr. LEE. Yes.

Mr. MORENO. You know, in debate, they taught me, if there is nobody who objects to your point, that that point is made. So I think the Democrats have ceded that point.

Mr. LEE. I think that is right.

There is a part of me that is now tempted to seek to pass by unanimous consent at least that portion of the SAVE America Act that consists of a voter ID law because they themselves have said, over and over again, that they have got no problems with voter ID laws until, of course, they do have a problem with them.

Mr. MORENO. The response?

Hearing none.

All right. We are going to move on to objection No. 2; that is, it is already illegal. It is interesting because that is a good point. I look and that and go: Wow, they just made a really good point. This is already illegal. What problem are we trying to solve?

Now, of course, we know it is already illegal. What we are asking is to have the integrity of it. So what they are trying to do is say: Speeding is illegal, but you can't check to see if anybody is speeding, which makes it legal. Because if you are not enforcing laws, aren't you, in effect, eliminating those laws?

So if they are saying: Well, it is already illegal. You don't need to prove

you are a citizen because it is already illegal to vote as a noncitizen, but if you are not allowing inspections of voter rolls, making certain that people are purged properly, wouldn't that be basically ignoring the law completely?

Mr. LEE. Yes. As Cicero once said on the floor of the Roman Senate: If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice—actually, that wasn't Cicero; it was Rush in the song "Freewill."

But the point was made: When you are aware of something and you do nothing about it, that, by itself, is a decision.

They have identified that this is an issue. And by suggesting that we move forward while doing nothing about it, that—there is an inexorable, inescapable conclusion that one derives from that, which is: They are just fine with this form of cheating. They are just fine with the very real possibility that up to 278,000 noncitizens, in those 4 States alone that we mentioned—to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands in other States that might be registered to vote illegally—that those guys are going to vote. They are just fine with that. Let that sink in.

Mr. MORENO. Democrat response?

Hearing none.

The other objection that we get is our elections are already secure. Our elections are very secure.

But doesn't it kind of override common sense to say: If you are not having to prove you are a citizen to vote, if you are not having to show your ID, if we just automatically mail out ballots without really knowing that that person is there and that person didn't request it, aren't we opening the door to having that lack of integrity of our elections?

I will tell you a quick anecdotal story. I was asked to be an election monitor by the Governor of Colombia in a recent Presidential election. I knew as much about the Colombian election as any American, meaning nothing. So I went down there, and they require all the things I just talked about. They require everybody to be a citizen of Colombia to vote in Colombian elections. They require that ID to be shown. They actually have facial recognition scanners and fingerprint readers in case there is a question whether that picture matches you. You know, like, if you are the Realtor that has the picture of you 40 years ago, sometimes it is like: Is that really you? So they have the facial recognition, the fingerprint, paper ballots.

So I was huddling with the registrar afterwards. And, of course, we are in Colombia; so we are speaking Spanish. And I said to him: Well, what happens if somebody doesn't show up with a voter ID, like, his ID? What do you do?

And we were having a pretty good conversation until I asked that question. And he turned to his assistant and in Spanish says: I think the Senator has lost his Spanish because I don't understand what he is asking me.

And his assistant repeated it.

And he completely looked at me like I was a knucklehead and said: Why would you possibly let somebody vote that doesn't have an ID to prove who they are?

In other words, the question was so ridiculous that he thought it had to be a language barrier.

Is there any way to justify the other position, since our colleagues—who were just here. They all ran off. During your speech, the majority leader ran through—is there any justification for not having to do this?

Mr. LEE. There is a justification. The justification goes something like this: Those people who might be purged from this because they are noncitizens and therefore not legally registered to vote are our voters, meaning Democrat voters.

Mr. MORENO. But they wouldn't make that case to the American public.

Mr. LEE. They wouldn't make that case if they were committed to the rule of law, and yet they have made the case. We have heard them do it.

Some of them, on the floor of the U.S. Senate, have said: These are our voters.

I don't know whether that was a Freudian slip, but I have heard it made several times where they say: These are our voters who would be at stake here—and then they go on about disenfranchisement.

This disenfranchises no one unless it is a noncitizen who is illegally voting based on a fraudulent voter registration.

Mr. MORENO. Do you think it is possible that in a country like Colombia that has incredible amounts of ethnic diversity and Hispanics—like myself, I was born there—that when you are Hispanic and you are in Colombia, you are able to find your ID, but that when you cross the border, you lose that ability? And I am thinking to myself: Is that true?

And then I went to find my driver's license here. I actually do not currently possess my ID on me. So maybe there is something to this idea that Hispanics who enter America cannot find their ID.

Do you think that is possible?

Mr. LEE. It certainly is possible. And I wonder—I mean, we will have a separate conversation off the floor. I am trying to wonder which words in Spanish they uttered. I am trying to imagine them saying something like: Has this guy lost his mind? After he moved to the United States when he was 8 years old, he has now adopted the ways of North America and he has lost it.

Perhaps there is something about the tropical climate of Colombia that causes them to make more sense there, but perhaps you have lost your sense now that you have moved to Ohio? Perhaps the rationale?

Mr. MORENO. Well, obviously, we are being sarcastic, and the reason we are being sarcastic is this is really ridiculous. It actually is just blatantly

ridiculous that we are sitting here on the floor of the U.S. Senate, not debating—at all, by the way, clearly—not talking about the problems that everyday Americans are facing, but trying to get some 80–20, 90–10 issues across the finish line, and Democrats won't even engage in the conversation. Because it is so ridiculous that we have the Olive Garden require ID for the all-you-can eat pasta bowl, but we allow people to vote without showing who they are. That is just truly, patently absurd.

What is even more absurd is that my colleague from Ohio put forward a very simple voter ID. Just said: Hey, look—by the way, photo ID means the ID has to have a photo. That is in the word. So you have to have something that has your photo, your name, and your signature in order to vote. He put that bill forward because he is a good guy. He wants to get things done. He is somebody who genuinely in his heart of hearts is drawn to service. That is who Senator HUSTED is.

They had said they would vote for voter ID. He put it on the floor three times. That bill has been on the floor of the Senate three times. And all three times Democrats have voted against simple voter ID.

That makes no sense.

I have also—next objection—I have heard Democrats talk about: Well, States already have voter ID. In fact, one of our Democrat colleagues was on ABC yesterday talking about how there is already voter ID, except not in his State. And it was the moderator who had to point that out to him.

That was embarrassing because you really should know the voter laws in your own State.

But clearly not all States require voter ID. So all we are saying is: Let's just have all 50 States require voter ID, and let's have all 50 States require proof of citizenship.

Final one I hear quite a bit—in fact, I hear it most from the minority leader—is that this is Jim Crow 2.0.

For those of you who are under the age of 60 who may not know what that means, it basically means this is racist—which is, of course, the ultimate laziest way to attack somebody because they just label you a racist: This is Jim Crow 2.0.

And those are dark, dark, dark times in American history. And I think using those kinds of references is just grossly inappropriate.

Mr. LEE. Senator MORENO, which party was the party of Jim Crow?

Mr. MORENO. That would be the Democrat Party.

And what is even more interesting about that is that phrase, Jim Crow 2.0—you know how sometimes you are like: Haven't I heard that before? And we have heard that before. When Georgia reformed its elections laws, I think 2021—I don't know the exact date—the Democrats called it Jim Crow 2.0. In fact, the Major League Baseball moved the All-Star Game from Atlanta be-

cause they said they couldn't support these kinds of racist actions in Georgia. Companies boycotted Georgia because of this. Georgia was persona non grata as a State.

But they went forward with their elections reforms. And what was the result? Record voter turnout. Zero issue with anybody having voter ID.

In fact, the Senators from Georgia—one of them is running right now under the very laws that he called Jim Crow 2.0, and he hasn't given one speech in which he says that Georgia's voter laws are anything other than common sense.

Now, you remember even celebrities went out and did videos bemoaning Georgia. If that is not hypocrisy, what is?

But here is how I will end for my colleagues: I think the American people deserve a debate.

By the way, not just on this issue. I have been here for 18 months. Mr. President, you have been here for exactly the same period of time. This is exactly the number of debates I have seen in this Chamber: zero—zero debates. I think most Americans—I think you and I are probably shocked by that. Because when you and I were running for office, we are like: We are going to get ready. We are going in to debate.

We don't do debates. We do things like this: empty floor, not a single Democrat hearing the argument.

I am bringing up: Hey, how about this? There is nobody to respond. Let's have a debate.

When 80-plus percent of the American people support a piece of legislation, it boggles the imagination of how the U.S. Senate can't, at a minimum, debate the issue.

So to my colleagues, my Democrat side, we don't need to get rid of the filibuster—just like you wanted to, by the way. The Democrats wanted to get rid of the filibuster to pass the For the People Act, by the way. Thanks to Manchin and Sinema, that didn't happen.

But we don't have to do that. Let's have a debate. Come out here point by point and explain to the American people why you feel the way you do.

I don't want to speak for anybody else, but I can tell you the Republicans are ready for that debate. We look forward to that debate. The American people deserve that debate. Let's do it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, just a brief comment as we wrap up our conversation for this evening. Moments ago, we heard my friend and colleague, the Senator from Ohio, talk about identifying—the need for people to identify themselves. He talked about the fact that he, on one recent occasion, started looking for his photo ID and couldn't find it.

And yet he has one. Even as he stands here today, he has got a pin on his lapel. That pin signifies that he is

a U.S. Senator. So that, by itself, identifies who he is.

Long before he got here, he had to prove that he was a U.S. citizen and that he was otherwise eligible to run for the U.S. Senate. When he ran for the Senate in the State of Ohio, he had to provide that documentation to the elections personnel there. He had to show up the day he voted and prove who he was.

He has had to prove who he was even since he has been elected. He had to produce an election certificate from his State's chief elections authority before he could come here.

Then when he started here, he had to produce an ID, as every employee has to provide to the new employer, whatever, starting a new job.

And he had to prove to the satisfaction of the Secretary of the Senate that he is, in fact, the same BERNIE MORENO who was elected to the U.S. Senate from the State of Ohio.

You have to go through all those steps before you get to wear one of these pins. And without being able to wear one of these pins and be sworn in, you can't vote here.

And the people who vote for you in most States represented by most Senators—including most Democrat Senators—have also had to show who they are.

It is not too late for us to get this done, nor is it too much for us to ask the American people to do that which they have to do every single day—sometimes many times in the same day—to show that they are who they claim to be.

Our right to vote, our most sacred incident of U.S. citizenship, requires nothing less.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO TOM LEE

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. President, it is an honor to pay tribute today to Judge Tom Lee, who has recently assumed inactive status after more than 40 years on the Federal bench. Judge Lee was appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1984 to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District Court of Mississippi. He would go on to serve as chief judge from 1996 to 2003 and as chief judge he oversaw the implementation of the Case Management and Electronic Case Filing System, a system still used by the Federal Courts today. Early in Judge Lee's career prior to this appointment, he was a legal stalwart in his native Scott County serving as county prosecutor, youth court judge, and city of Forest municipal court judge—well, maybe referring to his hometown of Forest as a city is

a bit of a stretch. Preceding Judge Lee's legal career beginnings in his hometown, he graduated from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1965 and served in the U.S. Army Reserve as a captain in the JAG Corps from 1965–1973.

The respect Judge Lee earned during more than four decades of judicial service has no limit. A defining characteristic of Judge Lee's remarkable career is his deep commitment to applying the law fairly and impartially. However, not only has Judge Lee earned a strong reputation for applying the law fairly, but he is also known to have done so with humility, courtesy, and integrity. Highly regarded for his strong intellectual ability too, these qualities have earned Judge Lee the deep admiration of so many legal professionals who have witnessed his service on the bench. Throughout Judge Lee's career, lawyers, litigants, law clerks, court reporters, court employees, and fellow judges have all praised his outstanding character in how he handled matters before his court.

During his time on the bench, Judge Lee has presided over a number of high-profile cases. His most recent high-profile case was the “Goon Squad Case” in March of 2024. It was one of the most challenging and closely watched criminal cases in Mississippi's recent history. Consistent with Judge Lee's career, he approached that responsibility with fairness, careful deliberation, and an unwavering commitment to the rule of law. Judge Lee's work on that case serves as an example of the strong integrity and judicial temperament that has defined his career.

So many members of Mississippi's legal community have been influenced by Judge Lee. I am certain their careers have been enhanced by Judge Lee's legacy and follow the example he set as it applies to their own professional circumstances. Judge Lee's legacy will undoubtedly continue long after his years of active judicial have concluded. The State of Mississippi is blessed that Judge Tom Lee is one of our own as is our Nation's judicial system as a whole.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. KRISTINA SAWETZ-GLASENER

• Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, along with my colleague Senator MIKE CRAPO, we join in honoring Dr. Kristina Sawetz-Glasener, Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor and Licensed Clinical Social Worker, for her devotion in serving children and families across the Washington, DC, area. We thank her for facilitating a hands-on interactive session with the Senate Moms group.

Dr. Kristina Sawetz-Glasener is the owner of her own private practice, the Creative Counseling Center of Northern

Virginia, LLC. She simultaneously serves the community by working on grant-funded initiatives in preschools and nonprofits. Dr. Kristina is the NOVA Regional co-chair for the Virginia Association for Play Therapy and was awarded the 2026 Play Therapist of the Year by the Virginia Association for Play Therapy.

With over 15 years of experience, Dr. Kristina has continually dedicated herself to the community by providing invaluable mental health services to children and families. She earned her doctorate from Lesley University in expressive therapies, and her doctoral research utilized sandtray and creative arts to aid siblings of children with cancer in communicating their lived experience. Dr. Kristina is a mother of two and understands the demands impressed upon working mothers.

Our staff lead the Senate Moms group, a bipartisan group of more than 200 moms employed by the U.S. Senate. The group's regular meetings and internal resources in the Senate help working moms feel united and supported in navigating the Senate workplace and raising children in the Washington, DC, area.

Thank you, Dr. Kristina, for your inspiring work to ground and connect them to what truly matters by exploring their experiences as working mothers. You have set an excellent example for the many moms who help keep the U.S. Senate functioning day-to-day. We wish you the best in all the future offerings you.●

RECOGNIZING GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION FIREFIGHTERS

• Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the service and bravery of the hundreds of Georgia Forestry Commission personnel, volunteers, and paid firefighters who worked to suppress wildfires that ravaged over 50,000 acres in south Georgia this year.

Since April, these fires forced hundreds of families from their homes across south Georgia. Combined, the Highway 82 Fire and Pineland Road Fire have destroyed over a hundred homes.

State officials have said both fires are now fully contained, thanks in large part to the tireless efforts of the Georgia Forestry Commission. Hundreds of volunteer and paid firefighters have been working around the clock to stop these devastating fires to protect our communities.

Since 1921, the Georgia Forestry Commission has provided leadership, service, and education to protect and conserve Georgia's forest resources, including defending our State from over 2,300 wildfires annually. These firefighters have now added another chapter to this proud legacy, defeating these unprecedented fires with professionalism and dedication under the leadership of GFC director Johnny Sabo.

With gratitude for their service, as Georgia's U.S. Senator, I recognize and