

The minority leader, who spoke a little earlier today, seems to be very happy about it. Just yesterday, when talking to the press, the minority leader said this. He said these extreme candidates make their party stronger.

Well, Senator SCHUMER may be thrilled with the direction that his party is taking, and now look what happened last night in Michigan. The Democrat candidate for Senate winning the primary yesterday in Michigan is truly an extremist—radical, extreme, dangerous, and, in my opinion, scary. He has been endorsed by Senator BERNIE SANDERS, and just recently he hit the campaign trail with a leftwing activist, a political activist who blamed 9/11—we are almost near the 25th anniversary of the attacks on 9/11 on the United States of America—blamed those attacks on America and the American people.

This is a Democrat Party that has a manifesto and a mantra. They have a radical set of beliefs, and they are clearly those of the Democrat nominee in Michigan.

The driving force in the Democrat Party today wants to abolish prisons. The driving force in the Democrat Party today has endorsed any and all efforts to release dangerous prisoners from the jails onto the streets of communities all across the country. The driving force in the Democrat Party is calling to defund the police. The driving force in the Democrat Party is calling to eliminate Immigration and Customs Enforcement in this country. They don't want borders, don't think we ought to have borders. They want ICE completely eliminated. Democrats want to go back to the dangerous Biden years when it comes to protecting our borders, and 10 million illegal immigrants flooded into this country. The Democrats want millions and millions more to come into America.

What do they want to do in terms of funding for these things? Well, the Democrats want to have hard-working taxpayers pay for healthcare for all the illegal immigrants who come here. Radical ideas like that were once the fringe of the Democrat Party. No longer. No, no. That fringe now controls the Democrat Party.

As a senior Senator who is a Democrat said, who sits right over there—he said it is a sign that the Democrat Party is “alive and well.” Senator SCHUMER said yesterday it makes their party stronger. It doesn't make America stronger. It makes America weaker. It makes America more vulnerable.

That is where we are today. Democrats seem willing to tear up the Constitution and tear down America. If you listen to some of these candidates, it sounds like they hate America. They want America to fail. That seems to be what they are aiming for.

Well, Republicans are not going to allow that to happen—no. We are going to continue to fight the extremists, and we are going to continue to fight for freedom, for liberty, and for continued American greatness.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Now, Mr. President, on a separate matter, Senate Republicans are confirming individuals who will keep the American people safe.

Last week, I met with Todd Blanche. He has been nominated to be the next Attorney General of the United States. I support him. He clearly is the right man for the job, and it is time for the Senate to move forward and confirm him.

Todd Blanche has led an impressive legal career. He belongs in this job. He brings to the job a decade of experience at the very Department of Justice. That includes his current service as the Acting Attorney General. Under his leadership, the Department of Justice is focusing once again on its core mission, and that is the mission of fighting crime and upholding the rule of law.

Today, Americans are safer. Murder rates have fallen dramatically under this administration. So have deaths from drug overdoses. And Mr. Blanche has fought forcefully for the safety and security of the American people.

Today, the Department is prosecuting drug cartels. It is dismantling gangs of violent criminals. Mr. Blanche has also been a key leader in Republicans' war against fraud. He helped establish a new Division in the Department of Justice to do exactly just that, and it is already, today, succeeding.

Mr. Blanche knows what it takes to lead the Department of Justice. It takes integrity. It takes accountability. And he is going to lead with both of those characteristics. That is why his nomination is supported by former Department of Justice officials, by so many attorneys general from States, and by law enforcement.

Former Attorney General Bill Barr is one such supporter. He recently praised Todd Blanche in an editorial in the Wall Street Journal. He said:

Throughout his career [Todd Blanche] has shown the personal determination, discipline and thick skin [that the] position demands.

That is exactly right. Todd Blanche is dedicated to the rule of law. He is fearless, he is focused, and he is fair. As Attorney General, he is going to provide candid advice even when it is not easy. He is going to stand up for the United States, and he will keep America safe and protect the American people. It is time to confirm him as Attorney General.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to deliver up to 15 minutes of remarks before we proceed to the vote.

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

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, colleagues, there is a lot going on in the country right now—actually, a lot going on around the world. And I rise today not to address specifically the cost-of-living challenges that so many working families are struggling with. That is certainly a topic of news these days—rightfully so. I am not here to focus on what families of deployed servicemembers must be feeling right now, although that is certainly worthy of our thoughts and consideration and empathy, particularly the family members and the loved ones of the 18 servicemembers that have lost their lives in this unauthorized war with Iran that the President has brought us into.

I want to focus on something that about a year ago was really dominating the evening news and a lot of our social media feeds—immigration, and specifically this administration's cruel, often violent tactics as part of their mass deportation agenda.

Families are still being torn apart. Tens of thousands of immigrants are currently being detained in detention centers around the country. Loved ones of those killed by Federal agents in broad daylight are also still hurting, including the family of Johan Sebastian Guerrero, the 25-year-old father and immigrant from Colombia who had work authorization, who was driving in his car last month when a Federal agent opened fire, shooting him in the head and killing him.

I hope you remember the story. It wasn't that long ago. If you followed the story, you will know that his partner and his 3-year-old daughter, still dressed in her Bluey pajamas that morning, were there at the scene because it was so close to their home.

According to witnesses, Johan's last words were:

I tried to stop.

I raise this because whenever there is a tragedy like this that happens, under this administration, we quickly hear from Department officials, from the White House, and MAGA supporters that all these victims had to do was to follow instructions, as if it was their fault they were being shot and, in some instances, killed. Well, that is exactly what Johan was attempting to do. Yet he was killed anyway.

I know we don't have all the details of exactly how this tragedy unfolded. In large part, we don't have all the details because some people say “Well, let's go to the video; let's go to the body cam footage and see exactly what happened,” but despite receiving billions and billions of taxpayer dollars, which included funding for body cameras, these officers weren't wearing any.

But there are a couple of things that we know for certain. First of all, Johan Sebastian Guerrero's daughter should still have her father. Second—and this is publicly reported—the man who took his life should never have been given a badge and a gun. And that is not just

coming from me; that is coming from Tom Homan—that is right—President Trump's "border czar," who recently said in a TV interview:

I don't think he should ever have cleared vetting.

From what we have learned, this is a man who verbally, emotionally, and physically abused not just one but two ex-wives and once threw his 13-year-old daughter through a glass coffee table. So Mr. Homan is absolutely right when he says that this man's hiring was a failure of the Agency's vetting process.

But it is emblematic of a much larger failure within the Department of Homeland Security. ICE has rushed, this last year, to put as many officers as it could into communities as quickly as possible—something pretty hypocritical, by the way, from an administration calling for the revetting of previously vetted refugees and other immigrants.

But I digress. In less than a year, ICE has hired more than 12,000 officers, a 120-percent increase in staffing—huge increase in a small amount of time. In part, they were so eager to hire up that they were offering \$50,000 bonuses for people who signed on to the Agency. Along the way, they also lowered recruitment standards to try to hire as many people as possible, and they shortened training—shortened training—for law enforcement officers before deploying them into the streets.

Anybody with history and experience with State and local law enforcement knows what happens when you do this. It is a bad combination, a recipe for disaster when you hire too quickly, shorten training, and lower recruitment standards. Now the Federal Government is seeing the consequences of those bad decisions.

How many more unqualified individuals who have not been sufficiently vetted or trained are now in our communities, not just armed but armed as if they are going to war—that is not the job they are doing—and, along the way, violating constitutional rights; using excessive force; risking innocent lives; and, worst of all, facing no accountability?

Colleagues, accountability isn't an inconvenience for law enforcement; it is imperative in a society where we entrust law enforcement officers with the power to take our lives, our liberty, or our property when warranted. Accountability is what gives law enforcement the legitimacy in a democracy, but that is not what is going on today.

Just a couple of weeks ago, it was reported that the FBI will no longer investigate confrontations with immigration enforcement agents. Instead, Homeland Security will do the investigating to determine whether officers or agents have broken the law. If true, how is that supposed to inspire confidence or legitimacy? After all, it has been 6 months since the killing of Alex Pretti and Renee Nicole Goode, and still nobody has been held accountable for those deaths.

Let me repeat their names: Alex Pretti, Renee Nicole Good, Ruben Ray Martinez, Silverio Villegas Gonzalez, Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, Joan Sebastian Guerrero.

God, I pray there is not more to come.

How many more need to die before this administration recognizes, acknowledges, and admits that something is deeply wrong?

Another important point I want to make today is that these failures don't end on the streets in our communities; they are also happening inside the walls of detention facilities, where as of yesterday, at least 54 people have died since the beginning of this administration.

The year 2025 was a record year—not a good record—the most deaths in ICE custody in a calendar year, and we are on track to exceed that in 2026. At this moment, more than 67,000 people are being held in overcrowded and understaffed facilities, where many are denied access to healthy food, clean water, even basic medical care—forget about lifesaving care for people with extreme conditions, folks that I have seen and talked to personally, suffering from injuries they sustained when being taken into custody because of the cruelty and the violence of how it is being done.

And reporting just this morning from the Associated Press shows us more than 50 parents and spouses of Active-Duty servicemembers have been detained since the beginning of the second Trump administration, and at least six have been deported.

Think about that. Their sons and daughters, husbands and wives are willing to put their lives on the line for this country during wartime, no less, and the Trump administration is rewarding their service by detaining and deporting their family members.

Yet, despite all this, Donald Trump and those around him keep repeating the lie that they are only going after "the worst of the worst."

It is not true. Even Federal courts have found that the conditions in these detention facilities, by the way, are unacceptable. A Federal district court judge in California just ordered improvements to basic needs like access to clean water, nutritious food, and medical and disability care in the Adelanto ICE Processing Center, basic standards of humanity that are both Federal law and international law.

In February, a similar order to provide access to medical care was issued regarding the large detention center in California, the one located in California City. But just last week, we learned from a neutral court-appointed monitor that ICE is failing to comply with that order.

This administration just doesn't care.

Despite these deaths, despite these conditions, and despite the enormous human toll, the administration is actually doubling down. ICE arrested 51,000

people in the month of July, the largest in a single month in DHS history. And again, the vast majority are not dangerous, violent criminals.

So we have a historic number of arrests coupled with a historic number of deaths in ICE custody, and this administration has the audacity to ignore court orders to provide basic care and dignity to the people that it is cramming into these detention facilities.

And on top of all that, the Republican majority in this Congress has given ICE and Border Patrol more than \$150 billion with no accountability, no safeguards required. So they don't even have to come back to Congress to justify their funding requests and answer questions for the next 3 years.

ICE is now expanding detention facilities while continuing to carry out these mass enforcement operations across the country.

They are failing. They are failing the humanity test. They are being ordered by Federal courts to do the job right. They are doubling down and growing their operation.

And we now know that over 300,000 Haitian immigrants are now facing arrests and deportation after the Trump administration has ripped away their temporary protected status.

Colleagues, how many people need to die at the hands of ill-trained, unqualified, and unaccountable Federal agents and inside inhumane detention centers before we as a Congress—at least the Senate—say: Enough.

Before we call for accountability and demand commonsense reforms, what is it going to take? Because our proposals are out there, like my **VISIBLE Act** which says immigration enforcement officials have to have very clear, very visible identification, something that is standard for law enforcement Agencies nationwide.

If a group of masked individuals in unmarked cars runs you off the road, jumps out of their cars with guns drawn, and starts screaming in your face without any way to easily and quickly know that they are Federal agents, of course somebody is going to panic.

We just saw that exact scenario play out in Houston a few weeks ago. Lorenzo Salgado Araujo was driving in his van on his way to work when two unmarked cars without sirens or lights began chasing him, eventually blocking his car on a small side street.

As he was trying to turn around, they shot him and killed him. Without any clear identification, how could Lorenzo know that these cars chasing him belonged to law enforcement?

As one expert reviewing the footage of this chase from public cameras said, it "looks more like a carjacking attempt than it [is] a police stop."

And we wonder why some people panic.

That is exactly why we need basic standards for Federal law enforcement like those called for in Senator BOOKER's Federal Law Enforcement Standards and Accountability Act.

And for the protection of agents and civilians alike, law enforcement needs to have the body cameras and to have them turned on, which the FOCUS Act would require. These are the kinds of basic safeguards that Democrats have been proposing over and over again, but the administration and the Republican majority doesn't want to act on it.

Now, we have a lot of policy debates here in Congress, but too often, we lose sight of the people behind the headlines and the people behind the statistics that are impacted by these policies.

Joan Sebastian Guerrero was one of those people, as are thousands of others living in fear today: mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters. They are our friends. They are our coworkers and neighbors, all human beings deserving of basic dignity and humanity.

Last month, Joan Sebastian Guerrero got into his car expecting just a normal, regular day, and now his daughter will grow up in a world without him in it. She carries his memory with her for the rest of her life—not only of him, but how he was taken from her. She will remember that forever.

Colleagues, I implore that we remember as well. Let's learn from it and do everything possible to keep it from happening again because we are a nation of laws that need to be enforced, but a nation of laws includes being a nation of due process, of accountability, and above all, human dignity.

We should never accept an America where Federal agents hide their faces, abuse their authority, or take life without oversight and accountability.

It is a choice, folks, that we are making. What kind of a country are we working toward? It is a choice that this administration and congressional Republicans have made of what we are seeing on the streets. America deserves better. America deserves better.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Erica Schwartz, of Florida, to be Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Jim Banks, Bill Cassidy, John Barrasso, John Boozman, Cynthia M. Lummis, Jon Husted, John Hoeven, John Cornyn, Joni Ernst, Bill Hagerty, Kevin Cramer, Chuck Grassley, Ted Budd.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination

of Erica Schwartz, of Florida, to be Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN: I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGOS), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 219 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Armstrong	Ernst	Moody
Banks	Fischer	Moran
Barrasso	Graham	Moreno
Blackburn	Grassley	Murkowski
Boozman	Hagerty	Paul
Britt	Hawley	Ricketts
Budd	Hoeven	Risch
Capito	Husted	Rounds
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Collins	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Lummis	Tuberville
Curtis	Marshall	Wicker
Daines	McCormick	Young

NAYS—43

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Baldwin	Kelly	Schiff
Bennet	Kim	Schumer
Blumenthal	King	Shaheen
Blunt Rochester	Lujan	Slotkin
Booker	Markey	Smith
Cantwell	Merkley	Van Hollen
Coons	Murphy	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murray	Warnock
Duckworth	Ossoff	Warren
Durbin	Padilla	Welch
Fetterman	Peters	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Reed	Wyden
Hassan	Rosen	
Heinrich	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—6

Gallago	Johnson	McConnell
Hirono	Klobuchar	Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Erica Schwartz, of Florida, to be Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am nearing the end of my Senate term, and I am reflecting on some historic events which I have witnessed at this table, at this desk. One of the most historic I remember—and specifically the date—January 6, 2021. The reason why that day was important was that the votes all across America had been counted to see who was elected President in the 2020 election, and the process involved certification by the House and the Senate of the electoral votes that were to be counted.

In the past, it has been almost a pro forma event, hardly noticed by anyone. But on January 6, 2021, it was much different—much different. The Presiding Officer of the Senate for that electoral vote count is the Vice President of the United States; in this case, it was Vice President Pence.

There was more security than usual in the Capitol Building. To those who are here today witnessing this session and visiting the Capitol, you are lucky. You are protected by one of the best security forces, police forces, in the Nation, the Capitol Hill Police. Most Americans don't know much about them. Those of us who serve in Congress know a lot about them. These are men and women who keep you safe and me safe in the Capitol Building and make sure that the visitors have peace of mind when they come and go.

We want to maintain the availability of this building to visitors from certainly the United States, but from all around the world. And these men and women—some in uniform, some in ordinary dress—make sure that happens. Well, on January 6, 2021, there was a special emphasis on security. The reason: It was not only a historic event with Members of Congress in their chairs and the Vice President of the United States presiding over the Senate. There was also a rally going on downtown by the outgoing President of the United States, Donald Trump, at the end of his first term.

He had summoned his supporters and friends to come for a rally down by the White House and the Washington Monument that day. No coincidence. It was an attempt to put pressure on Congress not to count the electoral votes.

You see, the President then and now had this fiction in his mind that he actually won the election. He was only off by 7 million votes—that is how much he lost it by. But he kept filing lawsuits and making protests and arguing that he should be President again. At one point, he dispatched the thousands—thousands—of people that he had summoned to Washington to leave the Washington Monument area and to march on the Capitol, and they did.

So we were sitting inside with the knowledge that these thousands of people were coming up to our building