

But I will tell you what is actually ridiculous: defending secret police after they murder or maim or brutalize people in our streets. It is ridiculous to look at all the images of chaos to see what is happening in Minneapolis and other cities, to see the tear gas and bodies lying lifeless, people hurt and beaten, thrown into dark prisons with no understanding of why they were picked up and put in these prisons. That is the danger.

It is ridiculous to think that ICE, a force of untrained people, should get special treatment, while every other law enforcement agency in the country is asked to follow reasonable codes of conduct.

When you get pulled over, the traffic cop doesn't wear a mask. People don't see sheriffs and their deputies running around wearing masks. Security guards and State troopers and even most FBI agents don't walk around wearing masks. But, all of a sudden, these ICE agents, who have one of the worst records of law enforcement we have seen in America in decades, should be allowed to wear masks.

It is truly ridiculous for Republicans to argue that at this very delicate moment, when people fear excessive force from Federal agents, the right answer is to defend ICE's ability to wear masks and enter homes with zero guardrails.

Now, we have just a few days until DHS funding runs out. Democrats have been clear on what needs to happen. Our proposals are designed to ensure public safety and instill the kind of guardrails that the vast majority of Americans support.

Republicans need to realize that the single worst thing they can do right now, in the eyes of the Nation, is to double down on the status quo of ICE. They must negotiate. They must sit down and work out a real solution.

The Nation is tired of the chaos ICE is unleashing on our streets and does not want Republicans in the Senate and House to sit on their hands and allow it to continue.

EPSTEIN FILES

Mr. President, now on Epstein, yesterday, Donald Trump said that the Nation should finally just move on with the Epstein files.

Here is what he said: "I think it's really time," Trump said, "for the country to get on to something else, now that nothing came out about me."

Of course, it is only about Donald Trump, as usual.

But let me just say this to Donald Trump. You are wrong again, Mr. President. America will not move on from the Epstein files until America gets the whole truth—the full truth—about the Epstein files. America will not move on until Donald Trump does what he promised—full transparency—and we haven't come close to that yet.

Millions upon millions of documents remain shrouded in darkness. We have no idea what is left in them, what is in there about Donald Trump. Did the

Justice Department particularly hide and not reveal documents that might be damaging to Trump?

Instead of prioritizing transparency and complying with the law, the Department of Justice, to this day, is still obsessed with prioritizing protecting Donald Trump. It is pretty obvious.

Trump chose people in the Justice Department to be his own attack dogs, his own puppets. They don't have any independence, and so we don't trust them. The American people don't trust them.

So, President Trump, no, the Nation will not "get on to something else" until you do what you promised and release all the Epstein files, so the whole truth—the whole truth—can come out. I yield the floor.

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

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call in relation to the Benton nomination.

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

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, yesterday I was in the Oval Office with the President of the United States, and President Trump signed into law five appropriations bills. And as a result, 96 percent of the Federal Government is funded through the end of the fiscal year. That is good news for the American people.

We accomplished all of this through the normal legislative process—a bill going through the House, through the Senate, and then to the White House. This is how Congress is supposed to work. The Appropriations Committee, led by Senator SUSAN COLLINS of Maine, made it happen here in the Senate. This is a welcome change from how things were done in the past during the Democrat administration.

Today, Republicans work to continue to fully fund the last 4 percent of government, and that is the Department of Homeland Security. The Department of Homeland Security is charged with one of the Federal Government's most basic duties, and that is to keep Americans safe. The Department of Homeland Security enforces our Nation's immigration laws; it oversees TSA agents; it directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency; it commands the U.S. Coast Guard; and it protects our Nation from cyber attacks.

Republicans are ready to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security. We are ready to do it through the end of the fiscal year. And we have been ready to do it for weeks. Democrats are

holding the funding hostage. Democrats have an unreasonable and growing list of demands. Democrats' demands would undermine law enforcement, and Democrats' demands would make our Nation less safe.

One of the Democrats' most dangerous demands is for local police to ignore Federal immigration law. Democrats in Congress and Democrats who run big cities do not want the law enforced. They have proven it by their words and by their actions.

For years, the Democrats have been the party of "defund the police." Democrats have now taken it a step further. Now, they are the party of defund American security. The debate is about much more than Federal funding. It is about whether Federal law is enforced or ignored. It is about whether our communities are safe or not. Seventy-eight percent of Americans want to deport illegal immigrant criminals. Americans support more cooperation between local and Federal officials. This applies specifically to deporting illegal immigrant criminals.

Americans also say that local jails should transfer criminal illegal immigrants to Federal officials. Let me point out that in today's Washington Post—and I have a copy of it right here, of their editorial page—the Washington Post this morning, February 4, 2026:

Congress has its work cut out on DHS funding.

They start a paragraph that says:

Something else Schumer says he wants is an end to roving patrols.

Senator SCHUMER just spoke here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. The editorial said Democrat-run cities should "hand over dangerous illegal immigrants in their jails" instead of "hiding behind sanctuary policies."

The Washington Post this morning is advising the Democrats and, specifically, Senator SCHUMER by name that we need more cooperation, not less, which is what we are getting from Democrat-run cities in big Democrat bastions and promoted by each and every one of the Democrats on the floor of the U.S. Senate. We need more cooperation.

We have gotten to this place because of the law, specifically the Laken Riley law, which, Mr. President, you were one of the cosponsors and advocates and worked so hard on. Because of that law—the law that Senator KATIE BRITT wrote, you worked with, we got passed, signed into law—DHS has detained an additional 20,000 illegal immigrants who otherwise would have been released back onto the streets of our communities.

Clearly, when local officials cooperate with Federal officers, the American people are safer. By contrast, Senate Democrats—and we are going to hear it again today—want to enact sanctuary city policies on a national level. People in my home State and yours hate the idea of sanctuary cities. American cities—already, over a dozen Democrat-

run States embrace these sanctuary city policies.

Let me tell you what the liberal Governor of New York now wants to do. She wants to make cooperating and coordinating with ICE illegal for the State of New York. We have seen who got elected mayor of New York City. Now, the Governor is following right behind him.

And in Minnesota, the liberal Governor, the liberal mayor of Minneapolis, and the liberal attorney general openly encourage citizens to obstruct Federal law. That is what they are doing in liberal bastions around the country. If Democrats have their way, every city in America would be a sanctuary city and every city in America would be less safe.

Here is why sanctuary cities are so dangerous: They are dangerous for the public, and they are dangerous for law enforcement. In sanctuary cities, local officials refuse to transfer illegal immigrants, even those convicted of crimes, to Federal law enforcement. These convicted criminals are often released from custody back onto the streets in our communities. That means Federal agents are forced to try to find these convicted criminals in the community, on the streets, instead of being able to secure and pick them up in the jails. It seems a lot safer way to do it for me.

Look at what is happening in New York City. Since last year, New York has released 7,000 illegal immigrant criminals instead of cooperating with Federal officials. Last month, New York knowingly released a convicted sex offender. They did this instead of transferring him into Federal custody, which is where he belongs. That is a criminal who has already been deported before and got back into the country.

Remember Joe Biden, 10,000 a day coming into the country—criminals, drug dealers, illegal immigrants who were part of criminal cartels—we had it all. Well, Federal officials were prepared to arrest him in New York. No, the local Democrats released him, let him blend in. Go away.

That is what sanctuary city policies do. They put criminals back on the streets in our cities and make our cities less safe. Not a single American is safer because of the sanctuary city policies that the Democrats are promoting. When liberal cities provide sanctuary for criminals, they deny the safety of law-abiding citizens.

If immigration laws are ignored nationwide, almost everyone who enters the United States illegally would remain here for the rest of their lives, free to do whatever they wanted, commit crimes, and not have to worry about ever being deported. Preventing cooperation between State and Federal officials would make the chaos of Joe Biden's wide-open borders permanent. The American people don't want that.

Let me tell you how this applies to the debate over the funding bill today

for the Department of Homeland Security. The Democrats' list of demands is a liberal wish list. Republicans are not going to accept changes that make our communities less safe. Personally, I want to end sanctuary cities and sanctuary city policies completely and so do many of my Republican colleagues.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM of South Carolina has introduced legislation to stop State and local officials from interfering with Federal immigration enforcement. It is a simple, common-sense concept: law enforcement officers should help law enforcement officers keep our communities safe.

The safest cities in America are those that cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. There is a clear cause-and-effect relationship. Congress should encourage more cooperation, do it nationwide, not less, which is what the Democrats want.

Republicans welcome this debate about immigration enforcement. Republicans are for cooperation. Democrats—they are the party of chaos. Republicans are for enforcing the law. Democrats are for sanctuary cities and once again side with illegal immigrants while Republicans stand on the side of making America more safe.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

MINNESOTA ICE SHOOTINGS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, something really extraordinary happened in the U.S. Capitol yesterday. It wasn't a floor speech. It wasn't a formal committee meeting or a hearing. It wasn't a press conference. It was five everyday Americans coming to the Capitol to tell their stories about the brutality and violence they suffered at the hands of their own government—everyday Americans just like all of us coming here to tell us how they were stopped, assaulted, detained, and brutalized by ICE and CBP agents. It was one of the most moving experiences of my time in the U.S. Senate, not only because of the words and the facts that they conveyed but because of their raw courage, their bravery.

I had tears in my eyes as I listened to Luke and Brett Ganger telling us for the first time in public in such a setting what it was like to lose their sister Renee Good.

They said:

In the last few weeks, our family took some consolation in thinking that perhaps Renee's death would bring change in our country. It has not.

Yesterday's hearing, very simply, was a call to action, and I am going to talk about those American citizens who came forward. But make no mistake, what happened to them could happen to any of us on our way to church for a clothing drive or to make a donation, on your way to a doctor's appointment, or even heading home from dropping off your 6-year-old son at school—everyday activities, American activities, by American citizens with no criminal record.

Luke and Brett Ganger said:

These encounters with federal agents are changing the community and changing many lives, including ours, forever. I still don't know how to explain to my 4-year-old what these agents are doing when we pass by.

They said:

Renee is not gone from us. She's in the light that finds us on hard days. She's in the resilience we didn't know we had until we needed it. She's in the laughter, the memories, the love that continues to grow.

Every one of the brave Americans who came forward yesterday demonstrated that resilience, a courage that we now have an obligation to match, a bravery that should inspire us to the action that Luke and Brett Ganger urged us to do in the memory of their sister.

We heard from Marimar Martinez. She was on her way to church to donate clothing. Her car was full of that clothing. She was stopped by agents who "came up to me with his cell phone and took my photograph. It was the same agent who had previously kept coming in and out of my room, and I had to tell him repeatedly to leave. It still haunts me that this agent has my photo on his phone." She was stopped and shot. The bullets caused her to bleed profusely. The wounds caused her almost to bleed to death.

The agent who shot her seven times—seven bullets in her body—boasted about it. Charles Exum, the agent—she knew him; she named him.

Here is what Charles Exum had to say to his friends, his colleagues, on his cell phone:

I fired 5 rounds and she had 7 holes. Put that in your book boys.

Cool. I'm up for another round of "[eff] around and find out."

It is the cruelty of seven bullets in her body, causing her almost to bleed to death—a woman who teaches in a Montessori school.

As she put it:

On Friday, I was teaching the young children at the Montessori school, and we were singing and dancing and getting ready for spooky season—preparing for fall activities to do the following week—and on Saturday, my own government was calling me a domestic terrorist, and I was in a federal detention center, with bullet holes all over my body.

She was shot by agents of the U.S. Government. For what? For what? She was charged with some kind of crime, and those charges were dismissed in court when the government tried to defend them, just as countless charges have been dismissed against similar so-called terrorists. The government sought to assassinate her, and then it sought to assassinate her character.

My attorneys showed the court the disgusting text images Exum sent to his fellow Border Patrol buddies, literally bragging about how many times he shot me. I got sick to my stomach seeing how a federal law enforcement officer would talk this way about shooting me—a woman who he swerved into. It was both eye-opening and heartbreaking.

This hearing—a forum that had no official status in the U.S. Senate but