

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

provided a platform to these victims of government brutality and overreach—was, indeed, eye-opening and heart-breaking for all of us.

Daniel Rascon was stopped by agents and then had his car shot at by them. They were attempting to kill him. Miraculously, they missed. His car was full of bullet holes.

I will never forget the fear and having to quickly duck my head as the shots were fired at the passenger's side of the car. Any one of those bullets could have killed me or two people that I love.

His soon-to-be brother-in-law and father-in-law were the two people with him in the car.

We no longer felt safe. We didn't feel like we could leave our home or operate normally in the world. How do you move on from knowing someone tried to kill you and the people you love?

"The agents pointed the bright lasers attached to their assault rifles at each of us" when they came to his home. "They even pointed their weapon at my fiancée," who was pregnant at the time. He has a 3-week-old baby now.

We kept telling them she was pregnant and we would comply. I was surrounded and trapped in a roomful of the ones I love and fearing for every single one of our lives.

His message should stay with us:

Our fight for justice is not over. We will carry this incident with us forever.

Truly, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Rascon, and Luke and Brett Ganger will carry the scars of this experience with them forever. So will Aliya Rahman, who is a woman with a disability who was dragged from her car, which is shown in a video that should sicken every American. It has been played numerous times now. Americans have seen it and heard it.

I cannot lift my arms normally. I was never asked for ID, never told I was under arrest, never read my rights, and never charged with a crime.

She hit the ground and felt pain in every part of her body. She suffers from trauma as well as a disability.

Our nation lacks rules and accountability around what a person claiming to be law enforcement can do to another human being.

"[A]nother human being."

What struck me is the absolutely stark contrast of the deep humanity of these Americans and of their bravery and courage in coming forward with their stories and the humanity that they showed us as opposed to the inhumanity of the criminal—yes, criminal—actions of these ICE and CBP agents physically assaulting them, attempting to kill them, and, in fact, murdering Renee Good and Alex Pretti.

We are at a defining moment. It is a moral moment.

At yesterday's hearing, Renee Good and Alex Pretti should have been with us. They were there in spirit, and through Luke and Brett Ganger, Renee Good certainly was represented. They were murdered by their own government in cold blood. Alex Pretti was shot in the back after he was disarmed.

For the countless others who could not be there yesterday because they

were killed or they were injured, the courage of these witnesses was a profile in bravery and in eloquence. They were the voices and faces of those countless Americans who have suffered at the hands of their own government.

Their stories are about brutality, lawlessness, and inhumanity. Their stories span the Nation. They are not only about Minneapolis. All the Nation is Minneapolis. We are all Minneapolis today, and these stories are a national call to action.

The violence unleashed by the Trump administration against our own citizens can touch any American at any time, any one of you on your way to a church, a clothing drive, as Miramar Martinez was, on your way to a doctor's appointment, or even heading home from dropping off your 6-year-old son.

These stories and far too many others demand that every one of us takes a stand against these injustices and insists on accountability.

Make no mistake, the lawlessness underlying these actions and the directives that have caused this lawlessness come from the very top, as shown by a secret memo that we revealed just days ago, a new policy uncovered yesterday, and the administration's obstinate refusal to change course.

That secret memo authorizes agents to kick down doors, smash into homes, terrify children, ransack living rooms and bedrooms, and detain and arrest U.S. citizens, as well as undocumented immigrants, without a judicial warrant, in violation of the Fourth Amendment. And that violation is only one of many violations of constitutional, explicit guarantees that we have seen repeatedly in Minneapolis, but around the country.

Ms. Martinez is from Chicago. Mr. Rascon is from California. And, yes, Ms. Rahman is from Minneapolis. But Brent and Luke Ganger came to us from Colorado. The ripple effects of the cruelty that we saw demonstrated in that attack—utter and total cruelty—are repeated again and again and again.

Today, DHS announced, through Tom Homan, that there will be a "withdrawal" of 700 personnel—agents, whatever they have as their title—from Minneapolis. And numbers are important. Part of the reason for the brutality is the quotas that have been implemented and exacted—quotas for arrests and detention. Those quotas haven't changed.

The numbers of agents in Minneapolis may be reduced, but the tactics—the police state and paramilitary tactics—that have caused this brutality and violence will remain the same unless we take action. The reduction in numbers of agents is a hollow and disingenuous attempt to nullify the intense criticism that DHS is seeing—a criticism and an explosion of outrage in the American people who have seen these videos, who have heard these stories—because it so violates

our sense of decency, not to mention our adherence to the Constitution.

The hearing that we held yesterday was part of an investigation underway by the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations that I serve on as ranking member. That investigation is going to continue. We have more stories and more factual material that we will present to our colleagues and to the American public. We will continue to investigate and uncover wrongdoing.

But we will also propose and demand reform. There need to be real changes at DHS, and those kinds of changes have to include body cameras and identification on every officer, masks off at all times, rigorous use-of-force training and policy, independent investigations into acts of violence and ongoing monitoring of the agency's conduct, and, most important, accountability and enforcement.

I believe we need some kind of independent monitor, just like would be appointed, and has been done, when local police forces are found to be so corrupt that they need an outside enforcer to make sure that there is adherence to the rule of law—an outside monitor who can take complaints, who can oversee and report to the public. And, at some point, maybe we need a truth and justice commission to look at the systematic failure of this Agency.

Rigorous use-of-force training and policies are an absolute must. As attorney general of the State of Connecticut, I advised police forces about what the law required of them. The proposals that we have made and the demands that we have set forth are hardly novel or radical. They are basically what is expected of and enforced for State and local police forces across the country.

To my Republican colleague, if you want some guidance on this issue, talk to local cops, talk to your local police chief. What are the rules for them? What are the norms? What are the expectations?

All we are asking here is that the same apply to ICE and CBP and DHS. And make no mistake, these are demands, not requests. I will oppose any additional funding for DHS and any DHS funding package unless it includes these changes.

Let's be very clear: Rights without remedy are empty promises. Rights without enforcement, when they are violated, are a mirage. And so I proposed, along with a number of my colleagues Senator PADILLA and Senator WHITEHOUSE, a very simple change in the law—four words—so that Federal agents have the same kind of legal responsibility and the same liability, if they violate rights, that any local cop would have.

Section 42, United States Code 1983—I think it was passed in 1871—says that "Every person who, under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage"—and it now says—"of any State or Territory or the District of Columbia," and so on, becomes liable,

becomes legally responsible, and citizens can seek redress against that individual. They have legal recourse in court. They have a day in court. They can seek monetary damages and a court order that stops the violation. It is used all the time in the United States of America against State or local police or law enforcement that break the law and harm individuals in this country. And all we need to do is add four words so that not only local and State law enforcement, but “agents of the United States”—“United States”—those four words will change the nature of DHS and its practices and tactics. It will serve as a deterrent. It will force compliance with basic standards of decency and use-of-force protocols and regulation. And it will raise the standards that we expect of our Federal enforcers.

Rights without remedies are empty promises, and we owe the people who came forward yesterday that we will fulfill the promises made to them—promises made to them not by us, but by the Constitution of the United States, the basic tenets of our great democratic project—that people are protected from governmental intrusion and overreach, their privacy by the Fourth Amendment, their right to free expression by the First, their right to possess a firearm by the Second. Every one of those rights is sacred, and we have a duty to make sure those promises are real, that the rights are protected.

We need to match the courage of the people who came forward yesterday with our own courage, match their fortitude with ours, and, yes, their perseverance because I am very clear-eyed. I know my speech here is not going to provoke a groundswell of support for the changes we demand. It will take continued outrage that we bring to the American people through the stories that we will tell and the faces and voices that will appear before them. They are the most moving and powerful advocates: everyday Americans assaulted and brutalized by their own government, financed by our taxpayer dollars.

But soon we will decide whether to spend on the Department of Homeland Security. Without these far-reaching, fundamental changes that, in effect, scrap the current culture and rebuild an Agency that is out of control, I will vote against a DHS funding package. And I think others will join in that opposition because this Agency is bankrupt—morally bankrupt, as well as legally, and, yes, politically bankrupt.

What happens with bankrupt corporations that go into chapter 10 is that they are dissolved, and their assets sold off to creditors. Or, under chapter 11, they are reorganized.

The analogy is only partial in its validity because what we need here is a fundamental overhaul of an Agency that has run amok in its violation of American rights and principles, and leadership that must be changed. And I

have advocated for impeachment of Secretary Noem, if she will not resign or if the President fails to fire her.

But changes at the top are only part of what is needed. The basic principles about use of force and firearms, about respect for rights and liberties, about dedication to the rule of law—these must be part of the bloodstream in this Agency. They are lacking now and are absolutely necessary in the future. We have an obligation to make it real.

The statement of Aliya Rahman can be found online at [https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3\\_aliya\\_rahman\\_statement.pdf](https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3_aliya_rahman_statement.pdf).

The statement of Marimar Martinez can be found online at [https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3\\_marimar\\_martinez\\_statement.pdf](https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3_marimar_martinez_statement.pdf).

The statement of Martin Daniel Rascon can be found online at [https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3\\_daniel\\_rascon\\_statement.pdf](https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3_daniel_rascon_statement.pdf).

The statement of Brent and Luke Ganger can be found online at [https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3\\_luke\\_and\\_brent\\_ganger\\_statement.pdf](https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3_luke_and_brent_ganger_statement.pdf).

And the statements of the two other witnesses in that proceeding, Antonio Romanucci can be found online at [https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3\\_antonio\\_romanucci\\_statement.pdf](https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3_antonio_romanucci_statement.pdf), and Seth Stoughton can be found online at [https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3\\_seth\\_stoughton\\_statement.pdf](https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026-2-3_seth_stoughton_statement.pdf).

And, Mr. President, I ask that the vote occur immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### VOTE ON PETERSON NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Peterson nomination?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 58, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 26 Ex.]

#### YEAS—58

|           |         |           |
|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Banks     | Cassidy | Daines    |
| Barrasso  | Collins | Duckworth |
| Blackburn | Cornyn  | Durbin    |
| Boozman   | Cotton  | Ernst     |
| Britt     | Cramer  | Fischer   |
| Budd      | Cruz    | Graham    |
| Capito    | Curtis  | Grassley  |

|            |           |            |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Hagerty    | Lummis    | Scott (FL) |
| Hassan     | Marshall  | Scott (SC) |
| Hawley     | McCormick | Shaheen    |
| Hoeven     | Moody     | Sheehy     |
| Husted     | Moran     | Sullivan   |
| Hyde-Smith | Moreno    | Thune      |
| Johnson    | Mullin    | Tillis     |
| Justice    | Murkowski | Tuberville |
| Kaine      | Paul      | Whitehouse |
| Kelly      | Ricketts  | Wicker     |
| Kennedy    | Risch     | Young      |
| Lankford   | Rounds    |            |
| Lee        | Schmitt   |            |

#### NAYS—39

|                 |              |            |
|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Alsobrooks      | Hickenlooper | Rosen      |
| Baldwin         | Hirono       | Sanders    |
| Bennet          | Kim          | Schatz     |
| Blumenthal      | King         | Schiff     |
| Blunt Rochester | Klobuchar    | Schumer    |
| Booker          | Lujan        | Slotkin    |
| Cantwell        | Markey       | Smith      |
| Coons           | Merkley      | Van Hollen |
| Cortez Masto    | Murray       | Warner     |
| Fetterman       | Ossoff       | Warnock    |
| Gallego         | Padilla      | Warren     |
| Gillibrand      | Peters       | Welch      |
| Heinrich        | Reed         | Wyden      |

#### NOT VOTING—3

|       |           |        |
|-------|-----------|--------|
| Crapo | McConnell | Murphy |
|-------|-----------|--------|

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

#### 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 legislative 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 Executive Calendar No. 609, Megan Blair Benton, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Tim Sheehy, Joni Ernst, Pete Ricketts, John Cornyn, Jim Banks, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, Kevin Cramer, David McCormick, Jon A. Husted, Dan Sullivan, Lindsey Graham.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Megan Blair Benton, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows: