

fostered a Team Young alumni network of current and rising leaders and regularly offers his help and counsel to countless individuals wishing to serve, advance their careers, and realize their dreams.

John is known for viewing our intern program as the “farm team,” and an incredible number of our interns have gone on to serve and to move up in my congressional office and well beyond, thanks to John’s efforts.

In addition to being a team player on our team, however, he has served the broader team in many important ways. In fact, other congressional offices and several Presidential administrations have regularly turned to John for advice on navigating Congress and overcoming obstacles.

John has treated his role of overseeing my DC office and instate operations with great enthusiasm, accessibility, friendliness, professionalism, dependability, and responsiveness—all of which resulted in our team’s ability to have maximum impact. Whether through legislative wins or building one of the Nation’s best constituent service operations, John’s fingerprints are on all of it.

Another important role John quickly became adept at was helping me identify talented professionals to be nominated for Federal service and shepherd them into important roles around the world, including an Under Secretary of State, an ambassador to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, and the Chief Management Officer for the DOD. This also applied to our Federal judiciary. From district court to the U.S. Supreme Court, John was always on the hunt for rising legal stars who might be willing to serve.

In fact, without John, I know I would not have had nearly as much success in translating my policy priorities into action. He owns a big piece of our legislative victories, having been instrumental at every stage of the policy-making process—from conception, to passage, to implementation—ensuring the State of Indiana maximally benefits from each law we pass: bringing social impact bonds to the Federal level; shoring up our semiconductor supply chain and incentivizing tech innovation through the CHIPS and Science Act; creating Indiana’s first national park, the Indiana Dunes National Park. Even into his last days in my office, he has been working on ensuring the Senate appropriately recognizes the IU Hoosiers for winning the 2025 College Football Playoff National Championship after completing an undefeated season.

To this day, he describes his presence in Assembly Hall in Bloomington on December 10, 2011, as his beloved Hoosiers beat Kentucky in basketball, as the greatest day of his life—except for his wedding, he is always careful to add. That incredible victory occurred during John’s first year on Team Young. It seems only fitting that as he departs, we are celebrating an even

more improbable IU athletics triumph—a national championship in football.

John plays by the rules. He is honest, sincere, dependable, upbeat, and optimistic, but he is always measured, and he is always realistic. He is relational—relational—the opposite of transactional, which can be a rare quality in Washington.

Another rare quality: his singular lack of ego in a town known for some big ones. He is skilled at creating a work culture that is serious about public service and satisfying work but is also done by great people in a fun office along the way.

If you know John, you know he loves Indiana, and he loves the Senate, but not more than his wife Marjorie and his three boys: Jack, George, and Matthew. He has been a great chief of staff, but he is an even better husband and father. He has found a way to give this job his all, to accomplish more than I could ever expect in a way that I could never improve upon, and he did it without sacrificing any of the relationships he valued most. For me, that is his most important legacy.

I will personally miss seeing John at work every day. I am going to miss his daily presence in the office, but I am not anxious about this transition—not for John, not for me, not for Hoosiers. Like a consummate professional, John has institutionalized excellence in our office, making every preparation for us to keep racking up victories for the State of Indiana and continue adding value to the U.S. Senate.

I now look forward to watching John apply his many considerable talents and experiences outside of Congress. I know he will continue to impress, continue to hold himself and others to the highest standards, and continue to win in whatever arena he competes.

So, John, thank you for your service to this office, to Hoosiers, to our country. On behalf of your many friends, colleagues, and admirers on Capitol Hill, I wish you fair winds and following seas.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Michigan.

#### IMMIGRATION

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, there is a phrase that gets tossed around a lot these days: “suicidal empathy.” It is a term I have used myself on more than one occasion. It means, more or less, exactly what it sounds like: Tolerance, taken to its most extreme and destructive end.

This is not the classic Republican tolerance you find in the Federalist Papers or the writings of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. It is a tolerance of anything and everything which overpowers all reason and undermines all distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil, order and anarchy.

It is an attitude summed up by the famous slogan of the French student

radicals in 1968: “It is forbidden to forbid.”

That is what the phrase “suicidal empathy” is meant to describe. We open our borders and import millions of unvetted refugees because we can’t bear to turn a single asylum seeker away. We empty out our prisons because we just can’t stomach the thought of keeping anyone behind bars.

We let violent criminals off with a slap on the wrist because we see them as victims of socioeconomic conditions beyond their control. We turn a blind eye to rioters who loot, steal, and burn their way through our city streets because a riot is just the language of the unheard.

But as I watch what is happening in the cities like Minneapolis and I listen to the pundits and politicians on the left openly cheer on the agents of chaos, I am increasingly convinced that suicidal empathy is not the right description of the disease that inflicts our body politic today. I think that phrase is actually far too generous.

These radicals on the streets of Minneapolis and their comrades in cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and Portland are not driven by “empathy” in any meaningful sense of the term. These are not bleeding-heart humanitarians paralyzed by an overwhelming concern for the welfare of mankind—quite the opposite. Their sphere of moral concern is vanishingly small, and it is reserved exclusively for those who can be used as instruments for their political goals.

They don’t care about what is just; they just care about what is useful. They wield the language of decency and compassion as a political weapon. If this was about empathy, they would have wept with the parents of Jocelyn Nungaray, the 12-year-old girl who was kidnapped, raped, and murdered by two illegal aliens in 2024.

If this was about compassion, they would have mourned for the five young children of Rachel Morin, an American mother who was ambushed, raped, and murdered by an illegal alien on a hiking trail in Maryland in 2023.

If this was about justice, their hearts would have broken for the family of Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student in Georgia who was brutally murdered while out for a jog nearly 2 years ago this day, beaten and strangled to death by a Venezuelan illegal because she fought back when he tried to rape her.

The two illegal aliens who murdered Jocelyn had been stopped at the border, processed, and then simply released into the interior just weeks before. The illegal alien who murdered Rachel was a fugitive with a warrant out for his arrest for the murder of a different woman back home in El Salvador. He had been deported three times in that year alone, only to waltz back in across our open border.

The monster who murdered Laken had been illegally released into our country under the Biden administration’s humanitarian parole program.

He had been arrested in New York for endangering a child and released; arrested again for shoplifting and released again without citation.

Time and time again, the people in power in this country were given the chance to stop them as if God Himself was begging them to do something. Time and time again, they refused. And now, another American family will have to live the rest of their lives with the pain most of us cannot even begin to comprehend.

These are stories that most of the people on my side of the aisle know; American mothers and daughters whose memories we have the duty to keep alive. But most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle won't even say their names.

We never read their stories in glossy front page cover essays or saw their names plastered across wall-to-wall coverage by the national press. When their families were honored by President Trump in his address to Congress last year, many Democrats refused to even applaud.

If the left does acknowledge their existence at all, it is only to accuse us of weaponizing their deaths, but their deaths are not a weapon; they are a fact, a bitter and unshakable reality, a stubborn reminder of the gruesome trail of American victims that mass immigration has left in its wake, and they are not alone.

For every Laken Riley, there are thousands of Americans whose names have never been spoken, whose stories have never been told, whose loved ones have suffered in silence.

There was the 14-year-old girl in Louisiana who was brutally raped at knifepoint by an illegal alien from Honduras and the man he stabbed in the face during an armed robbery just months after being released into the country by the Biden administration in 2023.

There was the 16-year-old cheerleader in a small town in Texas who was found dead in a bathtub by her own mother that same year, stabbed to death by an illegal alien from Mexico.

There was Travis Wolf, a 12-year-old boy from my home State of Missouri who was killed in 2024 by an illegal alien from Honduras who slammed into his family's car while driving drunk.

There was Kayla Hamilton, a 20-year-old autistic woman who was tied up, raped, and murdered in her own home in Maryland in July of 2022. Her murderer, a 16-year-old known MS-13 gang member, had been processed and released into the country despite his criminal record and gang ties. After he murdered Kayla, he left her on the floor, and he went to Target with his half-brother to spend the \$6 he stole from her. Then because he was a minor, the Biden HHS proceeded to place him in a group home with other children and enrolled him in a local public high school without telling the high school that he was the prime suspect in that murder case.

Where were the angry protests on the streets for American daughters like Kayla? Where were the general strikes and school walkouts and tearful TV monologues for American sons like Travis? Where were CNN and MSNBC? Where were the New York Times and the Washington Post? Where were the armies of journalists and camera crews to tell their stories, to interview their grieving parents, to regale us all with stories about their kindness and their decency and their innocence?

Where were CHUCK SCHUMER and HAKEEM JEFFRIES? Where were Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton? Where were the morally righteous speeches on the floors of Congress, the indignant press releases, the red carpet celebrity cameos? Where was the campaign to shut down the entire Federal Government on their behalf?

These questions answer themselves, so, you know what, spare me.

To the media, the pundits, and the talking heads, to the protesters on the streets and their political friends here in the halls of power, we know who you are. We know what you care about. It is not humanity or empathy or compassion; it is raw power. And we know what you do with that power, and we have seen what you do with that power. The empty chair at the Riley family dinner table is the cost of what we paid for your power, and it is our patriotic duty to ensure you never get close to power again.

Let me say this also to my friends and colleagues in my party: Don't give these people an inch. Don't fall for their moral blackmail. Don't let them negotiate or squirm their way into killing the President's mass deportation agenda. The American people support it. Don't let them talk you into believing that this is about justice. That is not what they care about.

Do you know what I care about? I care about Americans. I care about the people who are risking their lives in the freezing cold to enforce our laws, rather than the ones who are hell-bent on breaking it.

I care about the people who are trying to get these kinds of monsters who rape and murder our daughters out of our country, rather than the ones who want to put their bodies on the line to keep them here.

I care about the thousands of Federal agents who have been targets of malicious, coordinated, doxing campaigns that explicitly and intentionally are designed to put them and their loved ones in danger.

The ICE officer in Minnesota who opened his voicemail to hear a caller tell him:

I hope your wife dies. . . . I hope you get hit by a bus and you're paralyzed and your wife leaves you.

The FBI agent in Minneapolis who received a voicemail promising to kill him, his wife, and his daughter, stating "I am coming for you. . . . [Y]ou, your wife, and your dead damn effing daughter are dead," after his personal infor-

mation was stolen from a government vehicle last month.

The numerous ICE officers whose wives have received calls telling them that their families will be killed.

The ICE agent in Los Angeles who was followed home and doxed by stalkers who live-streamed his address and urged their followers to come to his house.

The DHS families in Portland whose names, addresses, and pictures of their children have been plastered on posters all around their neighborhood by antifa activists with "NO PEACE FOR ICE" in all capital letters.

I care about the Federal agents in Maine, Florida, Los Angeles, Portland, and countless other places who have been surrounded, boxed in, and run over by American protesters and illegal aliens alike seeking to use their cars as deadly weapons.

The ICE officer in Chicago who was severely injured after an illegal immigrant struck and dragged him behind his car in an attempt to escape arrest last year.

The agents who were fired upon by an antifa sniper at the ICE facility in Dallas, killing multiple people in the process.

The officers who were ambushed by an antifa terror cell armed to the teeth with semiautomatic rifles, Molotov cocktails, body armor, and encrypted radios in North Texas.

The cop who was struck in the neck and critically wounded while racing to respond.

I care about the pastor and his flock in St. Paul whose church was invaded by a screaming mob during Sunday service last month because they believed one of the pastors was a field director for ICE. The mob cursed, threatened, and terrorized not just the pastor but the young children in the congregation, screaming in the faces of crying children that their parents were Nazis who were going to burn in Hell. They blocked the stairs to the childcare area so that the parents couldn't reach their kids, and as parishioners tried to flee the chaos, they followed them into the parking lot, surrounded their cars, and attempted to trap families inside.

One child told his father:

Daddy, I thought you were going to die.

When the ringleader of this invasion was arrested, Mayor Jacob Frey called for her "to be released immediately" and said that it was a "gross abuse of power" that she had ever been arrested in the first place.

These are the kinds of people who want to lecture us about morality.

There is a war on immigration enforcement right now in our country. There is a war on the rule of law itself. It is the "mobocratic spirit" that Lincoln spoke of in 1838.

Some of the Democratic Party politicians in this city might want to pretend that is not what is going on here, but their friends on the streets out there are very clear about what is going on here.

This war is organized. It is coordinated and actively aided and abetted by local and State authorities across this country.

Since January 2025, there has been a 1,347-percent increase in assaults on ICE officers, a 3,200-percent increase in vehicular attacks, and an 8,000-percent increase in death threats against them and their families.

This is not the time to play defense or seek some kind of negotiated surrender; it is time to go on offense.

We have two goals: Deliver mass deportations and crush the violent, lawless campaign of leftwing sabotage that stands in our way.

That is why I am introducing the Protect America Act. This bill does four things:

First, it doubles the criminal penalty for assaulting Federal law enforcement, and for the first time, it makes it a Federal crime to “inhibit, stymie, hamper, or interfere with” Federal law enforcement operations. That means the people blowing whistles and erecting roadblocks on streets in Minneapolis, not just the ones who physically attack ICE and Border Patrol.

Second, it dismantles the corrupt NGOs that are funding and coordinating these attacks, enabling us to revoke the nonprofit status of organizations which incite or fund domestic violence against law enforcement.

Third, it turns illegal entry into a felony with mandatory detention—no more catch-and-release—and it establishes a 10-year mandatory minimum prison sentence for those who try to illegally reenter this country after they have been deported.

Finally, it ends sanctuary cities. Under this legislation, all Federal funds are conditioned upon full cooperation with ICE. If a city refuses to enforce America’s laws, it has no right to another dime of American money.

It goes further too. It mandates full information sharing about illegal aliens in our prisons so we can deport them immediately upon release.

There are some States right now that refuse to provide this information—criminals being released in our streets as a political statement so they can’t be deported.

It creates a private right of action so that Americans who are harmed by a removable alien in a sanctuary city can sue for damages.

It bans student visas in sanctuary jurisdictions. You do not get to continue profiting off of importing foreign students if you won’t even deport the dangerous illegal aliens on your streets.

We are at a crossroads. We can surrender our country to mass migration or we can steel our spines, plant our feet, and fight to defend our home. I have made my choice. I urge my colleagues to make theirs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

#### NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 596, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 596) designating the week of February 2 through 6, 2026, as “National School Counseling Week”.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHMITT. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 596) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, February 5; that following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 612, Brian Lea, postcloture.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:28 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 5, 2025, at 10 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

MICHAEL McDONALD, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE SHELLY C. LOWE.

##### IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be brigadier general

COL. SETH E. ANDERSON  
COL. ROBERT B. FINNERAN

COL. EDMUND B. HIPP  
COL. ANDRE M. INGRAM  
COL. LANCE J. LANGFELDT  
COL. REGINALD J. MCCLAM  
COL. THOMAS M. SIVERTS  
COL. DANIEL J. SKUCE  
COL. JOSHUA M. SMITH

##### IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

##### To be colonel

KARIN L. WATSON

##### IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

JOHN F. BATHON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

FADI S. ABDELHALIM  
JASON P. HELMSTAEDTER  
JOSEPH A. ORTIZ

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

JAMES D. BALLARD, JR.  
ERIC J. GIANNETTINO  
DUSTIN E. GUERPO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

ROBERT W. KREUGER III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

MARIO J. ARELLANO  
NICKY J. JONES  
AARON F. RANCIOS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

NEAL D. MCGAUGHEY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

THOMAS R. RICE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

TERMAINE R. BABERS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

MICHAEL L. REYNOLDS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

SCOTT M. CARTER

#### CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate February 4, 2026:

##### THE JUDICIARY

MEGAN BLAIR BENTON, OF MISSOURI, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI.

AARON CHRISTIAN PETERSON, OF ALASKA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALASKA.