

while Federal and State Governments will collect billions more in income tax revenue.

My Democratic colleagues want the American public to believe this is about catching tax cheats. And, to be clear, any attempt to evade taxes and defraud the public by not following the law should be condemned, and Congress should appropriately address it. However, a massive new reporting requirement of gig workers, many just trying to make ends meet in the midst of this pandemic, is not about catching tax fraud. It is about punishing the self-employed and raising revenues for the Democrats' massive spending plans.

It wasn't that long ago that President Biden promised that he wouldn't raise taxes on anyone making under \$400,000. Obviously, that was not true. But this isn't the first time Democrats have tried to quietly increase taxes and saddle the self-employed with new requirements like this. They did it with ObamaCare when they required businesses to send 1099 forms for all purchases of goods and services over \$600 annually. They quickly learned how unpopular and harmful this provision was, and they quickly repealed it. The Obama administration even praised the repeal as a "big win" for the self-employed. I guess some never learn.

What I am proposing is very simple. It is what the Democrats supported in 2011 when they repealed this bad tax increase in ObamaCare.

Today, I want to remove this new reporting requirement and simply reinstate the previous law back into U.S. code.

Increasing reporting requirements on our gig workers will create new and unexpected challenges for independent, self-employed workers and entrepreneurs, who are already facing an incredible burden created by the coronavirus.

Increasing costs and regulations on already struggling Americans is wrong, and I hope all of my colleagues will join me today and repeal this bad policy.

Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 948, introduced earlier today. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, the Senator from Florida claims to be looking out for gig workers and freelancers. The reality is very different.

What is in the bill, which the Senator from Florida apparently opposes, is a way to make sure that these workers can get the information they need to help meet their existing tax obliga-

tions. Without this information, for example, workers may lose out on benefits that would help them pay rent and buy groceries. They could inadvertently lose out on important tax benefits, like the earned income tax credit. The rescue plan, of course, expands the earned tax credit. We want to make sure that every eligible worker can get that financial help.

Finally, without reporting, workers might jeopardize the size of their future Social Security benefits, putting their retirement security at risk.

So what the Senator from Florida is up to here would deprive American entrepreneurs of the information they need to keep business records, comply with tax requirements, and claim important Federal benefits. For these reasons, I strongly object to this request for unanimous consent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The junior Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, that sounded good, but this is clearly a tax increase. It is a massive tax increase, and it is a massive new reporting requirement on already struggling Americans. Our focus ought to be on helping support American workers, especially these gig economy workers who have been hurt so badly.

I am disappointed my colleague wants to increase costs and regulations on American families. What is strange is that my colleague from Oregon voted to repeal this bad provision when Democrats added it to ObamaCare. So what is crazy is, why is he OK today with raising taxes on the American people now? This is all part of the Democrats' tax-and-spend agenda, and it is just the beginning.

Let's remember, with the last spending bill the Democrats passed, we will have \$30 trillion of debt. As Governor of Florida, I worked so that we cut taxes 100 times, and we paid off a third of our State debt.

We have to think that way here. How can we grow this economy and reduce the costs for Americans, not increase the costs to Americans? These bad types of policies will ruin our economy and a shot at the American dream, which we all believe in.

I am going to fight every day to get the government out of the way and make sure that doesn't happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclu-

sion of my remarks, I be allowed to present an excerpt of my speech in Spanish. I will provide transcripts both in English and in Spanish of those paragraphs.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 884

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I have read the accounts and so have many of you. A young mother from Honduras, two young sisters from Guatemala, a 6-year-old child from El Salvador—they were all told by a local cartel that, for a price, a better life awaits them in America.

They are told, as evidenced by those chanting "Biden, Biden" at the border, that this new President has opened the borders and that amnesty is imminent, so get in while you can.

These vulnerable people are flocking to smugglers and violent criminals and paying them all that they have for their chance to get in while they can. In the last month, traffickers have allegedly made as much as \$14 million a week smuggling men, women, and children across the border.

Once indebted to cartels and coyotes, the price these vulnerable people pay is far more costly than money. According to media reports, men are used as slaves; women are raped endlessly. In fact, one-third of the women making their way to the border are reportedly sexually assaulted, and 68 percent of the people coming across the border are physically assaulted.

Children are rented, trafficked, and "recycled," as they put it, forced to pose as the child of one illegal immigrant after another to activate the so-called Flores get-out-of-jail-free card. One former Border Patrol agent told me that the smugglers prefer to use babies because they are unable to tell Border Patrol agents that these are not, in fact, their parents.

What of those who escape the clutches of the cartels? Well, estimates of how many children are currently in Customs and Border Patrol custody vary from more than 4,000 children to well over 15,000. Thousands of these children are being held, packed into housing facilities, for well over the 72-hour limit required by Flores—and with no end in sight.

The Biden administration is doing all it can to hide the humanitarian crisis created by its own immigration policies—a disaster that Secretary Mayorkas refuses to acknowledge as a crisis. It denied media access and appears to be enforcing an unofficial gag order on Border Patrol agents. Journalists have not been permitted inside the detention facilities since President Biden took office.

Now, it shouldn't be a surprise to any of us that the Biden administration's open border policies have resulted in this overwhelming crisis—and a crisis it is. This is what then-Candidate Biden promised us in the very first

Democratic Presidential primary debate. He promised us that when he became President, there would be immediate surges along the border. Unfortunately, in this case, he has delivered exactly what he promised. How exactly did he deliver? Well, first, he made it known that once he was elected, the border would be open for business. Then he reversed course on a number of Trump-era commonsense immigration policies. This incentivized vulnerable people to entrust their lives and the lives of their children to dangerous coyotes and cartels.

What are these policies? The safe third country policy, implemented by the Trump administration, requires asylum seekers to apply for asylum in the first safe country in which they arrive. President Biden has moved to repeal that rule.

The expansion of the Flores Settlement agreement also creates perverse incentives in our immigration law. Flores is about protecting children, and yet, in the application of the expansion, we have put children in even greater danger of becoming victims of trafficking and cartel manipulation.

The Biden policy of keeping all unaccompanied alien minors in the United States, as my fellow Senator from Utah has pointed out, actually incentivizes parents to separate themselves from their children by entrusting their children to a cartel or coyote to bring them to the United States for their chance at amnesty.

By moving to loosen the requirements of asylum and expand its application, President Biden has invited immigrants, who could find safety in other regions of their own country or an adjacent country, to make the dangerous journey to the United States.

What we need are clear requirements to preserve the opportunities for asylum for those who need it the most. America is the land to which those seeking a better life look for relief, and we should provide relief where we can. We also have a duty to protect our border, our citizens, and our laws, our national interests. At the very least, we have a duty to eliminate policies that empower cartels and coyotes to exploit women and children. We must stop incentivizing vulnerable people to make a journey that will very rarely lead to the outcome they desire.

To this end, and together with Congressman ANDY BIGGS and several of my fellow Senators, I have introduced the Stopping Border Surges Act to address some of the more egregious loopholes in our immigration laws.

This bill remedies the expansion of the Flores Settlement agreement that puts so many children in danger by requiring the release of minors with any adult claiming to be the child's parent. It provides expedited processing for unaccompanied minors from all countries—processes currently available only to children from Mexico and Canada. Immediate processing will blunt the incentive for parents to send their

children on this dangerous journey alone. In an effort to end the trafficking of children by cartels, it strengthens protections for children released to adults within the United States. It tightens the asylum process so that we can better serve those who genuinely need the protections we can offer, and it incentivizes immigrants to enter our country through official ports of entry.

This bill offers a new commonsense series of reforms that will help stem the flood of immigrants at our border and free vulnerable women and children from the clutches of the cartels and of the coyotes. For that reason, I urge all of my colleagues to support it, to join it, and to vote for it.

Now, having previously received consent, I would like to conclude these remarks in Spanish, remarks directed specifically to those who might be considering making the dangerous, perilous journey to the southern border of the United States before sending their families.

(The English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Please do not send your wives and daughters on this journey only to be sexually assaulted by the coyotes and cartels. We hear story after story of smugglers kidnapping women and children and holding them hostage even after they cross our border. In the year 2019, the New York Times documented dozens of cases of these women. This is just one of those stories involving Melvin, a 36-year old mother of three from Guatemala:

For weeks in that locked room, the men she had paid to get her safely to the United States drugged her with pills and cocaine, refusing to let her out even to bathe. "I think that since they put me in that room, they killed me," she said. "They raped us so many times they didn't see us as human beings anymore."

Please, listen to Melvin's story. Do not make that the story of your family.

Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 884; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, we face a challenge at the border; there is no question about it.

It really strikes me as strange—maybe unusual—for Members of the Senate from the other side of the aisle to come and yearn for those wonderful days of the Trump administration when it came to the issue of immigration and border policy.

Remember when we had the longest government shutdown in history, paralyzing immigration courts and other Agencies? It was, of course, a shutdown that was sanctioned by the President

of the United States over his immigration demands.

Under President Trump, the Department of Homeland Security, incidentally, experienced unprecedented leadership problems. The Department of Homeland Security lurched from one Secretary or Acting Secretary to the next. Listen to this: There were six different Secretaries in that Agency in 4 years, only two Senate-confirmed—more Agency heads in the last 4 years under President Trump than in the 13-year history of the Department of Homeland Security prior to President Trump. They couldn't keep anybody on the job. They quit. They were fired. Nobody could agree with this President's bizarre ideas on what to do with immigration. Are we longing for a return to those days?

President Trump unlawfully diverted billions of dollars in Department of Defense funds to build a wasteful, ineffective border wall, which was supposed to be paid for by the Mexicans, if I remember, and then he created a humanitarian crisis at the border with a policy known as zero tolerance—zero tolerance.

I remember when Attorney General Sessions came before the American people and actually quoted the Bible to justify the forcible removal of infants, toddlers, and children from their parents' arms. Over 2,200 children were physically separated from their parents as part of the zero tolerance policy.

It wasn't until a Federal court judge in Southern California finally said to the Trump administration, "I demand that you account for these children, and I demand that you reunite them with their parents" that they set out to do it. Today, years later, years after zero tolerance, there are still hundreds of children separated at that time who have never been reunited with their parents.

Do we want to return to those wonderful days of the Trump administration immigration policy? I don't think so. Children in cages, children lost, adrift on the bureaucratic sea, doesn't speak well of America's values.

President Trump tried to end asylum protections for children and other vulnerable migrants. He cut aid to Central America, directly harming efforts to fight poverty and violence in the region. More refugees were driven to our border because the President shut down legal avenues for immigration and blocked all assistance to stabilize the Northern Triangle countries, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Now comes the Senator from Utah—and he and I have worked on legislation together in the past. I know that we can find bipartisan solutions. I don't think this approach is one of them, but perhaps it is the beginning of a conversation.

The President's former Republican allies in Congress claim that the real cause, the real problem behind immigration policy is humanitarian protection for children. They claim that we

can protect children by overturning these humanitarian protections, either that have been entered into in a consent decree in court or by law, and subjecting children at the border to indefinite detention and deportation without adequate due process. But there is no evidence that this will deter desperate families from fleeing to our border.

There is one thing the Senator from Utah and I certainly agree on. Many of these children and families are being horribly, horribly exploited by coyotes and kidnappers and very bad people. Many of these people and their children are suffering in unimaginable ways because of this.

I renew the plea that has been given across Central America by this administration: Don't send your people to our border. Don't send your children to our border.

It is not something we should encourage under the circumstances. It has to be orderly, and this is not in many respects.

There is no evidence that ending this humanitarian protection for children will deter desperate families fleeing to our border.

The bill before us today includes no assurances that children will be humanely treated or that they will be safe from violence once they are deported. This notion that once these children come across the border or are taken into custody by the U.S. Government, that sometime—2 weeks, 4 weeks, 6 weeks—later they are turned loose again does not dispense our moral obligation. We want these children to be safe, and that is what the laws are, the Flores decision and others.

This bill does nothing to address root causes that are causing migrants to flee the Northern Triangle in record numbers. If people were migrating because of so-called legal loopholes, they would be coming to our southern border from all over the region.

Instead, the vast majority come from three countries: Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Those countries have the highest homicide rates, some of them, in the world, and girls face a constant threat of sexual violence with little prosecution from local authorities. We are doing desperate things because of the desperate situations in these countries.

We are told by the Senator that we have to overturn the bipartisan Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, which passed by unanimous consent in the Senate and was signed into law by Republican President George W. Bush. But the TVPRA ensures that the United States meets its international obligations to protect unaccompanied children seeking safe haven in our country. It was a response to bipartisan concern that children apprehended by the Border Patrol were being returned to countries where they might be exploited even more.

Under TVPRA, unaccompanied children from the Northern Triangle are transferred to the Department of

Health and Human Services and placed in deportation proceedings, which gives them a chance to finally make their case to a judge.

Consider Samuel and Amelie, siblings ages 3 and 6, from Honduras. They arrived in the United States traumatized, ages 3 and 6. They said nothing—silent. After being transferred to HHS, Amelie revealed that both children had been raped by drug cartel members. Without TVPRA protection, Samuel and Amelie would have been returned to Honduras and almost certain further exploitation.

Democrats are trying to work on a bipartisan repair of this immigration system. It is long overdue.

In 2019, after President Trump finally agreed to end the longest government shutdown in history, Congress passed an omnibus appropriations bill that included \$414 million for humanitarian assistance at the border and then passed an emergency supplemental for \$4.6 billion of additional funding to alleviate overcrowding in detention facilities.

In 2018, Senate Democrats supported a bipartisan agreement, including robust border security funding and dozens of provisions to strengthen border security, but President Trump threatened to veto it and, instead, pushed for his hardline plan with the largest cut in legal immigration in almost a century.

When it comes to refugees, after World War II, when the United States sadly turned away hundreds and thousands of ultimate victims of the Holocaust and would not accept their refugee status, we set out to prove to the world that we had learned a valuable lesson, and we led the world in offering refugee status until President Trump, who brought the numbers down to record low levels. That does not speak well for the United States, or it shouldn't be a source of pride for anyone reflecting this administration.

We need comprehensive immigration reform. I support it. Eight years ago, in 2013, I was part of the Gang of 8, a bipartisan group of four Republican and four Democratic Senators. We produced comprehensive immigration reform legislation that passed the Senate 68 to 32. The Senator from Utah voted against it. Unfortunately, Republicans who controlled the House of Representatives refused to consider it.

So here is my invitation to the Senator from Utah and to everyone else interested. Let us sit down again and write that bill. Let's do it in a fashion that really does bring reform to our system.

I just talked at a bipartisan meeting on the subject earlier. One of the Senators from a border State said: People in my State don't expect the Federal Government to do anything because it has been so many years since they have done anything.

It is time for us to prove them wrong. We have the authority. We have the opportunity. We have the challenge.

Making this sort of request on the floor, I know, is symbolic, but I have to say that it is not the symbolism we should follow, and I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The senior Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I appreciate the sentiment expressed by my friend, my distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Illinois, particularly when he expressed the desire no longer to have people send their children on the long, perilous journey from Central America to the United States. On that, he and I certainly agree, just as we have agreed on a number of other issues over the years.

I do think it is regrettable that we are not able to reach this agreement today. This is something we ought to be able to solve right here, right now. This is a very dire set of circumstances.

We have to remember what we are talking about is dealing with the Flores agreement. We are in a position where so many of the children coming up through these caravans are in danger because we have in place policies that require the release of minors to any adult claiming to be the child's parent. We ought to have expedited processing requirements for unaccompanied minors, just as we have in place already for unaccompanied minors coming from Mexico and coming from Canada.

It makes me wonder: What is it about children from Central American countries—from any country other than Canada and Mexico—that makes them undeserving of that same expedited processing requirement? This is something we need to do.

Yes, I understand that our immigration system is a mess and needs reform, but I don't understand why it is that anyone would want to accept the default assumption that we can't fix anything with immigration; we can't even fix this problem subjecting these unaccompanied minors from Central American countries, including Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Why can't we give them any relief here until such time as we can come up with a comprehensive immigration reform proposal?

It is disappointing to me that we can't do that today. We will keep trying, keep moving on this effort. This is important.

Look, regardless of where one stands politically, what party one belongs to, I don't think it is too much to ask to suggest that we shouldn't give kids over to anyone claiming to be their parent without proof, without processes to make sure that is a safe person. We wouldn't want our own children treated that way. We shouldn't treat them that way.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The Senator from Illinois.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that cloture on