

I urge my Republican colleagues: Ignore the former President.

President Trump said: Don't fix anything during the Presidential election.

He is not your boss. He is not your constituent. We have an obligation to national security. The country is at risk. Let us debate the Border Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 696

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, it is great to hear my Democratic colleague come out against what is happening at the border. It is a disaster, and it is a national security threat.

Three weeks ago, two illegal immigrants attempted to break into the Marine base at Quantico in Virginia. Both individuals are Jordanian nationals who were apprehended by Customs and Border Protection at the southern border and released into the United States. One of them was allegedly on the Terrorist Watchlist.

Now, how did we get here? How did we get to the point where two people who entered the country illegally and were not screened or vetted tried to drive a truck onto a military base?

Let me say that again: These people are not being screened or vetted. We have no idea who these people are.

But here is what we do know about the people who have invaded our country: 25,000 Chinese nationals have entered our country since October 1, 2023; 184,000 Haitians have entered under Joe Biden's mass parole program; along with 101,000 Venezuelans, 91,000 Cubans, and 75,000 Nicaraguans. And this doesn't count the 76,000 Afghans who came here after Joe Biden's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan.

As I have repeatedly said, I have no problem with legal immigration, nor do my Republican colleagues. America is the land of freedom and opportunity. If people want to come here legally, we will welcome them; but we cannot—we cannot—have terrorists crossing our borders unverified. Ask the FBI.

Beyond the safety concerns, we simply cannot afford to support the 11 million illegal immigrants who have illegally crossed our borders in the past 3½ years. I don't know if Joe Biden missed the memo, but, folks, we are dead broke—dead broke—yet we are shelling out hundreds of billions of dollars to support these 11 million illegal immigrants, and this does not count the millions of what we call “got-aways.” Obviously, if they can come across and not be apprehended, why in the world would they go somewhere and run from the Border Patrol? It is because they are criminals.

A recent report from the House Committee on Homeland Security estimated the southern border surge is costing the American taxpayers about \$450 billion a year. You got that right. It is costing the American taxpayers \$450 billion a year. After 10 years, we are looking at a \$5 trillion bill. In

terms of actual benefits, it is estimated that illegals receive \$42 billion in welfare annually, \$68 billion in education, and \$7 billion in healthcare. We are spending hundreds of billions of dollars to support all of these people. The American taxpayers simply cannot afford it.

So why are Joe Biden and the globalist Democrats allowing this to happen? Why is this going on?

It is simply because Democrats care more about keeping power than they do about safety and protecting the American taxpayer and the American citizen. A New York Congressman confirmed this. She said that she welcomes illegal immigration because it helps with redistributing.

The President and his progressive left Democratic Party know that the more people they can get into this country, the longer they will stay in power—by increasing the population in the blue districts. It is a simple fact.

But enough is enough. Too many American lives have been lost due to the blatant disregard of U.S. law by the Biden administration. It is time elected officials fulfilled their obligation and the oath of office, starting with protecting the country from all enemies, foreign and domestic. This bill, the Border Act of 2024 that SCHUMER is forcing us to vote on, is basically an absolute joke.

By the way, President Trump has never told me—and I talk to him weekly. He has never said one word about the border. I don't know where my colleague from Georgia got this information, but it is false. If he had told anybody, he would have told me.

This bill, the Border Act of 2024, doesn't even have the word “security” in the title. That is because this bill will only make the crisis at the southern border worse. It is a border invasion bill; it is not a border bill. It is a border giveaway paid for by the American taxpayers in the trillions of dollars.

It also weakens the power of the President by suggesting the President close the border only when Customs and Border Protection has apprehended 4,000 illegal immigrants a day. Yes, you heard that—a day. So we are going to pass a bill that is going to allow 4,000 people to come here a day. That is insane. The last time I checked, the Commander in Chief already has full authority to secure the border. There is nothing new about that. That is supposed to be a basic requirement of his job: to protect the American citizens; to protect our borders; to protect our country.

The bill also includes zero funding for the border wall—zero, and it codifies dangerous catch-and-release policies.

So how did we get here? How is a border bill crafted that does nothing to secure the border?

Republican leadership put together this bill. They pushed things without telling the rest of the caucus and said: At the end of the day, this is the bill

that we have come up with—and we rejected it. Most of us didn't even know what was in the bill even at almost the time of the vote. The bill is just another public relations stunt from globalist Democrats pretending to care about the border during an election year.

We need to get serious about the national security disaster created by open borders—serious. If we don't believe that, we need to ask our allies over in Europe who have pretty much had their countries destroyed by immigration.

The American people don't want another messaging exercise. They want to feel safe in their neighborhoods. They pay our bills. They deserve it. We are here for them.

Over the last 3 years, Americans have watched in disbelief as Joe Biden has intentionally erased our borders and invited millions of illegal immigrants to invade our country. My bill, the Border Safety and Security Act, would shut down our borders until the Department of Homeland Security regains operational control because, as we speak, the border is being overrun. That means the border would be completely closed until DHS is able to track exactly who is coming into the country by either detaining them or setting up a program similar to “Remain in Mexico.” It is that simple.

If Democrats are serious about securing the border, they will support the Border Safety and Security Act.

Madam President, as in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 696 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, 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 (Mr. OSSOFF). Is there objection?

The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, the background that leads up to this moment is worth a minute or 2 to be explained.

It was October. We faced some ominous challenges around the world. Our allies and friends were in conflict, and the United States wanted to stand by them.

President Biden made a request for a defense supplemental and said: We need to move on this quickly. For example, our friends in Ukraine, who are fighting off the barbaric tactics of Vladimir Putin, need our continued help. We shouldn't waste any time.

At the time, several Members of the Senate on the other side of the aisle said: No, you cannot even consider helping Ukraine fight this war against Putin unless you do something about our border. There has got to be a change in our border policy.

So there eventually emerged a group that took on the task of writing a bipartisan bill.

Make no mistake, legislation on a subject as serious as this will never pass as a partisan piece of legislation. It has to be bipartisan. Both sides of the aisle decided to enlist our colleagues to sit down in a deliberative effort to write a bipartisan border bill to address the crisis we face at the border.

The Republicans chose as their spokesperson, as their negotiator, JAMES LANKFORD of Oklahoma. JAMES LANKFORD is a certifiable conservative Republican who is respected on both sides of the aisle. I join in that chorus of respect for him.

The Republicans said to us: None of these freewheeling efforts. JAMES LANKFORD is our man. He will negotiate this, and we will stand by him.

At that point, CHRIS MURPHY, a Democrat from Connecticut, was enlisted to be part of that negotiating effort, along with the Senator from Arizona. They sat down and started a three-way effort to find a bipartisan bill. They worked on it not just for weeks but for months.

During that period of time, I met with them from time to time, not to interject my efforts or any ideas I had, but just to measure their progress. They were not happy about the course of business and how quickly they could reach a conclusion, but the fact of the matter is they did. They reached a bipartisan agreement, one which I don't agree with in many aspects, but it is a good one—a heartfelt, serious effort; a bipartisan Democratic and Republican effort.

We were prepared and did call on the floor of the U.S. Senate this bipartisan bill that Senator LANKFORD had led the Republicans into establishing. I believe it ended up with four votes—four votes.

The Republicans were told: Keep your hands off, Democrats, when it comes to Lankford's efforts. Let him do the work.

When he finally produced an effort, a good-faith effort, they rejected it, walked away from it.

The Senator from Alabama just explained that they didn't have time to read it. If I recall, several days had passed where that bill was available for our staffs to analyze and others to look at. Most of us who wanted to know the contents of it. I thought it was a step in the right direction moving forward. But it was rejected by the same Republicans who initiated the process by saying that there will be no supplemental for defense until there is a bipartisan bill, and the bipartisan bill is to be put together by the Senator from Oklahoma. When it finally appeared before us, they walked away from it. They walked away from this bipartisan bill.

I would just tell the Senator from Alabama, I have worked on this issue for a number of years. The only effort I have seen that finally resulted in comprehensive immigration reform that came to the floor was totally bipartisan. A gang of eight Senators, which I was part of, led by Senator MCCAIN on the Republican side, pro-

duced a good bill that received over 65 votes. It wasn't taken up by the Republicans in the House, but it was a good-faith, bipartisan effort. That is the only way we can pass legislation that is meaningful when it comes to immigration.

The bill that the Senator from Alabama produces here today will not secure our border. It will not prevent the flow of illicit drugs through ports of entry or improve public safety. It would allow the Secretary of Homeland Security to suspend the entry of all asylum seekers at the border anytime the Secretary deems it necessary to achieve "operational control" of the border—whatever that phrase means.

Let's be clear. No Secretary of Homeland Security, including the Secretary under President Trump, has ever achieved operational control of the border.

The bill also requires the suspension of entry at the border of all asylum seekers if all asylum seekers cannot be detained and placed in expedited removal. One again, no administration, Republican or Democratic, has ever been able to detain and place in expedited removal all or even most asylum seekers—not even President Trump. It couldn't be done. No Congress has been willing to provide the funding that would be necessary to do it.

This bill would indefinitely end asylum protection without additional resources for the Department of Homeland Security, without any alternatives for desperate women and children fleeing persecution, and without any additional consequences for those who violate our laws.

We have learned from past experience that attempting to shut down the border is inhumane and simply doesn't work. To assume that this is one big wall that we could close the gate on is just wrong. It is not the reality. Our experience with title 42 emergency health authorities demonstrated this. Repeated attempts at unlawful crossings soared despite title 42, as did the number of noncitizens who successfully evaded Border Patrol, often referred to as "got-aways."

Recent data from CBP shows that in fiscal year 2024, the daily number of "got-aways" was 70 percent lower than the period immediately before the end of the use of title 42.

The reality is that our current laws for processing asylum seekers at the border are fundamentally broken, and measures like this bill will not fix them.

The bottom line is, the buck stops here. The buck stops here in the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives.

The last time we passed meaningful immigration reform was over 30 years ago, and we wonder why this broken system continues to be broken. It is because of our dereliction.

In contrast, we have the opportunity to vote on a bipartisan border bill, which will be offered tomorrow. It was

written by Senator LANKFORD, a Republican of Oklahoma, Senator MURPHY, and Senator SINEMA.

This legislation would actually help secure the border and provide essential national security funding. It would reform broken laws that are not working to process asylum seekers at our border, and it would provide desperately needed resources to our Agencies to allow them to implement these new provisions.

While these new processes are being implemented, the bipartisan border bill would provide for a temporary suspension of asylum in between ports of entry if the number of asylum seekers arriving at the border exceeds the capacity of DHS to process.

I have some concerns about the bill, but it reflects a genuine, bipartisan effort to create solutions to outdated laws and underfunding that have plagued our immigration system for years.

I was really disappointed, as I am sure Senator LANKFORD was, to see most of my Republican colleagues vote against that bipartisan bill. Although the bill was written by Senate Republicans' designated negotiator, Senator LANKFORD, and endorsed by the National Border Patrol Council—the union that represents Border Patrol agents—the Speaker of the House declared it "dead on arrival" in the House before the text was even released. To think that the Border Patrol agents said that this will improve the situation—the Lankford bill—and the Republicans still voted against it tells us the whole story.

I hope my colleagues will work with me to pass immigration legislation that the American people deserve, one that supports our frontline law enforcement, addresses the needs of our economy, provides a path to citizenship for Dreamers and immigrant farmer workers, and lives up to our Nation's legacy of providing safe harbor to refugees fleeing for their lives.

The American people are tired of partisan posturing and bickering over immigration. That is why this bipartisan bill, which was encouraged by the Republicans and the Democrats, needs to be the starting point of our negotiation. They want us to work together to secure the border, support our economy, and stand by America's fundamental values.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Well, there you have it. The American people have their answer. Democrats don't care about securing the border. They never have, and they never will. They pretend to. They continue to choose open borders—more crime, more fentanyl overdoses, more human trafficking, and more American deaths.

Democrats will say Republicans tanked the bill that would have secured the border. You just heard that.

This is a blatant lie. This bill, crafted by Democrats, would have done absolutely nothing to strengthen the border—not one thing. In fact, it would have made things worse. It would codify the problems that we have had the last 3½ years.

My Republican colleagues have offered real solutions for the last month to fix the problem. We have a huge problem. Somebody needs to recognize that. But my Democratic colleagues have voted against and objected to every single thing that we have brought up.

Don't buy into this lie.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 505

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, let's start at the grassroots of Iowa.

The question that comes up frequently at my county meetings—and next week, I am going to hold a Q&A in 12 of Iowa's 99 counties, and I expect I will get this question that I am going to pose to you: Senator, what are you going to do about the open border, people illegally entering our country?

My answer is usually pretty short—that long before I came to the Congress, Congress passed laws saying you can't come to our country without our permission. In fact, I add that we are a very favorable country toward immigration because about 1 million people come here every year, and maybe we should have more who come here under our laws, within those laws, not breaking our laws by entering the country illegally.

I don't get much of a pushback from that because I explain to them that we pass laws, and then the President enforces those laws under our Constitution.

The President has decided not to enforce the immigration laws. It shouldn't surprise us that he has taken that position for 3½ years because he told us before the election that he was going to open the border.

But there are some things Congress can do about immigration. That is why I am here on the floor today to ask unanimous consent for a piece of legislation that I put in. Maybe if this legislation becomes law, the President still might decide not to enforce it, like every other law.

Since day one, the Biden administration has pursued an open border policy. The result has been utter chaos and a crisis at the southern border. This crisis has become an indelible hallmark of President Biden's America.

However, President Biden, as I have said, has the authority to secure the border. He is already empowered under current law to do that. He could do it today if he really wanted to. It is the same authority that President Trump used to secure our border just a few years ago.

The Constitution makes very clear that the President takes an oath that he shall take care to faithfully execute

the laws. President Biden doesn't follow that constitutional oath to take care in regard to the immigration laws. Trump did take that oath very seriously.

Under the Biden administration, some 9 million migrants have been allowed to illegally enter our country. That is about three times the population of my home State of Iowa. The President has done that for 3½ years. Let me repeat that that 9 million figure is like the entire population of Iowa nearly three times over.

So instead of taking care that the laws be faithfully executed, enforcing these immigration laws already on the books, this administration chooses to ignore our border and abuse our Nation's immigration parole and asylum system. That is what my bill deals with, the parole system.

Immigration parole is supposed to allow the executive branch to temporarily grant individuals entry into the United States on a limited but case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. But instead of case by case, the Biden administration uses this program to admit entire categories of people as a means to bypass the legal immigration pathways outlined by Congress—in other words, not doing it on a case-by-case basis.

The actions of President Biden are completely out of line with what Congress intended to be the parole authority. So to address this loophole, I have introduced S. 505, the Immigration Parole Reform Act.

My bill will close this loophole and ensure compliance with Congress's original intent as a limited authority for exceptional circumstances. My bill outlines specific parameters for what constitutes an urgent humanitarian reason or significant public benefit. This bill would also provide clarity on the timing and extension of immigration parole, among other reforms.

So at this point, Mr. President, as in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 505 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this week has given the American people yet another clear window into the Republican mind when it comes to immigration: They are not serious about addressing immigration or about having secure or humanely managed borders.

Instead, Republicans only seem to believe in highlighting the challenges at our border instead of actually taking action to address them, and it is because they are prioritizing how it may

impact the results at the ballot box this November. That is their goal: to stoke more and more fear of immigrants every month between now and election day.

So I have asked before, and I will ask again: My Republican colleagues, when are you ready to get serious about immigration reform?

All but ending the practice of parole and cutting off legal pathways to immigrants is not a serious approach to the immigration problem. They know it can't happen in practice, and maybe that is exactly why they are calling for it.

Let's be clear what this is and what this isn't. This is not updating the amnesty process, which is legal but in dire need of additional resources, so that we can provide due process for those who may be seeking amnesty and provide them determinations on their requests sooner rather than later.

This is not updating work visa programs, because I know that all of us are hearing from employers across industries that there is a need for additional workers to keep our economy thriving.

What we are talking about here with this measure is parole in place. Every President since Eisenhower has used the parole authority on a case-by-case basis to allow a safe and secure path for immigrants who are fleeing natural disasters or who need urgent, specialized medical care to come to the United States. That is what we are talking about. Both Republican and Democratic Presidents have used it because it is a humane way to help address global crises.

I will give you some more recent examples. We have been able to provide protections for families of our military members. We have been able to provide protections for people fleeing the war in Ukraine. We have been able to provide protections for people who fled Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover, and for Haitians, more recently, and Venezuelans and those of other nationalities seeking refuge from violence and instability in their home countries.

Taking it away will actually force more people to come to the southern border, instead of using other lawful pathways like parole to come in a more orderly way. Is that what Republicans really want—because that is what would happen—to force more people to go to the border so they can continue to point fingers at a crisis of their own making?

The President's ability to grant parole on a case-by-case basis to people fleeing horrific and dangerous conditions is actually fundamental to America's continued leadership and our proud history of embracing strategic immigration as part of our success.

This bill represents a lack of respect for humanity and the laws of our Nation, and, therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.