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No. 23

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, February 9, 2024, at 10 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024

(Legislative day of Wednesday, February 7, 2024)

The Senate met at 12 noon, on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable ANGUS S. KING, Jr., a Senator from the State of Maine.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, thank You for Your sacred precepts that provide us with a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. We are grateful for Your universal truth that appears across the spectrum of religious traditions.

It states:

Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

Lord, we praise You for that liberating truth and for Your promise that it did set us free.

Give our Senators the wisdom and courage to know and obey Your truth and trust You with the consequences.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 8, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ANGUS S. KING, Jr., a Senator from the State of Maine, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. KING thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

REMOVING EXTRANEOUS LOOP-HOLES INSURING EVERY VETERAN EMERGENCY ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED UPON RECONSIDERATION—Continued

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we are going to have a cloture vote now, and I am hopeful we can move forward on this bill.

I ask for regular order.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 30, H.R. 815, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Mark R. Warner, Michael F. Bennet, Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Richard J. Durbin, Martin Heinrich, Tim Kaine, Kyrsten Sinema, Jack Reed, Angus S. King, Jr., Richard Blumenthal, Christopher Murphy, Brian Schatz.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 30, H.R. 815, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close upon reconsideration?

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 67, nays 32, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 41 Leg.]

YEAS—67

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Butler	Kennedy	Sinema
Cantwell	King	Smith
Capito	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cardin	Lujan	Sullivan
Carper	Manchin	Tester
Casey	Markey	Thune
Cassidy	McConnell	Tillis
Collins	Menendez	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cornyn	Moran	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Welch
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Ernst	Ossoff	Wicker
Fetterman	Padilla	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	Young
Grassley	Reed	
Hassan	Romney	

NAYS—32

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Graham	Ricketts
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Britt	Hoeven	Sanders
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cotton	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Vance
Daines	Mullin	

NOT VOTING—1

Lummis

(The PRESIDENT pro tempore assumed the Chair.)

(The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). On this vote, the yeas are 67, the nays are 32.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion upon reconsideration is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it is a very good thing that the Senate has just voted to proceed to the national security supplemental. This is a good first step. This bill is essential for our national security; for the security of our friends in Ukraine, in Israel; for humanitarian aid for innocent civilians in Gaza; and for Taiwan. The bill also strengthens our military at a time when they need it most. Failure to pass this bill would only embolden autocrats like Putin and Xi, who want nothing more than America's decline. Now that we are on the bill, we hope to reach an agreement with our Republican colleagues on amendments.

Democrats have always been clear that we support having a fair and reasonable amendment process. During my time as majority leader, I have pre-

sided over more amendment votes than the Senate held in all 4 years of the previous administration.

For the information of Senators, we are going to keep working on this bill until the job is done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, the Federal Government has failed Arizona and other border States for decades. And for decades, Congress has done nothing about it. As we have lurched from crisis to crisis, Arizona and other border States have always been hit the hardest.

This humanitarian crisis is bad for asylum seekers, bad for law enforcement, and bad for communities. The problem gets worse the longer it is ignored. And yet for decades, nothing has been done. I see it every time I go to the border. So have my colleagues who have traveled to Arizona to see it for themselves. I hear about it every time I talk to border mayors and sheriffs. And we talk about it every day here in the Senate and over in the House. In fact, there are few topics we talk about more while nothing changes.

This week, we had a real and rare opportunity to actually do something about it. There was a real plan, a real bill ready to be passed and signed into law by the President. We got here because for months, Senators SINEMA, MURPHY, and LANKFORD worked together on a bipartisan agreement almost every single day for months. If we passed it, we would get more Border Patrol agents, more technology to stop fentanyl, more asylum officers to quickly screen asylum claims, and more judges to bring down this massive backlog of cases. That would make a real difference. If we passed it, we would have an updated asylum system, authorities to prevent the border from being overwhelmed, and more visas to keep families together.

We would have a more secure and fair process at the border. That is what all of us want, and it should be no surprise that we got this plan thanks to Republicans and Democrats just working together. It was the product of tough conversations and compromise—in other words, the way legislation is supposed to happen. And it came together in an agreement that was not going to just address the border, but also the biggest challenges in our national security.

This is a perilous time. The decisions we make here, now, will shape the world that our kids and grandkids grow up in. As Hamas and other Iranian-backed militias threaten stability in the Middle East, this agreement included support for our ally Israel and aid for civilians in Gaza.

And as China expands its influence in order to offset U.S. power in the region, this agreement included support for Taiwan and other partners in the Pacific to strengthen their own self-defense.

Finally, as Putin wages his illegal war to annex Ukraine and destabilize Europe, this agreement included desperately needed weapons and ammunition to support Ukraine in their self-defense. I have traveled to Ukraine twice since Russia invaded nearly 2 years ago. As someone who has fought in combat myself, I was struck by the bravery of their citizens and soldiers in this existential fight that they are facing. Over the course of the last 2 years, armed with support from us and our European allies, they have decimated the Russian Army significantly, degrading their combat capabilities. This is a huge benefit to our own national security, and it came about without putting a single American in harm's way.

But our previous aid package for Ukraine ran out last year. So this week, we faced a choice: either provide Ukraine with more support to keep beating back Russia or leave it without the weapons and ammunition it needs and invite Russia to regain momentum. If that happens, Putin could set his sights on another target, threatening a wider conflict that will be much more costly for the United States.

That would be a disaster.

I am relieved that we found a path forward to prevent that by advancing these national security priorities on their own. But I am baffled by how we got here. We took a pair of votes this week—one that included border security and support for allies and one that was just support for our allies. It was a lack of support from my Republican colleagues that meant the first vote with border security failed—this, after months of working on a compromise to finally do something about this issue.

Every Senator faced a choice, an up-or-down vote. That is why we are here: To make tough choices in service of our country and to make easy choices when they are right in front of us.

Supporting our allies is an easy choice. Securing our border is an easy choice. I understand the politics. I know some politicians see more advantage in shouting about problems than solving them.

Well, I will tell you this: If you come back to my State to do TV interviews at the border, you better be ready to explain why you chose politics over addressing this crisis that is staring you in the face. If you can't do that, don't come back because this isn't just a political talking point for me or for Senator SINEMA or for my State. It is the reality that we live with every single day.

That is why, even after this setback, I won't stop working to fix this issue at our border and fix our broken immigration system. But make no mistake, this is a shameful week for the Senate. The American people are watching. They were hoping that Congress could overcome political divides for once and actually deliver. That didn't happen. The Senate failed them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, there are pivotal times in our Nation's history when what we do in this Chamber really matters. How we vote may well determine whether people live or whether they die; whether men and women live under the dictates of an authoritarian regime or as free people in a democratic nation; whether terrorists continue to commit atrocities, kidnap children, kill our troops, or are defeated.

This is such a moment.

This week, General Kurilla, the Commander of U.S. Central Command, told me that this is the most dangerous security situation in 50 years—50 years. The defense supplemental bill before us would strengthen our own military. It would send a strong message to Putin that his goal of capturing free, democratic nations will not be allowed to succeed. It would reassure our closest ally in the Middle East—Israel—that terrorists will not achieve their goal of wiping that nation off the face of the map. It would counter Chinese aggression, and it would rebuild our own defense industrial base.

Mr. President, I urge our colleagues to recognize the perilous times that we are living in and vote for this national security bill. It is critical.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, it should never have taken us this long to move forward on this aid that so many of us are saying is necessary. But I am so glad that we are finally here making progress on this crucial package. We have more work ahead to get this passed in the Senate and House and, ultimately, signed into law. And we, frankly, do not have a minute to waste.

I hope this vote is the start of moving this package now in earnest, because this is serious. As the senior Senator from Maine just outlined, our allies are at war. Civilians are in harm's way. Dictators are watching closely to see what we are going to do about it. So, really, the stakes could not be higher. How we answer this moment will define America's future on the global stage and could well redefine the balance of power in the world.

I hope today is truly a breakthrough for bipartisanship, that cooler heads will prevail from here on out, and that we can move this forward in a reasonable, bipartisan way.

We will be doing everything in our power to move that forward. I stand ready to work with my vice chair, the senior Senator from Maine, on any amendments that Senators want to bring forward. And as the leader just said to everyone, we will stay here until this is done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO ALYSON SINCAVAGE

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today with the bittersweet task of saying goodbye to our office's departing chief counsel, Alyson Sincavage. Whether it was her time as a public defender or fighting on behalf of immigrants at the American Immigration Lawyers Association to cutting her teeth in the Senate with former Senator Tom Udall and my colleague Senator TIM KAINE, Alyson has been exactly the type of public servant we were looking for when I joined the Senate in 2021 and was handed the gavel to the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and Border Safety.

From the earliest days of setting up shop in the subcommittee, through tireless fights during reconciliation and nonstop negotiations and vote-aramas, from helping me prepare for the historic confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson to navigating contentious markups—yes, we have contentious markups in the Senate Judiciary Committee from time to time—and also overseeing the confirmation of 30 judges to the Federal bench in California, she has done a lot.

She has helped guide my team of counsels on the Judiciary Committee while we have taken on the dark money influence on the Supreme Court of the United States. We worked together to protect reproductive rights and, particularly the last few months, defending against some of the most extreme and cruel Republican immigration proposals. She has fought for Dreamers, for farmworkers and essential workers and for keeping the asylum system serving asylum seekers and immigrant communities who too often lack someone who is watching their back while in the room where decisions are being made and proposals are being negotiated.

In this most partisan of times, she has constantly reminded all of us about the human impact of what we do and who would be most affected by the decisions we make here in Washington.

Through her tireless dedication and her unrivaled expertise, she has also helped guide fellow immigration counsels in other offices, serving as the moral conscience of the Senate on immigration and an invaluable resource for staffers and Senators alike.

I want to acknowledge that Alyson has spent countless hours, many late nights, not just long days, early mornings, long days and late nights and weekends committed to the work and to the fight. That doesn't always show up in the box score. It may not always make headlines the next day. Through it all, she has always kept her cool un-

less the situation called for a little bit of fire, which, actually, oftentimes it did.

Finally, speaking not just as a Senator but as a parent, I know just how hard these jobs can be to navigate those long days with the emotions running high—in the office, not just at home—and to still make sure we are picking up the kids, putting kids to bed at night, attending to those kid birthday parties on the weekends, and, yes, making sure the dinosaur doesn't go to school.

Alyson has essentially managed 3 years of around-the-clock immigration negotiations, our entire Senate subcommittee, and still made time to be a good mom and to bring her kids to the Hart Office Building on Halloween for trick-or-treating.

To her kids, Siena and Jude, who may be too young now to appreciate this but watch this video in years to come, please know just how important your mom has been, not just helping to build a future for your family but for millions of families across the country.

To her husband Adam and to her entire family, thank you for sharing her with us. The Senate is a better institution, the State of California is a better place, and our future is stronger because of the work Alyson has done.

To Alyson, thank you for all that you have done for Angela and me, for our office, and for the people of California and the Nation. We are going to miss you. We know you are not going too far, and you will be back often to visit, but we are going to miss you in the office. We thank you so very much.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

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

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

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am back now for the 28th time in my series of speeches on the special interest scheme to capture the U.S. Supreme Court. What I would like to do today is to talk a little bit about the Judicial Conference and what the Judicial Conference has been doing to help clean up the mess at the Supreme Court.

I suppose I should start with "What is the Judicial Conference?" The Judicial Conference is a body created by Congress around 100 years ago as the chief governing and policymaking body of the Federal judiciary. It basically supervises the administrative side, not the adjudicative side—the administrative side—of the judicial branch of government. It is chaired by the Chief Justice, and its membership is composed

of the chief judges of each circuit and of the Court of International Trade. So it is a very distinguished group of very senior appellate judges and a district judge from each circuit—typically, a chief judge or a senior judge. Again, it is a pretty distinguished group.

The Conference is responsible for, among other things, enforcing ethics rules, overseeing financial disclosures, and setting other policies across the Federal judiciary, which it mostly does through committees. It has committees on issues ranging from financial disclosure to things like courtroom security.

The Judicial Conference has a very important role enforcing judicial ethics rules. Ethics rules are within its ambit of responsibility. Now, bearing in mind the recent ProPublica story concluding that the Judicial Conference has, to quote the story, “often protected, not policed, the judiciary,” I wanted to share my experience as I have conducted this investigation and how we have been able to work with the Judicial Conference.

First, let me say, as a general matter, that the Judicial Conference is very reticent—very reticent. Getting even basic information, like which judge serves on which committee, is an uphill struggle.

Last year, Business Insider, the publication, sought the list of members of the Committee on Financial Disclosure, and the Conference initially denied the request—what can I tell you—saying that the “names of the members of the committee are not public,” which is kind of a strange position to take when they are paid by taxpayers to do that work, and all you are asking is who they are.

But, thankfully, later, the Conference reversed course. I requested the Judicial Conference disclose information, like who sits on its committees and what rules they operate by, but, so far, I have not yet received a formal response to that, and I very much hope that the members of the Judicial Conference will make this information public. Transparency is not a bad thing in this area.

Anyway, through all of its established reticence, when I have brought issues to the attention of the Judicial Conference through correspondence or through remarks that I deliver at the Conference’s twice-annual meetings in Washington, which I am invited to in my capacity as the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Courts Subcommittee, the Conference has generally produced positive results. My requests have covered four areas, and I will give you a quick overview of where those matters stand.

First, I will talk about the disclosure rules for amicus curiae briefs, or “friend of the court” briefs. Dark-money front groups send flotillas of amicus briefs to the Supreme Court. The Justices and their clerks read these briefs. They often cite them in their official decisions. But it is basically judicial lobbying.

The problem is that this flotilla of amicus briefs doesn’t have to disclose the true source of the funding behind the briefs. So neither the Justices nor the other parties nor the public gets to know who is really paying for these arguments to be presented to the Supreme Court, nor do we know the interconnections among the front groups. To what extent are they single web of front groups masquerading as a great number of individual entities?

We know for sure one thing: There was a brief filed under a “fictitious name” of another organization. It wasn’t even a real entity that filed the brief. It was the “fictitious name” under Virginia law of a completely different group, and that was done without disclosing the name of the actual group to the Court.

That means it is left to offices like mine to track these groups and then explain to the Court, which we do in our amicus briefs, how all of this flotilla of briefs is coordinated.

Very often we see common dark-money donors. Very often we see the fingerprints of the rightwing billionaires’ Court fixer, Leonard Leo, time and again. Dark-money groups pay huge sums to support rightwing Justices’ confirmations onto the Court and then turn around and file amicus curiae briefs to signal to those Justices, whom they helped get on the Court, how they should rule.

So, since 2019, I have asked the Supreme Court to strengthen its amicus disclosure rule. After much badgering, the Court, to its credit, sent this matter to the Judicial Conference for consideration, where, at the Judicial Conference, it was, in turn, referred to an advisory committee. Although that advisory committee hasn’t yet formally proposed a rule change, things look promising. These judges who make up the Judicial Conference well recognize the importance of, as one judge said, knowing what she called the “real power behind the throne” in these flotillas of amicus briefs.

It is also encouraging to hear judges on the committee recognize that there is a “broad agreement,” which they said, on the need for better disclosure. As always, the devil will be in the details, but, thus far, the Judicial Conference is on the case. It has announced that it is examining the matter.

Another issue that I have raised with the Judicial Conference is what I call the “Scalia trick,” misuse of the “personal hospitality” exception in the financial disclosure rules. Justice Scalia got this trick named for him by taking dozens of high-end hunting trips for free, and he used this rule to avoid disclosing them. He pretended that a “personal invitation” from a resort owner, whom he had perhaps never met, made it “personal hospitality” protected by the rule.

Senator GRAHAM and I first sent a bipartisan letter to the Supreme Court about abuse of the personal hospitality exception back in 2021. This letter can

be found online at <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/download/2021-02-04-letter-with-graham-to-sctus-hospitality-and-code>.

After that, I sent several more letters asking the Court to address the “Scalia trick.” Those three letters can be found online at <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/download/2021-08-30-letter-to-circuits-hospitality>, <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/download/2022-04-18-letter-to-circuits-hospitality-follow-up>, and <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/download/2023-02-21-letter-to-judicial-conference-personal-hospitality>.

The good news is that, in March of last year, the Administrative Office of the Courts wrote to me to say that the Committee on Financial Disclosure “would clarify its regulations on ‘personal hospitality.’”

I will quote that word again, “clarify,” because it matters later.

Sure enough, when the clarification came out, the Judicial Conference slammed the door hard on the “Scalia trick”—so no more secret flights to and from hunting trips across the country on someone else’s dime; no more secret “personal” hospitality paid for by a third party; and no more secret “personal” hospitality, so-called, at properties owned by a corporation.

I count these clarifications as a win. So I will put that into the “win” column.

There is a related question still pending from that. Justices Thomas and Alito claimed, last year, this same exception—the “personal” hospitality exception—let them accept their secret gifts of jet and yacht travel from rightwing billionaires without reporting it.

In his most recent financial disclosure report, Justice Thomas claimed that he could keep those past gifts secret because what he called the committee’s “new rules”—his description—didn’t go into effect until March 2023. And there I disagree. The disclosure law was always clear. It was the Judicial Conference’s guidance that hadn’t headed off the “Scalia trick,” likely because nobody imagined that any judge would be so bold as to have intermediaries ask resort owners to send them invitations for free travel and then call that “personal” hospitality.

Anyway, the judiciary’s letter to me said that the change was a “clarification.” And that word choice matters a lot here, because if it was, in fact, a “clarification,” then Justice Thomas and all the rest of the Supreme Court must amend their past filings to comport with the law, because it had always been that way, and they would have to disclose all the freebies kept secret in previous years. So pending at the Judicial Conference is my request that the Conference clarify whether the revised guidance constituted a “clarification” or a rule change. I do not have a response to that yet, but the end of the “Scalia trick” was a considerable win.

I have also contacted the Conference about how omissions in Justice Thomas's financial disclosure report were handled by the Conference back in 2011. That correspondence can be found online at <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/05.02.2023%20-%20Supreme%20Court%20Ethics%20Hearing%20-%20Exhibit%2010.pdf> and https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2023-08-31_letter_to_judge_mauskopf_financial_disclosure_committee.pdf.

Back then, Justice Thomas failed to disclose \$700,000 that the far-right Heritage Foundation had paid his wife over several years. Justice Thomas's undisclosed yacht and jet travel, paid for by the rightwing billionaire Harlan Crow, also became public for the first time. So Members of Congress and a watchdog group sent the 2011 omissions to the Judicial Conference's Committee on Financial Disclosure for review. Under the law, the Conference is required to refer the matter to the Attorney General for further investigation if there is reasonable cause—reasonable cause—to believe that the violations may have been willful.

Last year, my Courts Subcommittee heard testimony from a judge who was then on the Judicial Conference, who raised serious concerns about the Conference's "reasonable cause" inquiry. There is actually no indication that a "reasonable cause" inquiry was made, so in August, I wrote to the Administrative Office to find out more about what really happened. The Administrative Office acknowledged my request, but I have not yet received a response to my questions.

The Judicial Conference is also considering Justice Thomas's more recent financial disclosure omissions. Congressman HANK JOHNSON, who is my coordinate as the top Democrat on the Courts Subcommittee on the House side, and I wrote to the Judicial Conference several times, along with other Members of Congress, asking for a review of these ethics violations and a determination as to whether referral to the Attorney General is required for this second round of yacht and jet travel from Republican billionaire Harlan Crow, for the real estate sale from Thomas to Crow, and for various gifts from other ultrawealthy individuals, including Paul Novelly and David Sokol.

Madam President, those letters can be found online at https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/download/letter-to-judicial-conference-referral-to-ag_04142023 and https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2023-08-11_letter_to_judge_mauskopf_thomas_gifts1.pdf.

As in 2011, the current matter has been sent to the Committee on Financial Disclosure. We don't know exactly how the committee's review is going, but the Judicial Conference's report on its September meeting—its most recent meeting—included this interesting note on the committee's activi-

ties. The note said the committee was "updated on the status of the ongoing review of public written allegations of errors or omissions in a filer's financial disclosure reports that were referred to it since the Conference's last session." So it seems like that is this matter, and it seems like that investigation is an ongoing review.

The final issue I have raised with the Judicial Conference is my complaint against Justice Alito for what I thought was a pretty blatant ethics violation last summer. I addressed this complaint to Chief Justice Roberts both in his capacity as Chief Justice and as Chair of the Judicial Conference.

Madam President, that letter can be found online at https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2023-09-04_complaint_from_senwhitehouseenclosure.pdf.

The Supreme Court, unlike every other Federal court, has no procedure for receiving or investigating ethics complaints, so that is why I sent it to him wearing both of those hats.

The first thing I asked the Chief Justice to do was to change that. There should be a place where, with a complaint like that, I could go and file it and somebody would pay attention.

I also asked that either the Conference or the Court conduct its own investigation into Justice Alito's comments in the Wall Street Journal's editorial page, made in an interview with David Rivkin, where Justice Alito offered his legal opinion that "[n]o provision in the Constitution gives [Congress] the authority to regulate the Supreme Court—period."

Well, it seems to me that is a slam dunk ethics violation for a couple of reasons. First, Justice Alito was opining on the constitutionality of my Supreme Court ethics bill, which the Senate Judiciary Committee had recently advanced, and the legitimacy of related oversight requests from the Senate Judiciary and Finance Committees.

We have heard time and time again from Supreme Court nominees, including Justice Alito himself, that it is improper and a disservice to the judicial process—those were Justice Alito's words in his nomination hearing—for them to express opinions on a matter that might come before the Court. Well, boom. This was a matter that might come before the Court—indeed, it was actually likely to come before the Court—and there he was opining at will in the pages of the Wall Street Journal's editorial page.

But it gets worse. He made his comments in the context of a specific ongoing legal dispute—a dispute involving Court fixer Leonard Leo, who had arranged for an undisclosed free jet trip and fishing excursion for Justice Alito and himself.

When the Senate Judiciary Committee requested information about the gifts Leo arranged, we got a letter back from his lawyer, David Rivkin—the same person who conducted the

interview that recruited the comment from Justice Alito. Justice Alito's comments in the Wall Street Journal echoed the exact argument that Rivkin had made when he refused to give us any information—i.e., that Congress has no authority to legislate on or oversee Supreme Court ethics, which is a weird position to take when you consider that the Judicial Conference, which oversees Supreme Court ethics, was created by an act of Congress.

Anyway, the cherry on top of this whole mess, which I flagged also for Chief Justice Roberts in a followup letter—which can be found online at https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/alito_complaint_addendum.pdf—came a month later when another billionaire, who is also alleged to have provided Justice Thomas with undisclosed gifts, cited Justice Alito's comments as support for his argument that this billionaire didn't have to answer our questions about those gifts. I sent that letter to Chief Justice Roberts as an addendum to my complaint, and I have not yet heard back.

But it really does seem wrong that a Justice of the Supreme Court would offer an opinion on a matter that might come before the Court that actually relates to a specific, ongoing legal dispute in which the lawyer for a party in that ongoing legal dispute is doing the interviewing; that the person that lawyer represents is a friend and associate of the Justice himself; and that the result of that activity is that gifts to that very Justice are kept from public view, orchestrated by the client. It is a mess.

The last thing we have is a letter that Senator WYDEN and I just sent to the Acting Director of the Judicial Conference that relates to the recreational vehicle loan that Justice Thomas received. It appears from the Finance Committee's investigation that the principal on the loan was never repaid—not a dollar of it; that for a period, interest on the loan was repaid but then interest stopped being repaid.

When you stop paying both principal and interest, that amounts to an act of forgiveness of the loan. Yet the forgiveness of that loan was never declared on his judicial ethics filings, suggesting that it might not have been disclosed even in his tax filings, which could lead to a whole second set of legal concerns.

Madam President, that letter can be found online at https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2024-02-07_wyden_whitehouse_letter_to_ao.pdf.

It is not fair to expect the Judicial Conference to have done anything about that because it was just sent to them, but with respect to the other things, I would sum it up this way: The score at the Judicial Conference so far is one clear win on getting rid of the Scalia trick; major progress on discrediting who is really behind front

group amici; an ongoing review of the billionaire gifts program at the Court as it relates to Justice Thomas in particular; and so far no response on the Alito-Wall Street Journal mischief.

Like I said, it is a very reticent place. They move very slowly and have a lot of process. So I am just going to continue to press along in bringing information before the Judicial Conference so that they and the public can get clear answers on these issues. Certainly, the American people deserve transparency when it comes to fairness and gifts from interested billionaires to Justices of the Supreme Court.

With that, to be continued.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, for the entirety of President Biden's term of office—for the last 3 years—my Republican colleagues and I have spoken out about the crisis on our southern border. Of course you can imagine, coming from a border State like Texas—we have 1,200 miles of common border with Mexico, and we are at the epicenter of this crisis.

I can't tell you how many times I have come here and tried to convince my colleagues that we needed to do something in order to stop the flow of humanity coming across the border, along with the drugs, the criminals, the people on the Terrorist Watchlist—the whole enchilada. I explained that the recordbreaking number of illegal crossings was something that is not normal. This is an extraordinary and unprecedented wave of humanity coming across the border. It is making these criminal organizations that pay by the head—or get paid by the head for smuggling people to the border from around the world and the ones who smuggle the drugs that follow on closely behind fabulously wealthy.

I have criticized the Biden administration's policies day in and day out because they send a clear signal to the migrants to keep on coming. In other words, the Border Patrol likes to talk about the push factors for immigration. Those are poverty, violence, things like that, a desire for a better life. They also talk about the pull factors and the Biden policies of releasing everybody who comes to the border illegally, either in claiming asylum or in granting them something called parole, which is 2 years in the country, plus a work permit. This is an enormous pull factor. It is like a giant magnet, telling people: Come to America. Forget illegal immigration. Forget the fact that people who come here legally have to wait in line and have to meet certain legal requirements.

I want to make clear: America was built on legal immigration. Legal immigration has been one of the greatest blessings our country has ever encountered. No other country in the world is as generous as the United States of America when it comes to welcoming

people from other countries. But we expect them to follow the rules, which allows us to control the numbers, which allows for the reasonable assimilation of those individuals because we want everybody not to be a hyphenated American but to be an American, and that means assimilation into our society. It also means keeping criminals out. It means keeping terrorists out. It means keeping the drugs out that come with illegal immigration.

So the Biden policies have been a flashing green light and a welcome mat for people from around the world. There are as many as 300,000 a month now—unbelievable—and as many as 13,000 a day. Jeh Johnson, the former Secretary of Homeland Security under Barack Obama, said that 1,000 illegal border crossings a day was a real problem, and we are seeing 13,000 under President Biden.

I have tried to share the stories of my visits to the border and what I have learned. In fact, Senator CRUZ, my colleague from Texas, and I have hosted numerous Senators and asked them to come to the border so they can talk to the same people we have talked to—the Border Patrol, the nongovernmental organizations, the Federal Government employees, the community leaders—who are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of people showing up.

It wasn't that long ago, in a little town of Del Rio, TX—population 35,000—that 15,000 migrants from Haiti showed up. Can you imagine the impact on that town of 35,000 people to have 15,000 people show up at the same time—people who needed food, shelter? They couldn't provide that sort of just simple necessity of life to these migrants. They were overwhelmed.

These migrants had actually been living in South America. They actually didn't come directly from Haiti, so they didn't have any credible fear of persecution coming from South America. But the Biden administration said: Come on in. And they do and they have and they will.

I have highlighted the link between the migration crisis and the fentanyl epidemic, which killed 71,000 Americans last year. This incredibly powerful synthetic opioid has taken too many young lives. In fact, it is the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 49. If we were having car accidents that was the leading cause of death of Americans between the ages of 18 and 49, we would say something has got to change. But we have become anesthetized to these numbers. They are so huge, it is hard for us to process those. But anything that is the leading cause of death for 18- to 49-year-olds in our country, you would think would be something that we would all be concerned about and want to do something about.

I have raised concerns over the increasing number of potential terrorists. My memory is that at last count, we saw last year, roughly, 170 people on the Terrorist Watchlist detained at the

border. You might think: Well, that is great. We got all of them. We stopped them. Well, there were 1.7 million "got-aways." Do you think there were people on the Terrorist Watchlist among those 1.7 million "got-aways"?

What do you think those "got-aways" were doing evading law enforcement? They certainly must have had concerns because anybody without a criminal record who is not engaged otherwise in a crime, they are turning themselves in, either claiming asylum or being released by the Biden administration. So the people who are actually running away from law enforcement, I think common sense would tell you they are running for a reason—either carrying drugs, they have criminal records, or worse.

I have also talked about the negative impact of this crisis on lawful trade and travel. You know, I saw an article this morning that now Mexico is America's largest trading partner. It used to be China; but now it is Mexico and, actually, NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement—now the successor is the U.S.-Mexico-Canada, the USMCA, trade agreement. Legitimate trade and commerce across our border supports millions of jobs in America and represent essential supply chains for our manufacturers—something we became acutely aware of during COVID because we found out that if you are depending on Taiwan, for example, to make advanced semiconductors, well, in the event of another pandemic or a war or a natural disaster, we might not be able to get those. It made us start to think: What do we need to do to make our supply chains more reliable? Part of that is the businesses have moved to Mexico.

But many times, because the border has been overwhelmed by migrants, they have had to shut down the bridges and the ports of entry. Recently, one of the railroads that transits the U.S.-Mexico border that is essential for trade and to maintain some of these supply chains was shut down completely, costing billions of dollars in lost revenue because the Biden administration does not control the flow of migration across the border.

For me, this is not a political cudgel; it is something my constituents care deeply about. It is an issue that my State has battled every day that President Biden has been in office. We are at ground zero.

It is also sucking up taxpayer dollars, endangering children because 300,000 of them have been placed with sponsors who came—children who came unaccompanied to the border are placed with sponsors in the interior. There have been 300,000 of them placed with those sponsors since President Biden took office, and the Biden administration can't tell you what has happened to them.

The New York Times documented children in forced labor—dangerous jobs illegally forcing children to work in these jobs. But we don't know

whether these children are going to school, whether they are getting the healthcare they need, whether they are being fed properly, whether they are being trafficked for sex, or recruited into gangs. And the Biden administration can't tell you. That is what the status quo of the last 3 years has given us.

It would be an understatement of the century to say that our Democratic friends have been less concerned about what is happening at the border.

Two years ago, President Biden visited a semiconductor plant in Arizona while the border crisis was raging. The President was asked why he wasn't visiting the border since he was so close, and he said: Because I have more important things to do—more important than visiting the border and seeing for himself what damage the Biden border crisis was creating.

That month—the same month that the President refused to go to the border because he had more important things to do—250,000 migrants crossed the southern border. But the President couldn't be bothered to go to the border.

The Vice President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the White House Press Secretary, and other administration officials have repeatedly downplayed the severity of what is happening at the border. They have lied. They have lied to the American people—some of them under oath—like Secretary Mayorkas. Time and time again he said the border is secure.

Does he think we are so gullible as to not see what is happening on TV or online with our own eyes the caravans of migrants making their way to the border and then being released into the interior, and the Secretary says the border is secure? That is outrageous. But the majority of our Senate colleagues on the other side of the aisle weren't bothered by that.

During President Biden's first year in office, the senior Senator from Montana threw cold water on the idea that Congress should act on the border. He said:

I don't know you need legislation—

This is our senior Senator from Montana. He said:

I don't know you need legislation. I think what we need is to make sure we get the people and the technology down there to stop it.

He said we don't need legislation. I guess in one sense he is right, because if President Biden would just enforce the law, everything could change and would change.

But now we are seeing a different tune. Our colleagues are saying: Well, because there has been disagreement on the border, border changes in the context of the current discussion on the emergency national security supplemental, they said: We care about the border, and the people who disagreed with the product that was negotiated on a bipartisan basis don't care about the border.

The American people are not stupid. The American people are smart, and

they could see through that sort of fig leaf or that attempt to try to mislead them from what they have seen with their very eyes over the last 3 years.

The following year, after the senior Senator from Montana made those comments, the senior Senator from Ohio tried to minimize the impact of the security crisis on the border. He said: I don't hear a lot about immigration from voters except from people on the far right that always want to gain political advantage by talking about it.

Well, I wonder what he is hearing from his constituents these days.

This is not just conservatives or Republicans. How about he listens to the mayor of New York City—a self-styled sanctuary city—or the mayor of Chicago or any major city that has seen migrants make their way into their jurisdiction?

There is no better example of our colleagues' intransigence than the lack of action by the Senate Judiciary Committee. I have served on the Judiciary Committee my entire time here in the Senate. It is a great committee. It has jurisdiction over immigration matters. But the Senate Judiciary Committee hasn't had a single markup on an immigration bill in the last 3 years, not one.

We have asked the chairman, the senior Senator from Illinois: Please schedule a markup. We are not even saying it is my way or the highway. We are saying: Bring an immigration bill to the Judiciary Committee. Let the Senators on the Democratic side and the Republican side offer amendments, and let's let the chips fall where they may. But the very committee in the U.S. Senate that has jurisdiction over immigration and border matters has done nothing in the last 3 years, even longer than that.

We have talked about the issue. We have advanced a couple of narrow bills that touch on the edges of what is happening at the border, including bills to combat human trafficking and support law enforcement. But under the chairman's leadership, the Senate Judiciary Committee hasn't made a serious, honest attempt to tackle this issue head-on.

To be clear, it wasn't for lack of bills to vote on. Just a few months into the Biden Presidency, Senator SINEMA—the Senator from Arizona—and I introduced, along with our colleagues in the House—HENRY CUELLAR and TONY GONZALES—we introduced a bill we call the Bipartisan Border Solutions Act to try to address the surge in immigration.

The theory was that, here is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that maybe—just maybe—the Biden administration would be willing to work with us on. Maybe if things got so bad, they would look at this as a lifeline to begin a conversation on immigration.

That bill would have increased staffing levels for law enforcement and immigration courts. It would have expedited legal proceedings and enhanced

protections for unaccompanied children.

These were commonsense measures. They were modest measures that had bipartisan and bicameral support. And it would have allowed us to at least get started to meaningfully address the problems we faced at that time before they spun completely out of control, as they have today. Still, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee won't schedule a hearing or a markup on that bill.

Now, we are not saying this has to be the final product. We are saying let's start the conversation. We have been asking over and over again for the chairman to have a hearing, have a markup, but he has refused. He has refused to engage at all. Had that bill been signed into law at the beginning of the Biden administration, it could have prevented some of the chaos we have endured over the last 3 years, but instead, the leadership on the Democratic side has buried their heads into the sand until the situation has become so dangerous and untenable that it has turned into a political liability for President Biden.

It is not lost on me that here we are—February—looking at a November election, and President Biden says: We have got to do something about my terrible poll numbers when it comes to border insecurity. You would think, if it had been serious, that he would have engaged earlier, but this is what we call an election-year conversion. Once the shift happened, the rhetoric from our Democratic colleagues has changed significantly.

Last month, the senior Senator from Montana, who once said we didn't need any new laws, wrote an entire op-ed about the need to act on the border. In it he wrote:

The lack of urgency from my colleagues on both sides of the aisle . . . is frankly disturbing.

This is from a Senator who said you don't need new laws.

Earlier this week, the senior Senator from Ohio, who once said he didn't hear much about immigration from his constituents, advocated for a border deal, saying:

Ohioans cannot . . . wait any longer.

And, yesterday, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, who for 3 years has refused to use that committee, the committee of jurisdiction, to advance any bills to deal with the crisis, stood here on the Senate floor and he blamed—you guessed it—former President Donald Trump for lack of progress on the border.

We should wish for the numbers of illegal crossings that occurred during President Trump's time in office because it was a fraction of what we have seen under President Biden. As a matter of fact, we have seen more illegal border crossings in 3 years under President Biden than we have in 12 years during the Obama administration and during the Trump Presidency.

But that is what people do here in Washington, DC. This is a city in which

the blame game is like an Olympic sport. People are vying for medals by telling the biggest whoppers. It is completely disingenuous for Senate Democrats to blame anyone but themselves and President Biden for the lack of broad progress on the border crisis.

Despite this shift in rhetoric that we have seen, President Biden's comments have once again taken the cake. Earlier this week, President Biden made the most bogus, delusional claim about the state of the border, somewhere he hasn't been in a long, long time. Now, I remember he did come to El Paso for a driveby. But he said:

The only reason the border is not secure is Donald Trump and his MAGA Republican friends.

You know, at some point, when you hold elected office, the most powerful office in the land—maybe on the planet—you ought to accept some responsibility, not just blame other people. But that is not what President Biden did. These are the words of the current President of the United States, the man who has the power, under existing law, to detain and deport illegal border crossers but has chosen not to do so.

On President Biden's watch, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has logged more than 7 million migrant encounters, and the Biden administration has released 2.3 million migrants into the country. And President Biden thinks that the American people are gullible enough to believe that we are in this situation because of former President Trump? Give me a break. For 3 years, we have been beating on the door, begging and pleading with our Democratic colleagues and the White House: Work with us. We are not asking for perfection; we are asking to do our jobs and do your job. But President Biden has refused to engage. Our colleagues across the aisle have pretended like there is no problem, and the chairman of the Judiciary Committee won't even schedule a markup.

Now, because Republicans voted against a single bill that was negotiated by three Members, including many policies that Republicans have been on record opposing for years, the American people are supposed to buy this argument that our party is to blame for the border? Well, I, for one, am still ready to engage with my Democratic colleagues if they are sincere, but it is hard to believe when this rhetoric occurs in the context of upcoming elections. It really does feel like an election-year conversion.

In the past few days, our colleagues have proven that this was never about solving the border crisis; it was about giving President Biden a new talking point on the campaign trail in order to cover up the disaster of his own making. This is a manmade disaster, and the man who made that disaster was President Biden.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. KAIN. Madam President, I rise to discuss the supplemental emergency security package that is currently being debated in this body.

Yesterday, the comprehensive package that included the bipartisan border provision was voted down after Republican colleagues did a 180 and chose to oppose it.

But there is an urgent need to move forward with a supplemental package, and so what we are now working on in this body is a slimmed-down version that would still do a tremendous amount of good: humanitarian aid for Gazans and others around the world who need it; State disaster relief funds for States that suffered flood, hurricane, drought, wildfire; support for our allies in the Indo-Pacific to promote regional stability there; support for defense aid to Israel; and support for defense aid for Ukraine.

And we are in the process of trying to find how we can move forward together on that package, and, in my view, it is very important that we do so and that we finish this before we recess. And it is my hope that when we do, we will be able to do it in a way that carries a significant bipartisan vote because that will increase the likelihood that it will be acceptable to the House of Representatives.

I want to talk about one particular aspect of this discussion, an amendment that I am filing together with 28 colleagues that, frankly, should be a no-brainer, accepted on a voice vote by all 100 Senators, and it has to deal with the provision of military support for the defense of Israel.

The proposal that President Biden made, which is now more than 2 months old, to the body included a recommendation of defense support for Ukraine, for Israel, for Taiwan, and then also potentially other nations in the Indo-Pacific. Some of the funding is to implement the AUKUS framework between the United States, Australia, and the UK.

Defense aid given by the United States to other nations traditionally carries with it a congressional notification requirement, and that requirement—to kind of short-form it—works in a very simple way. Even when we voted to allow the defense aid to go forward and we have appropriated money for it, when an administration of either party is ready to transfer the aid, they give a notification to Congress about the transfer so that Congress can review the aid and make sure that it is the kind of military aid that was intended when the bill was passed.

So, to give you an example, if we are doing transfers of foreign military aid to Egypt—and we have done that in the past—and the purpose of it is to enable Egypt to fight terrorism, we often want to see what the weaponry is so we can determine, wait, are those weapons that would be useful in counterterrorism or are those weapons that could be misused against civilian protesters, for

example. So the congressional notification requirement is an important way that Congress can check to make sure that support that we have voted for is actually being provided in the way that we intended.

The notification requirement isn't onerous. It requires that Congress be given a certain—not lengthy but short—period of notice where we can analyze to determine whether the aid is the kind that we intended, and if it isn't, we don't necessarily have the ability to veto it, but we can ask additional questions of the administration.

This is what oversight is about. This is what Congress needs to do. And this is tradition with respect to arms transfers to any nation.

In the request that was delivered to Congress 2 months ago, there was a small provision in the request that puzzled me, and it said that the traditional congressional notification provisions under the supplemental bill would not apply to any of the defense aid to Israel.

I support defense aid to Israel, and I have supported it during my entire career in the U.S. Senate, but I don't support this administration or any administration bypassing Congress and not providing us the notification about this aid.

In the supplemental bill, the notification would still apply to aid to Ukraine; it would still apply to aid to Taiwan; it would still apply to aid to other nations but not to aid delivered to Israel. I reached out to the White House nearly immediately to ask why this was done, and the answer was: We will have to get back to you.

And I have not gotten any answer, much less an acceptable answer, about why we would want to bypass congressional notification of this aid.

Why should Congress vote to bypass ourselves? Why should Congress say: Yes, you can bypass us and not give us notice of this aid, as is traditional?

The congressional notification provision does have an exception for emergencies. In the event of emergencies, the administration can say: This is an emergency, and we need to do it right away. And that emergency power has been used twice in the last couple of months to do expedited aid to Israel. I would not propose to take that power away, whether it be for Israel or Ukraine or any other nation, but why would we want to allow Congress to be bypassed in nonemergency situations?

And so the amendment that I have filed with 28 colleagues, many of whom are standing on the floor with me today, would simply say that the same standard should apply to aid to Israel as applies to Ukraine and the other nations; that, yes, we are supporting this aid, but when an administration transfers it, Congress should get notice so we can ask questions if we determine that we need to.

I endeavored to get this provision in the base language of the bill that we will hopefully be voting on soon, and I

failed in that. I was told the reason is that my Republican colleagues did not support it.

Why wouldn't Republican colleagues want a Democratic administration to give them notice about arms transfers so they could ask questions about it? I don't get it, but that is the reason that it is not in the base bill. Yet it is my hope, as we get into this debate—and I know there is significant discussion about the extent of amendments, if any, that will be offered—that I would hope to be able to bring this up, and I would think it should get an overwhelming vote in this body.

I have colleagues who are here to speak, and I want to just say one last thing as I conclude. This is not a box-checking thing. Congress having oversight over war, peace, and diplomacy is critically important.

We see what is happening more broadly in the Middle East with the United States engaged now against the Houthis in the Red Sea and in Yemen, with the United States engaged against the Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria, with the escalation of Hezbollah firing rockets into Israel. And I think many of us are worried about the United States sliding, slipping, stumbling into another war in the Middle East, which, in my view, would be a disaster.

The United States should be providing support for allies. But, in my view, it would be a disaster for the United States to be engaged in another war in the Middle East right now. It would be Vladimir Putin's dream. It would be Xi Jinping's dream. It would be others' dream to have us entangled in the Middle East right now. But I think it would be a horrible thing for the United States to do that. But if that is to be a possibility on the table, let it be debated here. Let it be debated by Congress in full view of the American public. Let's see what the stakes and the consequences and the risks and the benefits would be. But let's not stumble or slide our way into an escalating set of military hostilities in the Middle East with U.S. troops involved.

The provision about congressional notification on arms transfers is part of this very thing: to make sure that important matters of war, peace, and diplomacy are not just done by any Executive but that there is full buy-in by Congress, lest we find ourselves in a war we shouldn't be in.

And so I am going to work to see if I might be able to get this as part of the package that we are negotiating. And, again, I would think any Member of the article I branch should not casually accept an evisceration of its oversight powers over arms transfers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to the floor this afternoon with my colleagues Senator BENNET and Senator CARDIN. I think we are going to be joined shortly by others, Sen-

ators BLUMENTHAL and PETERS, and I am not sure who else. But we are here to register our strong support for the legislation that we just advanced with the vote earlier—the 67 positive votes—for the security supplemental.

This bill would give critical support for partners like Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan; it would provide humanitarian aid for Gaza and other populations; and, equally important for us in New Hampshire, it would curb the flow of fentanyl into the United States.

So make no mistake, our adversaries and our allies are watching how we respond to the war in Ukraine. If we allow Vladimir Putin to continue his unprovoked attack on Ukraine, who knows where he is going to stop.

What we do today is going to determine the strength of tomorrow's autocrats, because when dictators like Putin are not held accountable for their aggression, their threat to the world grows. And if we don't act quickly to support the Ukrainians, all the battles that they have won, all the land that they have reclaimed, all the progress that they have made to win back their country could be undone. We must not deny Ukraine the resources and weapons they need to defeat Putin once and for all.

Right now, Ukraine has just 20 percent of the ammunition and artillery it needs as Russia continues its advance; 85 percent of Russia's missiles are now foreign made; and Iran supplies 70 percent of its drone capabilities.

For anybody who is worried about Iran—and I am on that list of people who are concerned about Iran's threat, not just to the Middle East but to Ukraine and to the United States—defeating Russia in Ukraine is one of the most important things we could do to stop the threat from Iran.

The threats we face are so interconnected; and so our response to our adversaries must also be interconnected. This bipartisan supplemental funding agreement follows through on our promise to stand by our friends in Ukraine and Israel and in the Indo-Pacific.

We must not abandon them now. How will we convince our allies in the future that we are going to be there to support them if we abandon Ukraine and say: Sorry, we can't help you now?

I recognize that for a lot of Americans, including some in my home State of New Hampshire, many of the problems that this bill addresses seem like it is about far-off issues. But I want to be clear that what happens in Ukraine doesn't stay in Ukraine. Putin's illegal invasion is directly targeting American consumers. His obstruction of Ukraine's grain imports in the Black Sea threatened a global food security crisis and caused prices to rise around the world. It has caused the threat of famine in parts of Africa and other countries.

American support, in coordination with our allies, has helped to ensure that Ukraine can restart those exports that are needed to feed the world.

With the support of the United States and our NATO allies, Ukraine put Russia on defense in the Black Sea. They have reduced Russia's formidable Black Sea fleet by 20 percent over just 4 months.

And much of the supplemental funding for the Defense Department to support Ukraine is going to be spent in the United States. It invests over \$25 billion in the American defense industrial base. That expands production lines; it strengthens the American economy; and it creates new jobs.

These funds also ensure that our own military can backfill our own stocks and maintain U.S. readiness. Perhaps, the most important piece in all of this, Putin's expansionist agenda could lead to an attack on a NATO ally, and that could draw the United States into direct conflict with Russian forces.

We don't have to talk to too many of the countries that border Russia or that were under former Soviet control to hear their concern about what happens if Putin is not stopped in Ukraine, the potential for him to go into the Baltic countries, to go into Poland and Moldova.

I have four grandsons. I don't want them sent off to fight in Europe or Asia years from now because article V is invoked from a NATO country because we didn't take the action that we should have taken today to support Ukraine.

In the months after Russia's unprovoked invasion, I met with a Ukrainian soldier named Andriana. She said to me something that I will not forget and that I have said to people in New Hampshire who asked me about this war. She said:

Give us the weapons to fight the Russians so that you don't have to.

Well, last year, I saw her again as she recovered from a traumatic injury that she sustained on the frontlines and temporarily paralyzed her. And you can see the challenge. This is Andriana as a soldier. And there she is in the hospital bed. But her spirit was not broken.

I got a chance to see her again as she was recovering. And she reminded me that Ukraine has a motto that is much like New Hampshire's motto. It is: "Freedom or Death." That is not so different from New Hampshire's motto: "Live Free or Die."

My constituents understand what it means to stand up for our freedoms. We have a long history of doing that. And it is people like Andriana who we are supporting, brave defenders of democracy in Ukraine and every corner of the world, who are standing up for democracy, for us in America, and democracies around the world. And it is critical that we support those brave Ukrainians so that they can win this war, so we can say to Vladimir Putin and autocrats across the globe: We are not going to let you get away with taking over other countries; we are not going to let you get away with the human rights atrocities that you have committed.

For our whole history, the United States has been on the side of freedom. We cannot waver now. We must pass this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I am very pleased to be here this afternoon with the Senator from New Hampshire and the Senator from Maryland to talk about our commitments in Europe, our commitments to Ukraine. I want to thank them for their leadership on the Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee here in the Senate. They are a team that I wouldn't want to tangle with. And I am glad they are out here on the floor today as allies in support of this incredibly important mission.

I am also very glad that after 4 months of an endless—almost seemed endless—and painful set of negotiations, we find ourselves in a place where we have actually had a sign of bipartisan cooperation to fulfill our obligations at this really, really critical moment just in the nick of time. And I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for that strong vote. And I hope as we go forward in the coming hours that that is a bill that we will actually build on because there are some people who are saying this will never pass the House of Representatives. It never will unless we can figure out how to pass it here. And we can do it in a bipartisan way. And we are off to that start.

When Russia invaded Ukraine just 2 years ago, the world expected Kyiv would fall in 72 hours; that Putin would depose Ukraine's government and that he would install a puppet government in that capital city. But the Ukrainian people astonished the world.

Practically barehanded, the Ukrainians fought off Putin's army, saving Kyiv and its democratic government. And since then, with our help, they have liberated over half of the territory that Putin stole from them. They have won battle after battle after battle that nobody ever thought they could win.

As the Senator from New Hampshire said, they basically pushed Putin out of the Black Sea, opening up the seaways to get wheat out to the rest of the world—to Africa and to other places in the world. They don't even have a navy, the Ukrainians. They are a nation that is—I am talking about this in Colorado. It is like this is an entire nation of MacGyvers. And every day they are figuring out some new way to defeat Vladimir Putin or to push him out of the Black Sea.

Just last week, Ukraine sank another one of Putin's warships. And since the war began, Putin has killed 70,000 Ukrainian troops and nearly 100,000 Ukrainian civilians.

Our military support and our intelligence support has been critical. But it is really important to remember that it has only represented less than

0.4 percent of our economy—of our GDP—and that we are spending less as a percentage of our economy than many of our European allies.

I know it is fashionable around here for some people to say that the folks in Europe aren't doing their part. But many of them are actually doing more as a group. They are doing more than we have done.

In fairness to us, we provided more military aid than they have. And that has been really important. But they put in more humanitarian aid. And combined, we have stood up for Ukraine and stood up for each other.

But because of the delay that we have had here on Capitol Hill, Europe has already committed an additional \$55 billion to Ukraine just a week ago—or 10 days ago, I think—waiting for us to lead. They said: We are out of time. Ukraine is out of bullets. And so we are going to do what we need to do, is what our colleagues in Europe said.

But, listen, it is not just countries that are in Putin's backyard that are doing this. It is not just countries who think: Well, if they can do it to Ukraine, they might do it to us. Our coalition includes Australia, includes Japan, includes South Korea. In fact, Japan just pledged another \$4.5 billion for Ukraine. That is a lot of money for a country that is as far from Kyiv as Japan is, from Ukraine.

But our partners know what the stakes are for democracy in this battle. They know that supporting Ukraine means standing with people who are willing to fight to do whatever it takes to live in a free country like ours.

As I said, Ukraine is running out of bullets. And Putin may be having a tough time on the Ukrainian battlefield, to put it mildly, compared to what anybody would have reasonably expected. But the battlefield he is counting on winning on is the battlefield here on Capitol Hill. He knows how divided we are. He knows that this Capitol is filled with self-defeating division. And the question he is asking and the question we need to ask ourselves is whether we are going to allow that division to stand in the way of our support for Ukraine. He can read our newspapers. He knows how to troll us on social media.

Just in the 4 months that we have been having this debate—by the way, I think we should have passed this in October. Just in the 4 months we have been debating this and that we have consumed debating this aid, Putin has taken back territory that the Ukrainians spilled blood to gain, and his soldiers have killed or injured over 1,500 Ukrainian civilians. Russia is killing or badly wounding 30,000 Ukrainian troops every month.

As we gather here today, Putin is right now, today, amassing 40,000 soldiers, 500 tanks, and 650 armored vehicles to conquer yet another Ukrainian city. And Ukrainian's troops are digging in as they have all winter long to fight back. But they are outgunned;

they are outmanned. They have to ration their ammunition because they don't know whether the bullets are coming again. They don't know whether they are going to get the support they need.

And Putin thinks he can beat Ukraine, not because he thinks the Ukrainians are weak but because he thinks we are weak. He thinks we are weak.

It is not just Putin who thinks that American democracy can't meet the challenge; his autocratic allies across the world believe the same thing.

It is important, as the Senator from New Hampshire was saying, Senator SHAHEEN, to see how “interconnected,” to use her word, these things are. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine connects directly to Iran's aggression across the Middle East, to China's saber-rattling against Taiwan and the Philippines, and North Korea's missile launches. Putin is killing Ukrainians today with Iranian and North Korean missiles in this very war. China supplies critical components to Moscow to regenerate Russia's defense production, and it helps keep the Kremlin able to avoid or escape our sanctions. For its part, Hamas used weapons from China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia to murder 1,200 people in Israel on October 7.

As everybody in this Chamber knows from what is going on just this week, Iran is backing militants in Iraq and Syria who just killed U.S. soldiers in Jordan. Tehran is bankrolling the Houthis. Its attacks in the Red Sea have caused shipping prices to jump, inflicting higher costs on Americans. And, of course, China is funding billions of dollars to the dictator in North Korea who supplies weapons to fight this very war against the Ukrainian people.

The threats these powers pose are connected and overlapping. From Putin to Xi, these dictators have made it clear—and they have said it at the negotiating table over and over again in the last decade—that they believe that democracy is exhausting and that totalitarianism is the best that humanity can expect.

This Congress's failure to fund Ukraine, if it comes to that, will send a powerful signal to them that they are right and that democracy is in decline, at least in the U.S.A.

And despite all of this, despite all of these stakes, I heard people in both this Chamber and in the House of Representatives question whether this fight really matters to the American people. Failing to support Ukraine means showing the world that the United States, long the leader of the free world, is no longer capable of standing up for the post-World War II order, our values, and for our partners. We can't accept the implications of that for our future or for our children's future.

Fortunately, we have an amazing example in front of us right now in the Ukrainian people because their courage, their ingenuity, their stamina

have reminded us that humans will actually die for democracy. They will fight authoritarianism until it is destroyed, until it is dismantled. And they have fought and inspired people all over the world to support them in their fight, not to send soldiers or to sacrifice our lives but to send arms and to send intelligence.

Are we willing to say, after all of that over the past 2 years—are we willing to say that we have no stake in this outcome; that we are indifferent to Putin's aggression or the meaning to the free world if he is successful in his illegal and criminal invasion of a free country in Europe?

If we fail to fund Ukraine, it is not going to end this war. That is an invitation for Putin to continue this war. And he will impose his will on the Ukrainian people, and dictators everywhere will see that they have a green light; that they can inhabit a world where might makes right; where people don't have the benefits of freedom or the rule of law but get up every day just to fight off the kind of mayhem that the Ukrainian people are fighting today. That world would be a lot more dangerous than the one we are in today.

We do not want to embolden Putin or his allies to believe that they can do to other places what they did to Ukraine, as the Senator from New Hampshire said. Putin could march into NATO like his allies have said—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania—and then article V would be invoked and then we are involved and our people are involved.

If he actually won this war, Putin could use his leverage over Ukrainian wheat and Ukrainian energy to dictate terms to people all over this world who rely on those important commodities.

And let me tell you something else—and this is not some totally hypothetical parade of horrors. We look at this every day on the Intelligence Committee. Xi Jinping is watching this, and he is considering what this means for what he intends to do with Taiwan, whether he wants to plunge the Indo-Pacific into war, shocking the global economy and drawing American soldiers into that theater.

Letting Putin win—giving Putin the green light—is going to take us down this road. It is as predictable as the Sun rising tomorrow.

And that is why—let me close because I know the Senator from Maryland is here. Let me close by saying this. I want to just say this especially to the people in this Chamber who have sort of taken a more isolationist tack than the one we are taking today, who may not believe that the United States has the same essential role to play that I believe the United States has played, partly because of my family's own experience and my mother having been born in Warsaw, a Polish Jew in 1938 and what that means to me about American leadership. But let me say, if you are somebody who believes that the United States should be less entan-

gled abroad and more focused at home, you ought to ask them if you can vote for Ukraine twice—twice—because the world is going to be less safe for the American people if we fail to do this.

I know that many of my Senate Republican colleagues understand the historic nature of this moment—and Democrats as well—and believe that we should extend our support for Ukraine along with our partners, including Israel and Taiwan. They are right.

Let me say, no friend of Israel or Taiwan should turn away from Ukraine. Ukraine's battle is their battle. Ukraine's fight is their fight. And I hope our colleagues in the House will come to appreciate that as well and that we will have a big bipartisan vote here and a big bipartisan vote in the House, and we will recommit to each other maybe to overcoming the dysfunction that we have had, surprise ourselves on the upside for once around here, and send an important signal to the rest of the world.

I will finish with this. In his first meeting with us—and I know my colleagues remember this. There was still COVID when this was happening. President Zelenskyy was on the computer, just like any other Zoom call that any of us had during COVID. He said to us: We are fighting to live our lives the way you live your life.

The last time he spoke to us—it was in person this time. He came here. We met in the Old Senate Chamber. The last time he spoke to us, he said: We need your help. We need your bullets. We need your support. But if you fail to support us, we will never stop fighting because, as Senator SHAHEEN said, our entire enterprise is based on the idea that we are going to fight for freedom. We are never going to stop fighting.

He did say: We would lose. We can't beat Putin without your help, but we will never stop fighting for freedom.

I thought that was a very honest thing for him to say. I thought he could have said easily: We will give up. Instead what he said was: You may decide not to stand for freedom, but even if you fail us, we won't give up.

We can't fail Ukraine. This is no time for Congress to play politics with people's lives, no matter where they live, whether they live in Denver or in Kyiv or in the Middle East or New Hampshire or Maryland or Connecticut or Taipei. We won't get a second chance. This is a test of America's resolve and this is a call for American leadership and we cannot fail.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator BENNET for those comments.

Senator SHAHEEN, thank you for organizing this opportunity for us to talk about the importance of this bill.

I must tell you, it has been a long road, and there were times where I think we thought we would not be able

to get this aid package to the floor of the U.S. Senate.

The Senator from Colorado was one of the strongest voices that we had to make sure we never gave up. We were disappointed many, many times over many months. Senator SHAHEEN has been in the forefront, serving both on Armed Services and Senate Foreign Relations, to make sure, again, that we kept the momentum moving forward to get this done. Even last night, when we thought that there was an impediment that we could not overcome, we looked at the votes on the board and said that it doesn't look like we are going to get there. Senator SHAHEEN said, Senator BENNET said, Senator BLUMENTHAL said that we can't give up.

I have the honor of chairing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Presiding Officer is one of our distinguished members.

There is no more important foreign policy priority than getting this bill passed and signed by the President. It is our No. 1 priority for our national security.

You have heard my colleagues talk about the fact that this is not about Russia versus Ukraine. That is what this war immediately is about, but it is about the free-world democracy versus autocracy.

Yes, 2 years ago, how many of us thought that President Zelenskyy would still be alive, let alone President of a viable country, Ukraine? The will and fighting spirit of the Ukrainian people is to be admired. Their leadership has been incredible. They are the ones who have been able to hold back the big Russian army, but they couldn't do it without our support. Yes, they will still fight, but they can't hold back that type of force unless they have the ammunition and the weapons and the support they need in order to carry on this battle.

When I said it is not a fight between Russia and Ukraine, we have a coalition of the democratic powers of the world all working to help Ukraine—Europe and throughout the global community—and I think sometimes it is lost because our constituents think this is just the United States coming to Ukraine's aid. Europe collectively provides more help than we do as a nation. We are the largest single contributor. They can't do it without our expertise, our help, our resources, and our equipment. We know that.

But look who is on the other side. Who is supporting Russia? It is Iran, it is North Korea, and, yes, it is the People's Republic of China. They are the ones supporting Russia's efforts.

Yes, this supplemental is interconnected. What is happening in the Middle East, what is happening in the China seas, what is happening with Taiwan—all related to whether democracies can prevail.

We have so much at stake. Yesterday, I was so disappointed because of the vote that took place. Today, I see

some light here. But let's take advantage of this. We have momentum. Let's make sure we get this bill passed.

Why is it so important? There is no question in any of our minds that Russia will not stop its military operations at Ukraine's border. Russian troops are already in Moldova and Georgia because of earlier incursions similar to what happened with Crimea, Ukraine. Do any of us think they are not going to try to take over those countries, as they did Ukraine?

Then take a look at the Baltic countries: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. They used to be part of Russia—at least they claimed; we never recognized that. They are now NATO allies and great NATO allies. Mr. Putin wants to take over those countries.

Poland—he wants to take over Poland, the countries that border, and he doesn't stop there.

This really is an alignment of the world, and it is so critically important that the United States is the leader in this effort on behalf of democracy. It is not only the money that is important. It is not only the ammunition and the munitions that are important. It is U.S. leadership because it is a clear signal that we are going to triumph, that Ukraine will triumph and democracy will triumph. We really need to understand the importance of this action.

I have been honored to be a Member of this body now for 18 years. This is my 18th year in the U.S. Senate. This is perhaps the most important vote I will cast as a United States Senator. That is just how important this issue is for us to get done. And I am proud of many of the issues that we have taken up during my years in the U.S. Senate. That is how important it is for us to get this done.

Yes, we need to make sure that we stop the Iranian proxies in the Middle East because they are all part of this. Yes, we could be drawn into a conflict because of what is happening on the Red Sea or what Hezbollah is doing on Israel's northern border or Iran's activities and proxies in Iraq. We know that. We have to act with dispatch—urgency.

In Ukraine, the case is that they don't have enough ammunition. They are rationing ammunition today. There are Ukrainian villages as we speak on the floor of the U.S. Senate that are at risk of being taken over by Russian forces because they don't have the munitions they need and the support they need, including from the United States of America.

This has been a great investment. How many of us thought that the monies we invested over the last 2 years would lead to blocking the Russian military? But it has done that. Yes, it is real that the alternative to money could be U.S. military, our sons and daughters over fighting in Europe once again. Look at history. Look at what happened in the 1930s. Look what led up to World War II. You see some dangerous comparisons that are taking place.

We need to be on the right side of history, and the right side of history is to make sure the supplementals pass with dispatch. There are so many other issues in here that are critically important. We need to make sure that humanitarian assistance is there, and we need to make sure that at the end of the day, Russia is held accountable for what they have done. War crimes. They have committed genocide. They tried to wipe the Ukrainian culture off the face of the Earth. Sound familiar? World War II. They have to be held accountable.

They have to be held accountable financially for the damage they have caused to Ukraine. I am proud of the bill we were able to pass in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee known as the REPO bill. I congratulate Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator RISCH for their leadership on that. It also includes the global center. It also includes atrocities prevention.

We need to make sure that we have a comprehensive way to make sure Russia is held accountable for what they have done, but it starts with supporting Ukraine to defend itself and to win this war of aggression that Russia has started and make it clear that we are there in the Middle East. There is no future for the security of Israel or the Palestinians with Hamas in control. They have to be eliminated. The proxies in Iran have to be neutralized. Yes, in the Indo-Pacific, we must stand with our ally Taiwan so there is no military action taken by the People's Republic of China against Taiwan. All of that is in this bill, and that is why this bill is so critically important that we get to the finish line.

So I urge my colleagues—we had a good vote a little while ago. We are not at the finish line in the U.S. Senate. The next step is, let's be reasonable and find a reasonable path forward to get this bill done—I hope within the next day or two—send it over to the House of Representatives, and hope that our colleagues in the House will follow the lead of the U.S. Senate, Democrats and Republicans working together to get a bill done for our national security. Then I hope we can get back to border security because we know our immigration system needs that, and we need border security.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am grateful to my colleague Senator SHAHEEN of New Hampshire, as well as Senator BENNET of Colorado, Senator CARDIN of Maryland, and I will be followed by Senator PETERS of Michigan. We are among the group, but we are hardly the only ones who feel so passionately about this issue.

For anyone who has visited Ukraine—and I have been there four times over the last couple of years—seeing and hearing are so powerfully inspiring, so deeply moving. I will never forget my first visit after the in-

vasion when I went to President Zelenskyy's office—really a bunker—and spoke to him about what it was like to have the Russians literally 10 minutes away by car from his door.

Then I went to Bucha, where I saw the remains of Russian tanks where they were stopped by Ukrainians using handheld missiles in the snow against these huge weapons of war, but simply by dint of their courage and indomitable spirit, they stopped the Russians—but only at Kyiv's doorstep.

President Zelenskyy told me then and he has told me since: We will fight with pitchforks if we need to. We don't need your soldiers. We need your help. We need the military equipment that you can provide.

He told us they needed more Javelins, and we provided them later than we should have. He said: We need HIMARS artillery. He said: We need ATACMS. We provided them later than we should have. Bradley and Stryker vehicles. Again, we provided them later than we should have. Of course, Abrams tanks and F-16s. They are there or on the way—later, but we did the right thing.

Winston Churchill once said America always does the right thing after it tries everything else—an exaggeration, but there is a kernel of truth in Winston Churchill's comment, which is, we are often late in doing the right thing.

Now we have no more margin of error in Ukraine. Deliveries of weapons are one-third of what they were only 7 months ago, and the failure to appropriate funds here means that supply of arms will be at 10 percent of what it was.

I have met those veterans, Ukrainian soldiers who have fought on the front, who described to me what it means to be fighting against the entrenched Russian forces—landmines, their artillery pouring onto the Ukrainian troops, shells and drones that keep them at constant risk and force them back when they have sought to make advances. And they have made advances, and they have been successful on the front, both in the east and in the south. It has been yard by yard, mile by mile, moving forward, sometimes pushed back, and the Russians laying waste to whole cities.

I have also visited Bucha and Irpin. We know what happened in Mariupol. The killing in Bucha was an atrocity that the world should never forget—men and women and children, hands tied behind their backs, shot in the head, and then buried in mass graves that I saw. Talking to people who live in Bucha whose memories will be seared forever and their children traumatized by these Russian atrocities.

Vladimir Putin is a war criminal. There is a warrant for his arrest, rightly, from the international court of criminal justice. There should be warrants for arrests for all of the Russian officials who have participated in taking children from Ukraine, by the thousands—tens of thousands—and

then indoctrinating them, reeducating them in Russia or Belarus.

Russia has launched an unprovoked, criminal, murderous attack on a nation. That constitutes genocide. Those people in Bucha and in many other places around Ukraine were killed for one reason alone: They are Ukrainian. The world's outrage is well-founded.

Many of my colleagues have expressed that same outrage. Senators are good at summoning outrage in words that are far more eloquent than mine, but we will be judged not by our words but by our actions. We will be rightly judged by history as to what we do or what we fail to do here.

And we have missed opportunities in Ukraine before. The Senator from New Hampshire will recall well our efforts after the first invasion, when Russia seized a huge part of Ukraine and a bipartisan effort was made in the Armed Services Committee to provide more lethal aid to Ukraine so that it could use it, before this second invasion, to push back the Russians and show that we could deter them.

And after my first visit to Ukraine, which was a little bit before the second invasion, I came back, and I said to anyone who would listen, including the President of the United States: The only way to deter Putin is with force, delivery of what Ukraine needs to defend itself. Vladimir Putin is a thug. He understands only force.

And, unfortunately, we missed that opportunity. The second invasion occurred 2 year ago, and the effects in Ukraine are visible, again, to anyone who would visit: bombed-out buildings; transformers for power, destroyed; Ukraine's delivery of grain to a world that needs more food, blocked.

These effects are not abstract, and they are not limited to Ukraine. There are a lot of people in the United States who watch what they see on TV, and the images are horrifying. And their reaction is, of course: Thank goodness it isn't here, and thank goodness it doesn't affect us.

Well, the fact of the matter is, it affects Americans. It affects all of our allies. It affects the supply of energy and the cost of it—and the effect on the world economy. It affects the availability of grain—Ukraine is the bread basket of many parts of the world—and the cost of food. It affects the diplomatic relations of nations, and, ultimately, it will affect our men and women in uniform.

Right now, President Zelenskyy can fight and win without men and women from America on the ground. But if he keeps going—and he will keep going, if he wins; he has told it to us. We have only to listen to him. It will be Poland or Romania or Moldova or Finland and Sweden.

Does anyone have any doubt about why Finland and Sweden want to be part of NATO? After years of neutrality, it is simply fear of Russia and Vladimir Putin's savage indomitable appetite for more territory and his

long-range vision for restoring the Russian Empire and the old Soviet Union.

So anybody who thinks that what happens in Ukraine has no effect on America, you are in denial. Anyone who argues that we should be repairing our roads or building more schools or providing more food and heat for people who need it in America, you are right, but not at the expense of our national security. We can do both. We have done both.

And throughout American history, there have been people who have said: Let's pull back; let's care only what happens within our shores. And they have been proved wrong by history because of their denial, and, ultimately, America has done the right thing, as it did in World War II, and as it has done again and again and again by defending freedom and democracy.

This imperative is a moral obligation. It is a political necessity, but it is also a national security imperative.

The arms that we deliver to Ukraine already have helped degrade the Russian military by one half. Talk to our military leaders about the effects on Russia's military of Ukraine's defense. It has degraded the Russian Armed Forces by one half, and we have invested less than 5 percent of our military budget, without a single American casualty—not a single American in uniform killed or wounded. That is an investment that we need to continue, because the alternative is for us to be putting our troops on the ground there to defend, under our NATO obligation, those countries that will be invaded next—whether it is Poland, Romania, Moldova, or Finland and Sweden.

Let me say, finally, I was very proud yesterday to vote for a supplemental that serves our national security—our national security in Ukraine, our national security interest in Israel. It is defending itself against a terrorist organization that wants to eradicate Israel and annihilate the Jewish people, and it is doing so at our urging, with pressure from the United States, with reduced civilian casualties, more humanitarian aid, and maybe, most importantly, working toward a pause to bring home the hostages. Some are American.

And our security interest in Taiwan, in the Southeast, where, again, an aggressor threatens the rule of law and the order that we have established.

And, of course, national security at the border—we need to control the border. Our immigration system is broken. We need comprehensive immigration reform, but we need steps now to reform a completely shredded system at the border.

But this cause of Ukraine should bring us together and has brought us together. When we first started 10 years ago in the Armed Services Committee, one of our leaders was John McCain. I have traveled to Ukraine with Senator GRAHAM. We have been part of a bipartisan movement. It should bring us together as Repub-

licans and Democrats. There should be no red or blue part of it.

And I know—let me just say finally—that the people of America, at heart, are with us. I know that the Ukrainian community in Connecticut has stood steadfast and has been such an example. When I have told President Zelenskyy about the strong support in our Ukrainian community, his eyes have lighted up. And that is true throughout America. Ukrainians have remained steadfast in their loyalty to the freedom of their country, and they have been inspired, as have we.

Vladimir Putin is counting on us to fail. He believes democracies are decrepit and corrupt. He thinks that an autocratic dictatorship is superior, that everyday people don't know how to govern themselves, that he can continue to divide us by misinformation and disinformation.

He is wrong. Let's prove him wrong. Let's do it without delay. Let's do the right thing, without doing everything else first.

I thank my colleagues, and I am proud to stand with them today to urge that both Chambers pass this supplemental as quickly as possible.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

MR. PETERS. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate considered legislation that would have provided critical aid to our allies and provide resources and authorities to secure our northern and southern borders. The legislation was forged by good-faith, bipartisan negotiations.

But instead of coming together to advance a vital border security bill, my Republican colleagues blocked it—blocked it—from receiving any further debate and potential modification. My Republican colleagues voted against advancing legislation that would make meaningful changes at our border for the first time in decades. It would have provided the personnel, the resources, and the authorities needed to secure our borders, address regional migration trends, and support lawful trade and travel that drives our economy.

I serve as chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and I have worked to advance several bipartisan bills to secure our borders. But the legislation we had yesterday was rejected by my Republican colleagues, which would have addressed some of the most pressing challenges at the southern border and actually take them on immediately.

The bill would have allowed us to hire more CBP officers and agents, the men and women who are on the ground protecting our national security and managing our border crossings. It would have provided resources to install more advanced screening technology, tools that help identify illegal cargo and stop dangerous drugs like

fentanyl from reaching our communities. It would have helped the Federal Government go after criminal organizations that traffic harmful drugs across the border.

The bill also aimed to streamline the process for asylum seekers arriving at our southern border, while ensuring individuals who do not qualify are quickly removed. It would have helped to ensure that unaccompanied children who arrive at the border—some of the most vulnerable people in our immigration system—have access to counsel, and it would have established a pathway to permanent residence for Afghan allies who risked their lives in the defense of our national security.

Now, the bill wasn't perfect. It was not meant to be a comprehensive immigration reform, but it was a bipartisan effort to address the challenges that we are now seeing at the southern border. And that is why the National Border Patrol Council, which represents frontline border security professionals, fully supported it, and they urged us to take action. They needed these tools. They were crying out: Please, give us these tools at border.

The conservative editorial board of the Wall Street Journal put it simply in their headline, and it was: "A Border Security Bill Worth Passing."

Republicans in Congress initially demanded border security measures to be part of this bill. But in the minute that we actually had a strong, bipartisan security bill on the floor, they decided to walk away. Maybe it is because they have been listening to former President Trump, who publicly fought to sink this bipartisan effort. He doesn't care about making our border more secure or supporting our CBP agents on the frontline or keeping fentanyl out of our communities. He only cares about his chances in November, and he thinks that, if we solve this problem, it is going to hurt his election.

Clearly, Republicans in Congress agreed, and they have made it abundantly clear that they would rather campaign on this issue than actually pass legislation to fix it. They would rather play politics and see themselves on TV and on their favorite network talking about it rather than rolling up their sleeves and actually solving the problem.

My colleagues who worked on this comprehensive bill set a much needed example of bipartisanship. I am proud to work alongside Senator MURPHY in our caucus, and I am grateful to serve as chairman of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee and work closely with both Senators SINEMA and LANKFORD. These are three committed lawmakers, people who did actually roll up their sleeves and actually worked to get things done in a meaningful way. And I certainly appreciate their hard work in negotiating this comprehensive bill.

We are all aware of the challenges we face at the southern border, and it is a shame that a vast majority of my Re-

publican colleagues have decided not to act.

We could still take a critical step to help our allies, however, who are now facing existential challenges. Our international partners are fighting for democracy. Ukraine is standing up to a reckless dictator and protecting its people from his violent campaign. In October, Israel weathered the deadliest terrorist attacks in its history. Taiwan continues to face aggression from the Chinese government. In order to help preserve democracy and stability on the global stage, the United States must stand at their side. We can send help to our international partners when they need it the most.

It has been almost 2 years since Putin initiated his unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. In response, the Ukrainian people have shown incredible bravery and resolve. They have stood up in the face of this dictator to defend their sovereignty and their democracy. They are fighting a courageous battle, not only to protect their own country but to show the world the importance of protecting liberty against an authoritarian regime. For months, Ukraine has needed the United States to help in this fight and provide more military assistance as they push back on Russian forces. And now we have an opportunity to move a bill forward that would send this critical aid to our ally. It will help the Ukrainian Army get the weapons, the intelligence, and the training resources that they need to win this war. It will also include significant humanitarian aid, money that will go directly to those most immediately affected by this conflict.

My home State of Michigan is home to a vibrant Ukrainian-American community. Every day I hear from constituents who are urging the United States to act and act soon, not just to help Ukraine but to defend democratic values all across the globe.

If we fail to pass this legislation, it will play right into Putin's hands. The Ukrainian victories will be nullified, their resolve will have been wasted, and their independent democracy will be in grave danger. We cannot and must not let that happen. I commend President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people for their response to Putin's invasion, and I implore my colleagues to pass the bill before us and send them the aid that they so desperately need.

We also now have the ability to send urgently needed resources to Israel in their fight against Hamas and provide humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza who have been caught in the crossfire of this conflict. Israelis are reeling from horrific attacks on October 7, 4 months ago. Many families are still praying for the safe return of family members being held hostage by Hamas. Others are mourning their loved ones who were killed in the initial attack, and there is no question that the country will never, ever be the same.

I stand with Israel and all those in the region seeking peace and security

by passing this legislation. We can support both our key ally in the region and provide relief for innocent civilians in Gaza who have shouldered the burdens of this war.

As we send this urgently needed support, I want to reiterate my calls for both parties to minimize civilian casualties and work toward a lasting peace.

We had a chance to address all of these challenges at once yesterday; but, unfortunately, a significant bipartisan agreement failed, congressional Republicans decided they do not want to secure our border. But today, we can send help to our allies and we can still help protect democracy across the world. The stakes are too high not to act.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the bill before us now and join me in supporting this vital assistance.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, we heard you loud and clear.

Is it my turn? I am not jumping ahead of anybody.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. GRAHAM. Thank you. So let's have an overview of where we are at here. Everything my colleagues on the Democratic side said about helping Ukraine makes perfect sense to me. I think we need to help Ukraine.

I thought it was a really bad idea to get out of Iraq in 2011, and I issued a statement about our withdrawal in 2011. I said:

I respectfully disagree with President Obama. I feel all we have worked for, fought for, sacrificed for is very much in jeopardy by today's announcement. I hope I am wrong and the President is right, but I fear this decision has set in motion events that will come back to haunt our country.

The ISIS was not the JV team. A lot of people were slaughtered throughout the planet because of that ill-advised decision.

So we got out of Afghanistan. President Biden chose to do that. I have a statement here I will put in the record. I was very clear that if we get out of Afghanistan, pull all the troops, that there will be a reemergence of al-Qaida and ISIS and there will be a great major upheaval, as this decision by President Biden is a disaster in the making.

So a lot of Republicans agree with those two things. To my Republican colleagues, if we pull the plug on Ukraine, it is going to be worse than Afghanistan. The idea of pulling the plug on Ukraine and it will not affect our national security is a fantasy.

It was clear to me that getting out of Iraq in 2011 was too soon and would lead to the rise of radical Islamic terrorists. They literally took over half the country, killed people in Paris and here and everywhere else.

Now we are back in Iraq. We should never have got out in the first place. The bottom line about Afghanistan—I know it was a long slog and people

wanted out, but the Taliban took over within weeks. And the Taliban being in charge of Afghanistan led to other people in the world thinking, hey, America is weak, now is the time to pounce.

So in 2021, we withdraw from Afghanistan. The Taliban take over. In 2022, Russia invades Ukraine. That has been a complete disaster. In 2023, Hamas attacks Israel, killing more Jewish people than at any time since the holocaust. In 2024, Iranian proxies are killing American soldiers and they are running wild throughout the world. Other than that, everything is pretty good.

Now having said all that, my point is, I want to help Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan. I really do. I think it is in our national security interests to do all of the above. But I have also said from, like, day one: I want to help other countries, but we got to help our country first.

Now what do I mean by that? I mean that the border is not just broken, it is a complete nightmare. It is a national security disaster in the making; 7 million people have come across the border illegally—a lot of people on the Terrorist Watchlist. So it has been a nightmare. And we tried to sit down in a bipartisan way—Senators Murphy, Sinema, Lankford, and others sat down to come up with a bipartisan proposal that I thought did a pretty good job in many ways. However, having said that, I didn't think it was enough.

I was hoping that they would build on what they did. But here's where we are at: The House declared it insufficient.

Ms. SINEMA. Would the Senator yield to a question?

Mr. GRAHAM. The Republican—

Ms. SINEMA. Would the Senator yield to a question?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes.

Ms. SINEMA. OK. Thank you. Thank you. Senator, I was just listening to your speech, and you mentioned that you thought the bill that we had drafted was a good start but not enough.

I am wondering if you would remind us how you voted yesterday on the motion to proceed to the bill that had the border package that we worked on together?

Mr. GRAHAM. I will be glad to. I voted no because I didn't see a process in place or willingness by my Democratic colleagues to allow me to express how I think it could be better.

See, at the end of the day—you weren't here, but Senator McCain was—we worked really hard—Senator BENNET has been involved in all this stuff in 2013—and we let the bill come to the floor, people amend it, and we spent days and weeks. So that is why I voted no.

Ms. SINEMA. Senator GRAHAM—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. My colleagues will address your comments to me.

Mr. GRAHAM. So here is what I am saying. This has been a half-ass effort to deal with border security. To the people in the House—

Ms. SINEMA. Senator, would you yield to a question?

Mr. GRAHAM. No, I am speaking. You will speak later.

To the people in the House, we have not really tried hard to secure the border.

We took a well-meaning product. People worked really hard. I applaud you and others for coming out with a product that I thought had a lot of good things in it, but not enough for me.

So now I can't even vote. We have closed out the border debate, and you may give me a few amendments on Ukraine about the border. That is not the way it works around here.

Ms. SINEMA. Would the Senator yield to my question?

Mr. GRAHAM. No.

To my House colleagues: You can do better than this. Don't send us back H.R. 2. It is not going anywhere. You couldn't get all Republicans for H.R. 2. We lost one Republican and no Democrats.

So this idea we have done enough on the border is BS.

I am not done. I am not going to help Ukraine until we first do a better job helping ourselves. I have given people involved credit for working hard to get a product. But the system in place now—take it or leave it.

The reason I voted no is because I didn't see any willingness by anybody to allow an amendment process where we could deal with the border issue.

I'm giving an amendment on the Ukraine bill about the border.

Ms. SINEMA. Would the Senator yield to a question?

Mr. GRAHAM. No. That is ass-backwards. We don't do it that way.

During the Gang of 8 and other attempts, we had a robust amendment process. And let me tell you, I think there are things we can do to make it better.

Ms. SINEMA. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. GRAHAM. They want the 5,000-a-day encounter that kicks in an emergency authority to shut down the border. Here is what the border council said: 5,000 encounters a day is a catastrophe; 1,000 encounters a day would be a substantial improvement. It is truly an emergency. I was hoping we could talk about that.

Now, we may get a vote on that on the Ukraine bill. We have closed out a debate on the border.

Ms. SINEMA. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes.

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you. Now, Senator, I know that you have been here quite a bit longer than me, but it is my understanding that in order to get to the portion of the bill where we offer amendments on the floor, we first have to pass the motion to proceed.

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes.

Ms. SINEMA. And it is also my understanding that it was authored by leadership and the three sponsors of

the border bill, which your team gratefully helped us create, that we would have an open-amendment process.

So would you help me understand why you voted against the motion to proceed before we were able to offer any amendments?

Mr. GRAHAM. I will be glad to. Yes, because I think the fix is in.

I think people on our side and your side wanted to do the border thing as quick as they could so we could get to Ukraine. And I don't trust the system here to be able to allow us to have the debate that we had for the Gang of 8 bill. That is why I voted no, because I didn't see any willingness in—and it proved to be correct—because now the Republican leadership has joined with the Democratic leadership to shut down debate on the border bill, throwing a few amendments on the Ukraine bill and saying: Aren't you happy now?

No, I am not happy. I am not happy. I admit it that I wanted to secure the border before I help Ukraine. Everything you say about Ukraine is right.

I was not kidding, to our colleagues in the House. We have done a half-ass job here trying to secure the border.

We shut this thing down unlike any other time I have been involved in immigration. I have taken a lot of hard votes. You have taken a lot of hard—you know, you have been kicked around. I understand it. Senator LANKFORD, I admire the hell out of him.

I thought you all produced a pretty good product—a really good product in some areas. But it wasn't enough.

I want a cap on parole. Let me tell you why I want a cap on parole. During the Trump-Obama years, the average people paroled in the country was 5,600. In the last 2 years, President Biden has paroled over 800,000 people. So the parole was better, but we need a cap to stop the abuse. I would like to have an amendment on whether or not we should cap parole at 10,000 per year, but I am getting that on the Ukraine bill.

So, to my colleague from Arizona, no, no, no. This has not been a real effort to find border security in a bipartisan way. We took your product. Take it or leave it. The reason I voted no to proceed has exactly been reaffirmed here. We stopped the process. We are jumping to Ukraine. We are going to do it this weekend, and it is going nowhere in the House.

To those of you who want to help Ukraine, you have made it harder. We are going to lose a handful of Republican votes over here because they felt they were shut out in the debate about how to secure the border.

We are going to lose votes—

Ms. SINEMA. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. GRAHAM. No, please.

We are going to lose votes over here. You don't have a snowball's chance in hell of getting it through the House, because we took the border issue, and we didn't address it the way it should have been. We closed it out. I could see

the game being fixed. I am here as a proud supporter of Ukraine, telling you that you have hurt the cause of Ukraine by trying to shortchange a debate on the border. Your product was good, but I want to make it better.

I have got a National Border Patrol Council letter about three things that would make it better.

I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL BORDER PATROL COUNCIL,
Tucson, AZ, February 7, 2023.

Hon. LINDSEY O. GRAHAM,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN CORNYN,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS GRAHAM AND CORNYN: I am responding to your questions regarding how to improve the border security provisions in the emergency national security supplemental. Simply put, defining an emergency at the border as 1,000 encounters a day would be a substantial improvement. It is apparent that 5,000 encounters in a day is a catastrophe, and 1,000 encounters a day is a true emergency. This is line with what former Secretary of Homeland Security for President Obama, Jeh Johnson said, that one day of 1,000 encounters was a very bad day and "overwhelms the system." If you could lower the number to 1,000 encounters on average over a 7 day period, and require that the President shut down the border at that level of encounters, that would be a substantial improvement to the legislation.

As to the question of how to end catch and release, detaining single adults and families rather than referring them to non-custodial removal proceedings and enrolling them in Alternatives to Detention, would be a giant step forward towards that goal. The system of non-custodial proceedings created by the provisions in the supplemental would not effectively curb the catch and release policies of the Biden administration for single adults or aliens in a family unit. Therefore, changing the bill to provide for detention of families as well as single adults would be a tremendous improvement in stopping catch and release.

Finally, the idea of putting a cap on parole would be a gamechanger on ending parole abuse. As you indicated, under the Trump administration and the Obama administration, grants of parole by Customs and Border Protection at the southern border averaged around less than 6,000 a year. Under President Biden, grants of parole across the Department of Homeland Security has skyrocketed to over 800,000 a year. A cap on parole of 10,000 parole grants a year would be a check on their ability to abuse this authority.

In summary, redefining emergency from 5,000 to 1,000, requiring actual detention instead of Alternatives to Detention, and a 10,000 a year cap on parole would make this bill exponentially better. Thank you for your questions and your interest.

Sincerely,

BRANDON JUDD.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I am going to close this thing out. Here is what is going to happen. You may get this bill passed without any border, but it is going nowhere in the House. The House has made it crystal clear: To get money for Ukraine and other foreign countries, we have got to help our own. Our border is on fire.

I will give you credit, the Senator from Arizona. You have been trying to

fix it. I appreciate what you have tried to do, but the system we have employed—to my colleague from Arizona—is unlike any I have ever seen, in that we are going to take a consequential moment in American history of trying to secure a broken border and not even bring it to the floor for a real debate.

The reason I voted no to proceed is because I saw what was happening. Our people on this side have been obsessed with Ukraine to the point of ignoring our border. There are people who are going to vote no to Ukraine who have always believed that the border was an excuse to try to get Ukraine. I never believed that.

So the bottom line is this idea that, because 41 of us vote no, you close out the border. How about sitting down, re-opening the border debate, and having a robust debate like we did with the Gang of 8? The reason I voted no is I could see where this thing was going. The bill you produced, while I liked parts of it, was dead in the House. I am trying to find a way to make it better, if that is possible.

As to President Trump, who said he just doesn't want to deal with this until next year, I want to deal with it now. We could be attacked tomorrow. I want to let the people in South Carolina know I consider this a direct threat to the United States. I want to do something. I want to do it now. I don't want to wait until November.

Ms. SINEMA. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. GRAHAM. Sure.

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you.

Senator, are you aware that the only way to offer an amendment on a bill being considered in the U.S. Senate is to first pass the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed—that being the vote we took yesterday at 1:59 p.m.?

Mr. GRAHAM. Are you aware of the fact that people routinely vote not to proceed until they get some kind of understanding of what is coming next? And here is what came next: Not one effort to sit down and talk to the 41 of us: What would you like to change your vote?

The fix is in. We jump right into Ukraine. We are going to do it this weekend. We did the minimum on the border when it comes to changing a bill that has many good qualities. So you are not convincing me that I am the problem. I have seen this. You have not. I have seen a debate on this floor with Senator BENNET where we got the crap kicked out of us for weeks. We gave everybody who didn't like what we did a chance to come down here and say their side of the story and kick us in the ass. That is the way the process works. We did not do that here. So you are losing votes on Ukraine. You are losing me in terms of trying to fix this problem. I can't tell our House colleagues that you should accept this product, because we have not done what I think needs to be done to try to

secure our border. That is why I am voting no.

With that, I yield the floor.

Oh, wait a minute. Can I take that back? I have got to say something to my friend, if I may, just for a minute.

This is the Polish Prime Minister. I like Poland. It has been a great ally and a good NATO ally.

Dear Republican Senators of America, Ronald Reagan, who helped millions of us to win back our freedom and independence, must be turning in his grave today. Shame on you.

To the Prime Minister of Poland, I could care less what you think. To the Prime Minister of Poland, if Ronald Reagan were alive today, we wouldn't have this broken border. To the Prime Minister of Poland, I want to help Ukraine. I want to help make a stronger NATO, but my country is on fire. We have had 7 million people come across a broken border.

How would you feel if 7 million people came in illegally into Poland? Would you have this attitude that we have got to put Ukraine ahead of Poland?

I am not going to put Ukraine, Israel, or anybody else ahead of America. I am going to try to create an outcome where the bill gets through the House. It has got to get through the House.

And, to our House colleagues, we have not done everything that we could. We have let you down.

Now I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FETTERMAN). The Senator from Arizona.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, I think it is probably useful to take a couple of moments and do a quick refresher on how Senate process and procedure work.

So, in the U.S. Senate, when a bill is introduced and when it comes to the floor, we have to do what is called a motion to proceed. The motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed is a 60-vote threshold in the U.S. Senate. The 60-vote threshold, of course, is the filibuster.

Now, folks in this body might remember how deeply I care about the filibuster, because it requires comity; it requires compromise; and it requires individuals of different parties to work together to solve problems. Often, it has been an object of contention in this body, but I support the filibuster because I believe it requires us to work together to solve problems, hear everyone's ideas, and incorporate them as we move forward on legislation.

Of course, before you can actually amend a piece of legislation on the Senate floor, you first must pass the motion to invoke cloture. We held that vote yesterday at 1:59 p.m. I have got the copy of the rollcall vote right here in front of me. Unfortunately, there were only 49 Senators who voted yes to move forward on yesterday's package. There were 50 Senators who voted no to move forward on the package.

Of course, what the motion to invoke cloture was, was on the shell of the

bill. The substitute that would be filed is this bill right here. This bill is 370 pages long. Most of this legislation is the border bill, which we spent over 4 months negotiating in a bipartisan way.

I was very grateful that Senator GRAHAM's team and Senator GRAHAM himself were integral parts of that conversation.

So this bill is subject to debate and subject to amendment but only—only—after a motion to invoke cloture is passed, which requires 60 votes. Now, my good friend from South Carolina indicated that he would like to offer some amendments. Some of the ideas that he was discussing are ideas that I very much support. I would look forward to debating and possibly even supporting one or more of his amendments. But, alas, we are unable to consider those amendments because, yesterday, the Senate chose to vote no on the motion to invoke cloture to move forward on this legislation. Therefore, we are not able to amend or debate this bill.

The Senate later moved forward with a piece of legislation very similar to this, but it was missing the entire border section. So we are now in a period of waiting until our next vote to invoke another cloture in which, potentially, if unanimous consent occurs in this body, we could consider additional amendments. However, it could be more difficult to consider some of those border-related amendments since the package now does not include any of the border language that we carefully negotiated over the last 4½ months.

So, to Members of the Senate and the folks who are listening, just to be clear, it seems clear to me—and I think to everyone in the U.S. Senate—that had we passed this motion to invoke cloture yesterday with 60-plus votes, we would be currently debating, offering, and voting on amendments to the border provisions of the bill that was drafted, and each of those amendments would have been germane, which means they would have been voted at a 51-vote threshold—a simple majority—to move forward.

Alas, because this body chose not to invoke cloture, we have moved on to a different piece of legislation, one that does not include the border components. So, while there may be amendments offered at some point over the next several days, it will be a very different debate than the amendments that would be offered before.

I know that my friend from South Carolina is currently drafting an amendment, which I appreciate. The amendment that he is drafting for current discussion would have to incorporate the entirety of the border bill package, with some minor changes to the language that we drafted and voted on yesterday, in order to consider his amendment. So I would suggest that, perhaps, if we had wanted to have a robust debate and an openness to an open

amendment process, the time to have done that would have been yesterday at 1:59 p.m.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, first, let me commend my colleague from Arizona, Senator SINEMA, for her great and tireless efforts to develop a bipartisan immigration reform package that, as she indicated, we could have placed on the floor with our vote yesterday so that we could now be talking about modifications, changes, and improvements to not just the immigration section but also to the other sections. But my Republican colleagues in large numbers said no, and I think that was a grave mistake. If, in fact, we are facing a crisis on the border, voting against legislation to correct this crisis seems to me to be very difficult to justify.

But it is good news that finally, on a bipartisan basis, the national security legislation is on the Senate floor for debate. It is a start, but it shouldn't have taken this long simply to get to the starting line. The delays and continued efforts to slow-walk the process by some can have serious and negative repercussions on our national security.

It has been nearly 6 months since President Biden initiated this request—so long ago that the request was addressed to the former Speaker of the House, not the present Speaker of the House.

I can recall last October, as we were talking about aid to Ukraine, as we were talking about aid to Israel, that my Republican colleagues—many of them—stood up and said: Fine, but we have got to do something about the border. So, for months, we have been engaged in the process.

Again, I have great regard for Senator LANKFORD, for his efforts, and for Senator MURPHY of Connecticut and Senator SINEMA for what they have done. They brought together a truly bipartisan piece of legislation. Senator LANKFORD is one of those most principled, conservative voices here in the Senate. My colleague from Connecticut has a very strong liberal stance, I would say, as myself. But they came together. Rather than being welcomed as a contribution to debate and progress in national security and border security, Senator LANKFORD has been demeaned by his own party, condemned by his State committee, and accused of or threatened by commentators that he would be destroyed because he had the temerity to try to develop a compromise on an issue of national security and national importance.

So we have come in the last 6 months through a very circuitous and strange path to reach the point at which we are now, but at least we have a chance to aid and assist people who are fighting desperately not only for their freedom but for democracy all over the globe.

For the last 6 months, the Ukrainian people have been keeping up their fight

against Putin's brutal invasion with tremendous bravery and skill and with dwindling resources. Today, they are battling through another difficult winter, trying to withstand indiscriminate Russian attacks against their civilian population and infrastructure.

We, of course, I believe, have a moral obligation to assist Ukraine in this fight. But it isn't just charity; it is in our national security interest to do so. We know that if Putin succeeds in Ukraine, he won't stop. He will seek to destabilize other countries in the region, including our NATO allies. He will continue to sabotage the international economy and threaten our interests.

This supplemental funding bill would provide \$60 billion to help Ukraine with the training, equipment, and weapons it needs to repel Russia. In bringing up Ukraine's military strength, we will also be building up our own capacity. Indeed, the vast majority of the funding in the bill would go directly back into the U.S. industrial base.

Over the last 2 years, we have had an extensive debate about Ukraine in this body. It is ironic to recall that until recently, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been highly critical of the United States for taking too long to provide assistance and for not sending the "right stuff" to help fight off Putin.

Now they have a chance to deliver the equipment—American-made equipment—and support Ukraine's needs, while also strengthening America's industrial base and American workers.

We need this bill to move now, and we need the House to act on it.

Make no mistake, denying aid to Ukraine has been and continues to be a gift to Vladimir Putin. But Putin is not the only one who benefits. China is studying how America and the democratic nations of the world respond to Ukraine.

As President Xi considers Taiwan, he is scrutinizing Putin's playbook and the international response. He is measuring and judging if, when push comes to shove, the United States can just be waited out, can just be seen as faltering because they don't have the commitment to democracy and the modern international order forged after World War II.

China, Russia, Iran, North Korea—they would relish seeing American support for Ukraine buckle, and they would relish seeing this supplemental fall.

In contrast, passing this supplemental would send a powerful message to our allies. The bill includes nearly \$5 billion in security assistance for Taiwan and our partners in the Indo-Pacific. Similarly, the bill includes \$14 billion in security assistance for Israel—our strongest ally in the Middle East—in the wake of the horrific terrorist attack by Hamas.

In addition, the bill includes \$10 billion for the State Department and

USAID to provide humanitarian assistance in Gaza, Ukraine, and other crises around the world.

Again, the bill would dedicate nearly \$35 billion for replenishing U.S. weapons and strengthening our defense industrial base.

It also includes Senator TIM SCOTT's and Senator SHERROD BROWN's bipartisan FEND Off Fentanyl Act. My colleague from South Carolina was talking about the crisis at the border. One aspect of that is the movement of precursors of fentanyl across that border. This legislation would help interdict the movement of drugs and supplies, and it would be a significant attempt to adjust issues emanating from the border. That would be—or it would appear to be ignored by my colleagues.

I believe that Democrats and some very courageous Republicans have gone the extra mile to put together legislation—the previous legislation, particularly, that incorporates improvements to our border security and this legislation, which addresses one aspect of the border, fentanyl, but quite critically addresses the issue of how we maintain the fight in Ukraine.

I hope our Republican colleagues can stand with us and get this bill through. This is a historic moment. What is at stake is the survival of the international order based on law, based on mutual security with organizations like NATO, maintained over the years by the courage of millions of American men and women but forged in the fires of World War II and in the post-war years.

What is emerging to undercut that great international order is a new autocratic system of oligarchs and demagogues who measure progress in their own personal power and personal wealth, not in peace and prosperity for all of their citizens and the citizens of the world.

This is not a routine measure, check the box. This is about the future of our whole world. I hope we can stand up and recognize that we must support this legislation. We must assist Ukraine and Israel. We must provide humanitarian assistance for those who are suffering in Gaza. We must maintain the international order of democratic nations, united by a common interest and committed to peace and prosperity for the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

ISRAEL

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague for his kindness in letting me go ahead.

Mr. President, as Israel's war with Hamas drags into another month, I know it can feel hopeless to know that with every passing day, the chances that we will get these hostages home safely are dwindling.

But above all, we must not abandon them. We must not abandon hope. We must tell their stories and do everything we can to bring them home.

I recently met a woman, Yarden. Her little sister, Romi, is a hostage. She said that early on the morning of October 7, she woke up to the sound of her sister's phone call. At first, Yarden was confused. She knew her sister was supposed to be having the time of her life at the Nova music festival. Instead, Romi was calling her, scared to death. She said a lot of missiles were being fired, but there was no shelter at the open-air festival.

Romi and her best friend Gaya tried to drive away, but they got stuck in a traffic jam. Suddenly, they saw people shouting and running: Get out of the car. There are terrorists. Run for your lives.

They hid in a bush as gunshots sounded. Over the phone, Yarden asked Romi if there were police anywhere around her. "Yes," Romi whispered. "There is one policeman"—just one policeman facing a multitude of terrorists.

Another friend, Ben, came to rescue the girls with his car, and the group began to drive away, picking up another man, Ofir. For 10 minutes, the group thought they would be safe, but then Romi called her mother. She said: Mom? We were ambushed. They are shooting at us. Ben is most likely dead. Gaya was shot, and she is not responding. Ofir is wounded badly. I was shot in my arm. If no one comes quickly, I will be dead.

Romi was on the phone with her mother and sister for 4½ hours that day, including at the moment she was captured.

Her family says that she has asthma and chronic sinusitis, and they worry that she could be struggling to breathe without her inhaler. They worry that her gunshot wound is not being properly treated. And they are worried that she doesn't have food, fresh water or fresh air.

Romi's sister Yarden says she gets nauseated when she thinks about her sister. She gets nauseated when she uses the bathroom or takes a shower because she doesn't know whether her sister can do that safely. She misses Romi desperately and describes her as a magnificent young woman.

A natural leader and advocate for justice, Romi loves dancing and traveling and hanging out with her friends. Her family says that everyone who meets her falls in love with her immediately; that she is her family's private sunshine and the glue that holds them together.

Romi, like all the people still in Hamas captivity, deserves to live her life to the fullest. She deserves to have her story told. And so we have to keep telling it—and never abandon hope—for her, her family, or for the thousands of other lives who have been affected by this horrific, horrific crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New York for making

those statements, and I am glad that I was able to yield time to hear them here on the floor myself.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. President, today is one of those days where I wonder if people know—who are watching C-SPAN or watch reports or are in the Gallery—what the heck is happening. So I thought I would come down here and maybe tell you what is happening.

For about 4 months, Senator LANKFORD, Senator SINEMA, and Senator MURPHY got together with the charge of trying to come up with a bipartisan approach to the situation at the border.

I think, by most objective measures, everyone I know—because now it even shows up in polls—recognizes that we have got an out-of-control situation at the border.

We clearly have people who should come to this country and should be able to ask for asylum, but it has been abused. The cartels are making about \$1 billion a year charging tolls to come across the border. And if you don't pay the toll, you are probably going to get killed. You get about one chance to cross the border without paying a toll—\$5,000 if you are from Central America, \$50,000 if you are from China. But if you try crossing that border—I have been there. They have got a line of sight, and if you try to cross that border without paying that toll, paying a transnational criminal organization, they are going to kill you.

Now, they do let some people come across the border without having paid a toll, but they have got to work it off once they get here. They are effectively indentured servants who are doing the work of cartels.

This is not hyperbole. This is a briefing that I have gotten from law enforcement officials—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—in the Biden administration. This is real. This is not politics, not from me anyway.

So JAMES LANKFORD, representing the Republican Party, went down, tried to negotiate a deal. And he worked hard at it. JAMES LANKFORD is from Oklahoma, a ruby-red State. JAMES LANKFORD is considered to be one of the most conservative Members of the U.S. Senate. To see Members of my conference and people out in the country criticizing JAMES LANKFORD as some sort of a "squish" or some sort of a sellout really tells me that the people here have to know, so they must be misinforming people, and the people out there are believing it because they are hearing people here say that JAMES LANKFORD sold out. It couldn't be further from the truth.

The fact of the matter is, the bill that they negotiated, it still needed a little bit of work, but it is a dramatic improvement over the status quo.

Why did we think we even had to go down this path? Because President Biden has apparently forgotten, over the last 3 years, all of the Executive orders that he has rescinded that have

caused the border situation to get worse.

President Biden needs to be told by his advisers that he, in fact, has tools, without a single bill being passed here, that could bring the situation at the border under some semblance of control, but he has chosen not to. So now we have some of our Members—my Members—who think that we have lost the argument; that for some reason, because we weren't able to get this border bill passed, that somehow Republicans own the responsibility for an out-of-control border situation that started after President Biden got sworn in.

Ladies and gentlemen, we did not have this problem. You could have whatever arguments you want to have about President Trump, but the one thing I will tell you about the border, it was under control under President Trump, and it is out of control under President Biden. No law has changed. No authorities have expired. President Biden has chosen not to use authorities he has today.

So I wanted to come down here and set the record straight, first, on Senator LANKFORD. I don't know if any other Member has come down and talked about him.

I voted yesterday not to move forward on the border package because I have always said, unless we can convince more than half of our Republican majority that they would support this bill, it didn't make sense to send a bill to a Republican-led House that didn't have a majority of the Republicans here in the Senate. That is just knowing how a bill becomes law and knowing that we needed the strength of that message in order to have any prayer of getting the bill passed when it goes over to the House.

So the border bill is where it is, and it is a shame. It is an opportunity lost that I will guarantee you, if we are in power in the White House, if Republicans are in power, we are going to regret that some aspects of this bill weren't passed.

The bill was also endorsed by the Border Patrol Council. The Border Patrol Council is the law enforcement Agency on the border. When I hear the Border Patrol Council say they have endorsed something, they have their necks on the line. Their lives—Border Patrol agents have lost their lives over the past several years because of dangerous encounters at the border. So when I see the Border Patrol Council endorse something—ladies and gentlemen, even if you oppose the bill, understand that law enforcement, those people on the line at the border, endorsed this bill. Clearly, they want more. They have communicated to us that they want more, but they have said that this was positive progress. But that is an opportunity lost, and I am OK with that, and I am at peace with having voted against moving forward on it because I knew we wouldn't have a majority of our conference.

But now what do we have before us? We have a bill that is primarily focused on providing aid to Ukraine, to Israel, and to Taiwan. So it is called a supplemental bill. It is an appropriation. It is us having to authorize the use of these funds.

Now, we were supposed to leave today for 2 weeks. We were supposed to go on recess. And Senator SCHUMER made a decision that I happen to agree with. He has decided that we are not going to leave here until we settle this issue.

We have some people say: Well, we need time to think about it. You know, this is a planned recess. We need to move on and step back and reflect, maybe negotiate another border bill.

That is not going to happen.

Now let's talk about what is before us. Do we care about this page or this chapter in history? I do. I mean, some people want to go away or think about it, but I think about right now and 24 hours a day since February of 2022, Ukrainian soldiers in trenches trying to defend their homeland.

I know on TV and I know to everybody else this is just something that is happening over in Europe. Think about these people who are fighting for their existence, and we are sitting here saying maybe we can take a couple of weeks before we decide on it? Putin would love nothing more than that.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we withdraw from Ukraine, if the United States, the leader of the free world, says that we are no longer interested in defending freedom and countering Russia, Russia will win, and at some point forward, we will regret the day that we avoided helping the Ukrainians fight their war because we are most likely—those who would make that decision are making a decision to someday put American lives at risk in a war somewhere, maybe in Russia—or maybe in Europe but maybe in China.

The people who are watching the decisions that this body is going to make over the next few days—Xi Jinping is probably more interested and more hopeful that we fail to make a decision to support Ukraine than Vladimir Putin.

This world is small today. We don't have, as the leader of the free world, the luxury of only being focused on one place at a time. We have to focus on Ukraine and defend freedom there. We have to focus on the South China Sea, Taiwan, and the risk there. We have to focus on our friend and ally Israel in the Middle East. We have to make the tough decision and sometimes cut through the noise and go back home and explain to the American people how critical this decision is.

Don't make the mistake of thinking it is just a channel change away from watching something else that is going on in the world, ladies and gentlemen. People's lives are on the line. Tens of thousands of people have died. Women have been raped. Children have been kidnapped. And Putin is OK with that.

Does this United States stand down when you are talking about that kind of a dictator, that murderer and thug? God, I hope not.

And I don't care how painful it is politically for somebody to go back home and explain this. It bears no resemblance to what people in Israel felt on October 7 and to what people in Ukraine have felt for the last 2 years. And it will be the same in Taiwan if we don't act.

So over the next couple of days, if you are wondering why nothing is happening here, why there are no votes—well, Leader SCHUMER laid down—they call it a motion to proceed, and at least 60 people needed to vote on it in order for us to proceed to considering the bill. So now we have a bill here on the floor, and that bill has funding for Ukraine, it has funding for Israel, and it has funding for Taiwan.

Now, you are wondering why are we not here voting and doing other things. Because right now, we are doing what they call hotlining votes. We are communicating to all the offices certain amendments that we want to pass. But then, because the Senate—any individual Member—I am THOM TILLIS from North Carolina. I am not supposed to be talking to you all, by the way, because I think it is a violation of the rules. So I am not really talking to you all; I am just looking in that direction.

But anyway, you have to get consent in this body to get anything done, and any one Member can gum up the works. So right now, we have people saying: We must have amendments on the bill. We must have amendments on the bill.

Then they are privately saying: But I am not going to give up a second of time between now and Monday to let those amendments occur.

So we can't have it both ways, guys. It is fine. If on Monday you get angry because no amendments were actually passed, it is because you haven't been able to cooperate. This is a give-and-take organization. If you don't show some flexibility—yielding back time—then we are just going to sit here until the mandatory time occurs, and then we are going to have a vote, and then people are going to be mad because they are going to say either the minority leader or the majority leader had this baked in all along and they were never going to allow a vote. That couldn't be further from the truth.

If you as a Member of the Senate want to cooperate, we can get a slate of amendments done here. We can get an agreement that they can be heard. We can vote on them. And that is not going to happen, likely.

So I just feel like we have to be honest with ourselves and recognize that if we don't come up with agreements, it is not because it was baked in; it is not because any leader already had it planned and is the puppet master to everything going on here; it is because Members are making a conscious decision to grind cooperation to a halt.

Now, let me just go back to where I started. The stakes are high here. Temperatures are high. But come on, guys. We are U.S. Senators. Get over it and do your job. Temperatures are high here, but the reality is, you should kind of cast aside the inconvenience that working this weekend may represent to you and think about the inconvenience that Hamas has put on the Israelis, that Putin has put on the Ukrainians. That is a real inconvenience.

What we are doing here is living out the privilege and the honor of being U.S. Senators, and I expect my colleagues to grow a spine, do the work of the Senate, and go back home and explain what it is we are doing and why it is we are doing it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of the national security supplemental appropriations bill that is the business before this body.

After a disappointing failure to move ahead with a bill that included critical border security provisions, we now have before us a chance to pass and send to the House a bill that would invest tens of billions of dollars in the men and women of Ukraine who continue to fight tirelessly in the depths of winter on the frontlines of freedom; to spend billions more on coming to the aid of Israel as it continues to battle Hamas; and \$10 billion invested in humanitarian aid that will provide critical support to those facing starvation and deprivation in Gaza, in Ukraine, in Sudan, in Somalia, and in a dozen other countries around the world; and to invest in our partners in the Indo-Pacific.

It is absolutely critical that we continue to fund Ukraine's response to the brutal Russian invasion. In 2014, Russia invaded and seized Crimea. But it was in 2022 that Putin sent in hundreds of thousands of soldiers to attack Ukraine from the north, from the east, and to occupy 20 percent of Ukraine's land.

Many predicted Ukraine would fall within a matter of days. Yet they still fight on bravely today, showing what is possible with faith and persistence, determination, and perseverance—and the support of 50 countries from around the world.

Our President has assembled a remarkable coalition, and together they have contributed more than we have to Ukraine's security and defense.

I was in Europe at a conference just a few weeks ago. I traveled with my friend and colleague Republican Senator ROUNDS of South Dakota. We went to Poland, to Slovakia, and to this conference in Switzerland, where we met with leaders from all over Europe. I had the chance to meet with President Zelenskyy and his Foreign Defense Minister to hear about how their economy is reviving; how they are export-

ing more grain now than they did before the war; how, with American investments through USAID, they have brought critical parts of their economy back. But I also heard that without these funds, without the munitions, without the budget support, without the humanitarian aid, President Zelenskyy predicted that Putin will ultimately win.

I cannot imagine—I do not want to imagine—the tragedy that will befall Europe and our place in the world should we allow this to happen. Putin will only stop when we together stop it.

When we were in Poland, Senator ROUNDS and I had heard loud and clear from their leadership the confidence that if Putin were to succeed in ultimately subjugating the Ukrainian people, he will be knocking on the door of Poland, our NATO ally, next.

Just last week, here in the Capitol, I met with the Speakers of the Parliaments of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, three Baltic States long occupied by the Russians—by the Soviets—today free and members of NATO. Their leaders are convinced that should Putin be allowed to succeed in Ukraine, they will be next. His forces will be knocking on their door.

And, folks, to be clear, either we come to their defense at scale and in force and with American troops or NATO is dead, and our role as leader of the free world is over.

I have listened here on the floor and in person, on television, at caucus lunches, and at meetings as my Republican colleagues have said over and over that they support Ukraine strongly. Now we have a chance to prove it and to show it.

I had the honor of taking the Liberty Medal from the National Constitution Center to Kyiv with our former colleague, Senator Rob Portman, of Ohio, now retired. It was a harrowing but uplifting journey, a chance to meet with President Zelenskyy and his whole core national security leadership team. To get into his office is quite a journey, through a maze of tunnels and sandbags of larger and larger men with more and more severe weapons, in darker and darker corridors. But to see the spirit, the determination, the persistence with which Zelenskyy, his team, their troops, and the people of Ukraine continue this fight is to be challenged to your very soul, to know what it looks like when people who have tasted freedom are willing to risk their very lives, to defend their country from the aggressions and the predations of the Russians. I don't need to tell you, but it is probably worth repeating that the horrific human rights violations committed by Russian troops against Ukrainian civilians must also be answered.

I had the chance to meet with Ukrainian refugees, both in Kyiv on that former trip and in Poland just a few weeks ago. And to hear from Ukrainian women what was done to

them, what happened to their husbands, to their children, to their hometowns is a reminder of the savagery of this war and the necessity of our standing firm with Ukraine.

Ukraine is running out of ammunition and running out of time. And the hope that they have in the United States, as the Nation that is the indispensable country leading the free world, will run out if we fail to come to their defense at this moment.

I will close with something that I heard from my parents when I was a child. There was a song popularized on the radio not long after Pearl Harbor. And in this song, a chaplain is reflecting on what he saw and what must be done next. The lyrics of the song go:

Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition
Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition
And we'll all stay free

And this song by Frank Loesser, penned by an American not long after we were attacked at Pearl Harbor, he concludes: I can't afford to be a politician. We are all between perdition and the deep blue sea. So praise the Lord and pass the ammunition, and we will all stay free.

To the men and women of this Senate, I can only hope and pray that you will pass the ammunition forward.

To those who stand on the frontlines of freedom, who are facing relentless Russian attacks, and who even today, in the depths of winter, watch the debates on this floor to see whether this Nation will stand, whether we can be counted on—when our President says we will be with you to the end, that commitment must mean something. We must pass this supplemental.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. COONS. Absolutely. I yield.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if I am not mistaken, the Senator is also considering attending the Munich Security Conference.

Mr. COONS. I am.

Mr. DURBIN. As am I. And for those unfamiliar with that conference, leaders from around the world gather to discuss the current state of affairs when it comes to security.

Mr. COONS. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. And if we are there, we are bound to be asked as a first question: Just what is the U.S. position on the defense of Ukraine?

Mr. COONS. We will.

Mr. DURBIN. Has the Senator come up with an answer?

Mr. COONS. The answer will be given by this body in the coming few hours and days—because I went to Europe with my friend and colleague Senator ROUNDS just a few weeks ago and in Poland and Slovakia and at a conference in Switzerland gave the answer: We are confident we will fund Ukraine.

Today, I am not certain. And in this question, in how we answer it, in how this body acts hangs the answer to whether the United States continues to lead the free world or is willing to be America first, America alone, and surrender to Putin.

Mr. DURBIN. As a student of history, I am sure the Senator remembers, as I do, the lengthy ordeal when the British came to us before World War II and begged us to come to their assistance, and we waited and we waited. We came up with an alternative, Lend-Lease and other things. But we didn't commit until that fatal day, December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and we were drawn into the war.

Can the Senator think of a time in history when the United States has walked away from an ally fighting for its life?

Mr. COONS. Not with the significance and severity of this moment, for a couple of reasons. One, because all of the world is engaged in watching or in supporting.

As I mentioned before, 50 nations are contributing munitions, financial support to Ukraine's fight. This is as global a fight as we have had since—well, the Second World War. And the clarity of the aggression by Russia against a sovereign, peaceful nation that in no way precipitated this conflict is as sharp and clear as any conflict in our lifetime.

I cannot imagine the consequences for our reputation, not just at a conference in Europe but in history, were we to abandon Ukraine now.

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to ask the Senator through the Chair again: In this circumstance, we have seen the revival, in my estimation, of an alliance which was so important 50 or 60 years ago and now is critical, and that is the NATO alliance. We have seen not only the strength of that alliance, but we have seen nations like Finland and Sweden announce that they want to be part of that alliance in the future. What does this say of the NATO alliance if the leading nation—the United States—walks away from Ukraine?

Mr. COONS. I think that would weaken the United States. I think it would weaken NATO. I think it would weaken the whole concept of collective security.

The Finns and the Swedes have a long history in this region. The Finns know better than any nation what it means to stand alone against Russian aggression, to fight hard, to stand tall, and to push them back. Their memory of the Winter War of 1939, 1940 is critical to their national identity, and they have a capable and sophisticated military. The Swedes were a regional power of dominant military centuries ago, but they remained neutral even in the Second World War.

For the Swedes and Finns to see Russia's aggression against Ukraine and extend their hand to all of NATO and say "we want in" shows that they appreciate the significance of this moment.

By adding Finland to NATO, we have doubled Russia's border with NATO. We have brought into NATO two very capable nations and militaries, but we have also increased, I think, our moral commitment to stand firm and to stand strong.

NATO has only invoked article V once, in our defense, after the attack of 9/11; and NATO came with us for 20 years to Afghanistan.

I have stood with the leaders of countries most Americans don't think about every day. Take, for example, Denmark, a small nation that fought alongside us for decades in Afghanistan that lost dozens and dozens of their soldiers. They met their pledge for collective security in NATO. We need to honor that pledge.

Mr. DURBIN. My last question, of course, relates to the aftermath if we abandon Ukraine. I have a special connection and affection for the Baltic nations as well as Poland, which is so ably represented in the State of Illinois and city of Chicago. We are very proud of that fact. What does this say to those countries that are literally in the sights of Putin as the next victim if we walk away from this situation in Ukraine?

Mr. COONS. It says to the people of Poland, to the people of Lithuania, to the people of Latvia, to the people of Estonia—nations that long knew the boot of Soviet occupation and oppression—that they should be afraid; that they cannot count on the United States; that they must provide for their own security.

In the trip I just took to Poland, Polish leadership said: Even though there has been a change in their election, they will not change. They are committing 4 percent of their GDP to their national defense—the highest of any NATO nation. They are welcoming Americans to participate.

As you well remember, my colleague from Chicago—from Illinois—we went to Poland, and we went to Lithuania together, just before Russia launched its second broad-scale invasion of Ukraine. We saw Americans training alongside Poles at the Lask Air Force Base. We saw Americans training alongside other Baltic nations, right on the border with Belarus. And then the war began.

The sense of the urgency of history was thick in the air as we got on a flight to come back to the United States, as the missiles and bullets were flying, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine began at full scale, and we did not know what would happen.

In every meeting, in every conversation, the folks we met with said it was crucial that the United States be the guarantor of NATO, be the backbone of this collective alliance that has kept us safe and free.

And with one last reference to history, the one previous time "America first" was a watch word spoken across this Nation was in 1939 and 1940 when Charles Lindbergh, a respected aviator, joined a nationwide isolationist movement to say we should stay out of the wars of Europe. As you ably pointed out, the lesson was nearly tragic, as Hitler's armies advanced across Europe, without the United States coming to the rescue of our allies. We wait-

ed and we waited and we waited until Japan attacked us.

It is only because Germany declared war on us that we got in the war in Europe. We waited too long. We could have saved millions of lives. We could have stopped the march of Nazism years before it got out of control. Many of us were raised on the lessons of that chapter of our history. We should not forget that.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank my colleague.

Mr. COONS. Thank you.

If I could conclude on this point: The lessons of history are thick not just in this Chamber, where the debates that formed NATO took place, not just in the capitals of Europe but around the world, where other authoritarians are watching to see whether we will stand, whether we will defend, and whether we can be counted on. We must pass this supplemental.

REMEMBERING DAVID BULLUCK BROWN

Mr. President, I rise to offer remarks in honor of a dear friend who passed recently: David Bulluck Brown, an attorney of the State of Delaware, a leader in our bench and our community, a neighbor and a friend; born in Wilmington, DE, 1946; David passed on January 22; devoted to his family, a tireless servant of our community. He was a tireless servant of our community, the sort of example of a life of humble leadership that makes our world better because David was in it.

He went to the same high school as my brother, A.I. duPont High School. He was a basketball and track star. He attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa. He went to the University of Virginia Law School.

He worked here in Washington as an attorney before returning home and joining Potter Anderson & Corroon, a firm he later served as chair. David mentored junior associates and championed the firm's growing ranks of female lawyers. Kathleen McDonough, a dear friend and former chair of the firm, said David made everyone—from someone working in the mailroom to the most senior partner—feel heard, seen, and valued.

Through an incredible, lifelong commitment to pro bono work and volunteerism, a commitment to social justice and equal rights for Delawareans, David showed the rest of us in the bar what we are obligated to do as lawyers. He didn't just do a little pro bono service here and there; he was a lion of the law and a leader of our community.

He cofounded and long-served as chair of Delaware Volunteer Legal Services. He was the keeper of the institutional knowledge at DVLS and respected for his clear-eyed assessment of new projects. The current executive director of DVLS, Janine Howard-O'Rangers, said David was skilled at high-level vision-setting and equally skilled at sweating the details of specific causes and cases. He was always ready to greet the staff at DVLS with a hug or encouraging word and to give them his undivided attention.

David was also chair of Planned Parenthood of Delaware, chair of the Combined Campaign for Justice, and a board member of the Delaware Historical Society. In fact, he helped champion the creation of the historic Mitchell Center of African American Heritage at our Historical Society. He was on so many boards, I could take an hour and could not list them all: Delaware Theater Company, Downtown Wilmington Improvement Corporation, the Music School of Delaware.

For his service, he was appreciated, honored, and recognized by so many of us in the First State. He received the Governor's Volunteer of the Year Award. He received the distinguished Bar Association's Christopher White Award—Chris White, who is a personal friend and an example of service to justice.

David was a devoted family man who loved riding horses with his grandchildren, fishing with siblings at a family cottage in Wrightsville Beach in North Carolina, and who was a gracious, thoughtful, kind, brilliant, capable neighbor, friend, citizen, and attorney.

David is survived by his beloved wife Gwen and their family: Ellie, Hannah, Tim, Francis, Sophie, Max, and River.

On behalf of all of us in the State of Delaware, I simply wanted to convey my heartfelt condolences and my deep thanks for how many times David took time away from family and took time away from the productive practice of law to contribute to our community, to make a difference in our society, and to make our world a better place.

I will deeply miss David Brown, and I hope you know how much of a difference he made to all of us with his life of dedicated service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

MAUI WILDFIRES

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, today marks 6 months since fire tore through Lahaina and Upcountry Maui. We continue to see the heart and resilience of our communities as we recover and remember the lives lost.

As recovery efforts continue, I am grateful to the thousands of people who have come together from literally all over the world to support our neighbors on Maui. Maui's recovery will take time, resources, and continuity of effort. I will keep working with my partners to ensure Maui has the resources it needs to recover and rebuild.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. President, the national security supplemental package we are debating demonstrates our strong support for our allies at a time of rising global instability, recognizing that an investment in our partners is also an investment in our own national security.

While the funding for Ukraine, Israel, and the Indo-Pacific currently included in this bill is critical, missing from this bill is the text of the recently renegotiated Compacts of Free Associa-

tion, agreements with the Pacific Island nations, Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands. In exchange for economic assistance, the Compacts of Free Association provide our country with exclusive military access to these countries and their territorial waters.

With their strategic location in the South Pacific, these countries provide a strategic buffer between the United States and China. At a time of rising tensions in the Pacific, these compacts are a critical component of our ability to operate in the Pacific, especially as we work to counter China's growing influence in this region.

Our military leaders have unanimously pointed out the importance of these compacts. Most recently, Admiral Paparo, nominated to lead U.S. military operations in the Indo-Pacific, reiterated the importance of the compacts in his confirmation hearing recently. These compacts date back more than 40 years, but our relationship with these island nations dates back to World War II.

First agreed to in the early 1980s, the compacts have to be renegotiated and approved by Congress every 20 years.

Over the past 4 years, U.S. negotiators have worked with their counterparts in the COFA nations to agree to new compacts that will govern our relationship with these countries for the next 20 years.

Imagine, if we get this done with this bill, we will have accomplished what we need to do in our relationship in support for our compact nation allies for the next 20 years.

These compacts have broad bipartisan support, including from both the chairs and ranking members of the Foreign Relations, Armed Services, and Energy and Natural Resources Committees. These are the committees of jurisdiction over these compacts.

They understand how critical these agreements are to our posture and readiness in the Pacific. And the harmful message—frankly, the harmful message it would send if we do not get these compacts agreed to.

Believe me, China is watching to see what we do in our support for our island friends. And, in fact, just this week, the Presidents of all three compact nations, Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands sent a letter to Congress in which they wrote:

Although we understand the delay in the legislation's approval, it has generated uncertainty among our peoples. As much they identify with and appreciate the United States . . . this has resulted in undesirable opportunities for economic exploitation by competitive political actors active in the [region].

Of course, they are talking about China. As I mentioned, China is watching and would love nothing more than for the United States to fail to pass these compacts.

Failure for the United States would present China with a golden opportunity to bring the COFA nations close to their sphere of influence, signifi-

cantly undermining our credibility and ability to operate in this region.

Beyond the serious national security implications of the compacts, nearly 100,000 citizens of the COFA nations live, work, and pay taxes in our country. Moreover, COFA citizens enlist in our military at higher rates than U.S. citizens.

With this bill, we stand with our allies, yes, but the compact nations are our allies in the Pacific. We are not just talking about our allies in Europe. These compact nations are our allies in the Pacific just as important, just as important to our national security.

We are introducing an amendment with strong bipartisan support to add to this bill the text of the compacts. And I thank Senator RUSCH, the lead sponsor of this amendment, for his leadership and partnership in this effort.

As we work to support our allies around the globe, I urge my colleagues to stand with our COFA partners and support our amendment.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

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

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the supplemental emergency package that we are considering addresses a number of issues, including, very importantly, the challenge of supporting the Ukrainian people. It also includes \$9.2 billion for humanitarian aid around the world, and some of that aid will assist with the humanitarian challenge in Gaza.

But I want to address that challenge in Gaza today in far more detail and argue that we need to do more; that we are so connected to the circumstances in Gaza because of our very close relationship with Israel; that the United States has a moral imperative, a moral responsibility, to launch a massive effort to address the humanitarian challenges in Gaza—to address the shortage of water, the shortage of food, and the shortage of medical supplies.

We have worked conscientiously with Israel to try to dramatically increase that aid. We have done so month after month after month, but that effort has produced only a trickle of aid compared to the need, and the circumstances in Gaza continue to deteriorate. So the United States needs to operate or launch "Operation Gaza Rescue"—or give it some other name but a bold and dramatic intervention in the humanitarian circumstances in Gaza.

Let me be clear. Israel had every right to go after Hamas after the horrific assault by Hamas terrorists on October 7 on villages in Israel, but how

Israel conducts that war matters. Hamas is Israel's enemy. The Palestinian civilians are not Israel's enemy, and the Palestinian civilians are not our enemy.

Israel's approach to the war, however, has produced horrifying, unacceptable levels of deaths and injuries and suffering for those Palestinian civilians. That has to change. It is why I have called for a cease-fire. It is why I have noted, though, that a cease-fire will not endure unless it includes the return of the hostages and an end to Hamas control in Gaza.

I salute today the Biden administration's intensive efforts to produce a cease-fire—a 40-day cease-fire and hopefully a permanent cease-fire—but yesterday those hopes were shattered. While such an outcome might still develop tomorrow or the day after, there is no certainty at all that it will come about, and that is why we can't simply hinge our hopes for addressing the tremendous suffering in Gaza on the possibility of a cease-fire. There is no guarantee when those negotiations will be successful, and with each passing day, the situation in Gaza is getting a lot worse.

The Netanyahu government's approach to the war has dramatically increased the suffering of civilians. At the same time, they have slow-walked the provision of humanitarian aid.

Senator VAN HOLLEN and I went to Rafah crossing, Rafah gate. We met with some of the most seasoned humanitarian workers to be found in the world. They told us about their work, having been in Sudan and in Yemen and on the frontlines in Ukraine. They said the combination of factors that they saw in Gaza made this worse than any other war or conflict they had ever been at—the worst humanitarian catastrophe that a group of seasoned aid workers had ever witnessed.

Netanyahu's government's war strategy has inflicted suffering on innocent civilians in multiple ways. President Biden described the Netanyahu government's bombing and shelling as "indiscriminate," and that indiscriminate bombing has resulted in a breathtaking number of civilian casualties and injuries, now counting more than 27,000 dead, not including the estimates of those who might be trapped in the rubble. This number—every few days, it goes up by another thousand people, and more than double that number—some estimated 67,000 Palestinians with significant injuries. Among the dead, among those 27,000, more than 18,000 women and children have died.

You know, these numbers, they are just—they are numbers. They are hard to get your hands around. So think about it this way: If 18,000 women and children were lined up, holding hands, they would form a line 13 miles long. Picture yourself going on a hike for 13 miles, and with every stride, another dead child, another dead woman. Or picture it this way: If you were to spend 1 minute with each of those

18,000 individuals before they had passed away, it would have taken you more than 300 hours to have met each of them. And, of course, it isn't just the dead and the injured. We see the huge impact in the form of the challenges faced by expectant mothers, mothers carrying children, mothers delivering children. More mothers are having miscarriages. More mothers are having stillbirths. More mothers are anemic because of malnutrition, and that anemia is producing more postpartum hemorrhaging. More mothers are enduring C-sections without anesthesia. If any of you have had the privilege of being in the room with a woman delivering a child and imagine a C-section without anesthesia, you can imagine just how horrific that is.

Of course, the bombing has had devastating impacts on the infrastructure, all kinds of infrastructure. We have an estimated 70,000 homes destroyed, 300,000 homes damaged, 1.7 million people internally displaced inside Gaza—1.7 million out of 2.2 million Gazans. That is just an enormous percentage, an enormous number.

That isn't all. Because so little aid has gotten in, hunger is rampant. Of those who are estimated to be at the highest level of hunger in the world, by far, the majority are in Gaza as compared to the rest of the world, the entire rest of the planet combined. Ninety percent of people in Gaza are surviving on less than a meal per day.

The impacts of that malnutrition also add to the impacts on new mothers in the form of women who are malnourished and cannot breastfeed. If you can't breastfeed, you need to have clean water for formula. But the U.N. reports that about 70 percent of the people in Gaza are drinking contaminated water. Clean water is extremely hard to come by. If you provide formula with contaminated water, then the odds of a baby surviving drop dramatically.

On the medical side, there were 36 hospitals in Gaza before October 7. There are 13 that are still functioning, and they are not functioning well. They are short of basic medical supplies like anesthesia and antibiotics, drug supplies for diabetics or hypertension—the whole host of issues that they face.

You know, the supply of food, water, and medicine can be provided through trucks. Before October 7, 500 trucks a day entered Gaza. Over the last 7 days, the U.N. reports that an average of about 170 trucks came in per day. It is not enough to meet even the most basic food, water, and medical issues in Gaza, meaning that with each passing day, the situation is getting worse and worse and worse.

Why are there so few trucks? Two reasons. The first is that Israel has set up a very complicated system to inspect the trucks before entering. They had such an inspection system before October 7, and they were able to inspect and allow 500 trucks a day to

enter, but they set up a convoluted system now that Senator VAN HOLLEN and I witnessed at Rafah crossing where truckdrivers, after loading up their supplies, often wait up to a week to get permission to pass into Gaza—a week. During that time, they have to wait until they can go to Nitzana to have an inspection. That means traveling down the road and going into Israel from Egypt. There, the load is inspected. Often, all the pallets are taken off, and they are looked at carefully.

There are a whole bunch of items that have been precleared because they are medical, food, and water items desperately needed, but at that site, the inspector may simply say "I am not accepting that item," and then not just that item but the entire truck is rejected, and the process starts all over again.

Senator VAN HOLLEN and I went to a warehouse full of these rejected items. There were medical supplies and food supplies and bladders that you could put into the back of a pickup truck or on a flatbed to carry water and deliver water—all rejected.

In fact, we were told that one of the items being rejected were sanitary kits for assisting in the delivery of a child. I said: How could one reject a kit for the delivery of children?

The answer was—the inspector said: There is a scalpel in this kit, and that is a knife, and so these kits cannot be allowed.

We have women delivering babies often without going to the hospital because the communications have been shut down, but when they do get to a hospital, not even the basic supplies have necessarily arrived to assist the doctors to provide the right care in the right way at the moment a woman is giving birth.

So if you make it through this complicated, bizarre inspection process that is designed to slow everything down; if you finally get permission to go through Rafah gate or Kerem Shalom gate by the U.N.—trucks going through a separate entry; if you get that permission, then the problem is, how are you going to get from there to the warehouse? How are you going to get from there to the hospital? Because there is a war going on. Bombs are dropping. Shells are being fired. Tanks are shooting shells. So you need deconfliction to be able to deliver humanitarian supplies. And who can deconflict? Only one entity can deconflict, and that is Israel, and Israel has refused to do so.

So now imagine the truck comes in. The Egyptian truckdriver says that now it must be transferred to a Palestinian truck and a Palestinian driver. How is the Palestinian driver even going to know there is a truck there when the communications have been shut down? How is the Palestinian driver going to get safely to the truck? How are they going to get safely to the warehouse when there is no deconfliction? So, of course, people

have been dying trying to deliver the aid to the hospital or the aid to the warehouse.

The failure to have a sane, efficient inspection process—which we know is possible because Israel was able to do that for 500 trucks a day before October 7—in combination with the complete failure of deconfliction has resulted in a very small amount of aid getting in. That is the challenge. That is the challenge truckdrivers face, with broken roads and falling bombs and artillery shells, risking their lives as they do every day and making it extremely difficult.

For months, President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken, Defense Secretary Austin, and other senior members of the administration have been urging the Netanyahu government to change course. They have urged the Netanyahu government to adopt a strategy against Hamas that does not produce this tremendous number of civilian deaths, civilian injuries, and massive suffering. And Netanyahu has stiff-armed the American Government. They have made some little changes here and there but the same basic fact—massively insufficient supply of food and water and medical supplies.

I have heard how members of the administration, the top teams, have had very testy, very difficult conversations with Prime Minister Netanyahu and with his other core leaders. But, you know what, no matter how much we ask, no matter how often we ask, the same result—massively insufficient humanitarian aid.

So President Biden's request to change war strategies has been rejected, President Biden and his team's request to massively increase humanitarian aid have been rejected, and the circumstances get worse and worse and worse in Gaza with every passing day.

President Biden is doing the right thing by trying to urge Israel to make those changes, but the Netanyahu government has been very clear in the end that they are not going to do so. So the strategy, however well-intentioned, however passionately carried, has failed.

This leaves us, the United States of America—it leaves us in a terrible place. We are Israel's closest partner. The suffering in Gaza now becomes part of our story. It becomes part of our responsibility. As Israel's largest supplier of economic aid, it becomes part of our responsibility. As Israel's largest supplier of military aid, it becomes part of our responsibility. As Israel's largest supplier specifically of bombs and artillery shells that the Netanyahu government has used in that indiscriminate bombing that President Biden talks about, it becomes our responsibility. Thus, if it is our responsibility, we have to act. The United States must act. Asking politely or asking urgently or asking passionately or asking often to Israel is not enough. That strategy—it has failed.

That is why it is incumbent on the United States to immediately stand up a rescue operation—Operation Gaza Rescue—to get that massive humanitarian aid into Gaza, to deliver the food, the water, the medical supplies.

It is time to make sure that every one of the 13 remaining hospitals—13 out of 36—has all the medicines and medical supplies it needs. We can do that through immediate and sustained helicopter deliveries. We can do that with direct deconfliction with the Israelis because they are not going to shoot down American helicopters delivering aid.

How do we know that deconfliction can work in that setting? Because it has already been done. Jordan has been delivering on repeated occasions assistance through airdrop deliveries. If Jordan can do this, the United States, with our massive capabilities, can do so.

It is time not just to ensure that every hospital has everything it needs but to ensure there is enough food and water to alleviate the massive hunger and the massive challenge of citizens unable to currently get clean water. We know that dirty water will produce disease. We know that sustained undernutrition or malnutrition—starvation—will produce significant challenges, illness. The combination is terrible, even before you add in the massive injuries from the bombing and the shelling. We can get that food and we can get that water into Gaza. It is a 40-mile coastline. We have huge assets that can deliver food and water from sea to shore. It is our responsibility to do so.

We are at this point—because of our close relationship and partnership with Israel, we, the United States, are complicit in the starvation, the hunger, the thirst, the illness, the brokenness, the suffering of the Gazan people. So I direct my comments to President Biden and his top team: You all worked very hard to find a path through Israel to get the aid in, and it has failed. I commend you for trying. But now it is our responsibility, our moral responsibility, to no longer be complicit in this humanitarian catastrophe. We must act and act now.

I encourage President Biden and his team: Meet today. Send the orders to ships today to get offshore. Launch the plans today to be able to provide those medical supplies to those 13 hospitals. Prepare those plans now for sea-to-shore delivery of food and water.

Communicate to Israel that we are going to do this because we will not be complicit in this humanitarian catastrophe that is ongoing; that we value the life of every civilian, every Palestinian civilian, we value the life of every Palestinian woman and child, and we, the United States, are going to act.

President Biden, I encourage you not to only meet with your team to plan this but to announce it to the American people. The American people are

deeply concerned about our close association with this humanitarian disaster. The world is very concerned about our close association and complicity in this humanitarian disaster. So speak to us, the American people, that Team Biden will act not in a week, not in a month, not when the war ends—but now. There is no time to waste, and this is a moral imperative.

It is the United States that so often says to the rest of the world: What has gone on here, and why have you allowed it to happen?

This is an unacceptable humanitarian catastrophe, and you must address it. That is the United States talking to the world, but now we have a humanitarian catastrophe that is in our hands, our responsibility, and we have to carry that responsibility squarely, directly, and act immediately and boldly. American complicity in the suffering of the Palestinians living in Gaza must end.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it is a very good thing that today the Senate cleared the first procedural hurdle to pass the national security supplemental.

For the information of Senators, the Senate will convene tomorrow at 12 noon to resume postcloture debate on the motion to proceed. If no agreement is reached, the Senate will vote on the motion to proceed at approximately 7 p.m. tomorrow evening.

As I said this morning, we still hope to reach an agreement with our Republican colleagues on amendments. Democrats have always been clear that we support having a fair and reasonable amendment process. Nevertheless, the Senate will keep working on this bill until the job is done.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, on a few more procedural matters, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 482, Jeffrey Prescott, of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture, with the rank of Ambassador; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of