

will actually approach this seriously instead of the flippant way it has been approached so far. We have to get this done. I commend us to get it done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, a few weeks ago, there was a lot of media attention on the caravan from Central America coming up through Mexico and making its way to the United States intending to declare asylum or to cross the border illegally. This is kind of interesting because people don't realize that we have within our laws that if a person declares asylum, it has to be acted upon as a matter of routine. We have heard all about people declaring asylum. They get a court date, and then they are not showing up for court. We know that happens—it is really a no-brainer—but nonetheless it has been going on and on and on.

In fact, the law prescribes that anyone coming to this country to seek asylum will be coming into the country through other countries, and they must first go to whatever country they go through before coming to the United States. In other words, someone coming from Central America, if they are coming through Mexico, should not go to the United States but to Mexico to seek asylum.

Now, asylum is not very well-defined. Anyone can come in and say: My life is in danger, and therefore I need the opportunity to come across the border into the United States. We all know what happens. Back in my real life, I spent some 20 years on the border. I was a builder-developer, and I know how the border works. I know the border agents. I have spent time down there. They wonder why we don't have a solution.

Anyway, we are told that migrants are escaping violence and persecution, but once they get to this country and someone asks, they say, no, in reality, they are seeking the economic opportunities that we taxpayers are paying for in the United States or they maybe want to reunite with their families. I think anyone within earshot right now would want to do the same thing for their families. So this has been going on for a long time, and while this caravan has rightfully garnered a lot of attention, it is really part of a much larger problem.

In fiscal year 2018 alone, more than 396,000 people were caught illegally crossing our southern border by Customs and Border Protection agents—an average of more than 7,500 a week.

They come because they know our border is porous and, if caught, they can always game our legal system and stay. They have been doing it now for years. While the problems are not new, the caravan brings a renewed spotlight to our vulnerabilities. We have to secure our borders, and we have to tackle the policies that encourage abuse of our immigration system.

After decades of seeing our border breached over and over again, voters responded very actively to President Trump when he was pledging to address our immigration crisis by building a wall. Here is the thing: Walls work. We know they work. We are about the only one who doesn't have walls. We are talking about walls that have been in discussion, proposed by this President and proposed by many of us in this body. DHS estimates a wall will deter 90 percent of illegal crossers. So walls do work. We know they work. Nearly 2,000 miles—the figure they have been using and I believe is pretty accurate—will take an estimated \$25 billion to fully secure our southern border.

I have heard my colleagues describe how we couldn't pay for a wall and, after all, we don't need to grow our deficit or use tax dollars to pay for it. That is why I am introducing the Wall Act of 2018, to build the wall and secure our border. We have talked this over and determined this will work. It is very simple. It provides \$25 billion—actually, more than that—for a wall by eliminating Federal benefits going to illegal immigrants.

We have a lot of liberals in both bodies of Congress who are going to say we can't do that. Liberals are always great about giving things away, and I think of Margaret Thatcher when I think about this: Socialism is a wonderful thing, until we run out of other people's money to give away. That is exactly what is happening right now.

Under current law, noncitizens who are not allowed to work are able to receive the earned-income tax credit—a refundable tax credit. They are eligible because applicants do not need to provide work-authorized Social Security numbers. Very simply, prior to 2003, the Social Security Administration routinely issued Social Security numbers to anyone needing a driver's license or a bank account. We have stopped that now, but those numbers still exist and allow for illegal immigrants to obtain Social Security numbers and receive this refundable tax credit and possibly other Federal benefits.

More significantly, the bill we are introducing would require the tax filers themselves to provide a work-authorized Social Security number to receive the refundable child tax credit. Now, under the law, filers only have to provide a Social Security number for a dependent they are claiming to receive a tax credit and a refundable portion. That is under the current law. An illegal parent with legal dependents at the end of a tax year could get a child tax

credit check for as much as \$1,400 per child, and that check comes from Uncle Sam. By closing these loopholes, we can save billions of dollars a year. We can also save even more taxpayer dollars by ensuring the integrity of other Federal welfare programs like SNAP and TANF. By mandating that all States use the E-Verify system, we can add an additional layer of integrity to ensure the legal work-eligible status of benefit recipients.

These are commonsense reforms. You have to ask the question, Why would we not do this? Only those legally in this country and eligible for work should be receiving Federal benefits that are intended to get people out of poverty and get them back to work. This is something that actually would work, and they are all common sense. It is one of the things that falls into the category of "why don't we do it." We have an opportunity to go ahead and do it now. Only those who are legally in this country and eligible for work should be receiving Federal benefits intended to get people out of poverty and into jobs.

Finally, in this bill is actually an additional amount that is out there that we should be taking advantage of. This bill will increase the minimum penalty for every illegal border crossing. Over the past 5 years, there has been an average of 500,000 illegal border crossings each year. By raising the minimum penalty on illegal border crossings, the Federal Government would raise revenue by as much as \$15 billion over a 10-year period. All of this more than pays for a wall.

Our President rightfully demanded a wall not be paid for with hard-working Americans' tax dollars, and my bill fulfills that commitment by not altering a single earned benefit for any American citizen or lawful immigrant.

I was having a news conference last week on this bill. Someone said: Well, the President has said Mexico should pay for it. In a way, this fulfills that commitment, too, because it is being paid for by benefits that would otherwise go to illegals who would not be getting the benefits. So it is the best of both worlds, and it is a solution to the problem. It is what American families deserve, but even more, it is what the hard-working, lawful men and women who are abiding by our immigration process deserve.

So that is the bill we are going to be introducing and we will be hearing a lot about. One thing people say has not been resolved is, how do you come up with \$25 billion for a wall? It is easy. It can be done. The figures match. It is the right thing to do for our lawful Americans.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF MICHELLE BOWMAN

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, this week this body began rubberstamping yet another Trump nominee who will help unravel Wall Street reform and who will give big banks free rein again. This White House increasingly looks like a retreat for Wall Street executives.

Michelle Bowman is about to become a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve. We should be aware that the only reason this slot is open is because of the obstruction of President Obama's Federal Reserve nominees in the last Congress. President Trump will have already nominated six of the seven Board slots. There are other nominees we could be voting on who would enjoy more broad bipartisan support and have a direct impact on saving and creating American jobs—people such as the four bipartisan nominees to the Export-Import Bank, blocked by two or three Members of the Senate doing the bidding of the White House, costing us thousands.

This is coming from business interests, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Wall Street Journal, and places like that. This is costing us thousands of good-paying manufacturing jobs because of an ideological hangup on this side, because of complicity in the majority leader's office, and because somebody at the White House has a problem with the Export-Import Bank. Nobody can understand what it is.

These nominees have strong bipartisan support. Instead of voting on that to create jobs immediately—immediately in my State, we are voting on someone who will make it easier for the Fed to roll back and water down more consumer protections.

Ms. Bowman failed during a hearing to provide the committee any insight on her views on monetary policy, regulation, and financial instability—in other words, all of the issues that affect our economy that she will make decisions on.

We have seen what is happening at the Fed. We have heard their plans for rolling back rule after rule after rule. Vice Chair Quarles came to our committee. Last week he said the Fed will weaken stress tests and living wills for the largest banks.

We see what is happening in other ways. The Fed put out its proposal to implement the bank giveaway bill enacted earlier this year. It rolls back rules on banks with over \$250 billion in assets. But do you know what else it does? Get this. The Fed announced plans to weaken rules for foreign megabanks. These are banks such as Santander, Deutsche Bank, and UBS. These are foreign banks. Think about "Make America great again." These

are foreign banks, big foreign banks—foreign banks that are huge into the hundreds of billions of dollars in assets internationally and a good size in this country. They have broken Federal law time and time and time again.

What does the White House do? What does the majority leader do? He says it is OK to give these foreign banks a break, and then we have to be preached to about making America great? How does that make any sense that the President of the United States sends these nominees up here who come out of this swamp at the White House? These nominees, pure and simple, look like a retreat of Wall Street executives at the White House—excuse me, a retreat of foreign bank CEOs at the White House. They come up here, and we weaken the rules that protect Americans.

We side with foreign banks that have broken the law instead of siding with American consumers. Something is very, very wrong on that.

I worry for our country. I worry for our economy. I know what happened. There may be collective amnesia on the Senate Banking Committee, but I remember what happened. The ZIP Code my wife and I live in had more foreclosures in 2007 than any ZIP Code in the United States of America.

I see the residue from those foreclosures. I know people lost their homes. I know people lost their savings. I know people lost their jobs. I see what those homes look like. I know they have high levels of lead-based paint. Does anybody at the Fed care about that? No, they want more deregulation. They want to help the foreign banks at the expense of people in my neighborhood. It is bad economics. It is morally outrageous.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 544.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stephen Alexander Vaden, of Tennessee, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Stephen Alexander Vaden, of Tennessee, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, John Hoeven, David Perdue, Tim Scott, John Cornyn, Roy Blunt, Cory Gardner, Tom Cotton, Jerry Moran, John Barrasso, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 939.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Karen Dunn Kelley, of Pennsylvania, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Karen Dunn Kelley, of Pennsylvania, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, John Hoeven, David Perdue, Tim Scott, John Cornyn, Roy Blunt, Cory Gardner, Tom Cotton, Jerry Moran, John Barrasso, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 626.