

Paul	Scott (SC)	Vance
Rubio	Sullivan	Wicker
Scott (FL)	Tuberville	

NOT VOTING—7

Barrasso	Hagerty	Schmitt
Feinstein	McConnell	
Fetterman	Murkowski	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1082

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I wish we were not here facing these issues yet again. In recent days, our Nation has seen yet another horrific school shooting. In September of last year, I stood on the Senate floor and tried to pass legislation to stop these school shootings. There have been too damn many. I have been there on the ground at too damn many of them.

Sante Fe High School in Texas, about 45 minutes away from my house—the morning of that shooting, I got the call within minutes of the shooting. I was down on campus just over an hour after it occurred. I saw the tragedy, the tears, the grieving parents, the children in shock.

Uvalde, I was there shortly after that shooting as well—the horror, the mayhem.

Too many of our children have been murdered by deranged lunatics.

Mr. President, when you and I were kids, this wasn't a thing. When you went to school, when I went to school, there wasn't a single day that I woke up going to school worried that some idiot, some sociopath, was going to shoot up the school. You might worry about getting punched at recess, but this didn't happen 30, 40, 50 years ago. Now it is a brutal reality over and over again.

There are lots of causes that we could debate for a long time: causes in our culture; causes of disconnected, emotionally disturbed young men who want to become famous. I think Columbine may have started this whole tragic cycle where an angry young person seeks to lash out by murdering little kids.

With respect to becoming famous, one rule I try to follow is that I will never say the names of these mass murderers. If they want to be well-known, I hope everyone in elected office—I would like everyone in the news media to follow that rule as well. They deserve to be forgotten in utter obscurity.

But we also have an obligation to stop this. Every time there is a mass murder, there is a pattern that plays out. No. 1, there is an expression of

grief, of love for the community. There are millions of us who lift the community up in prayer. Inevitably, that produces a response from the political left where they scream in unison: Thoughts and prayers aren't enough.

I will tell you, Mr. President, I believe in the power of prayer, and I will continue praying for communities that are hurting, whether from a natural disaster or a horrific crime or anything else. But I agree with the sentiment "thoughts and prayers are not enough." That is exactly right. We need action.

And what is so infuriating is, every time there is a mass shooting, Democrats in this Chamber stand up, and they don't actually want to do something to stop the murderers. Instead, they want another gun control bill to disarm law-abiding citizens that won't actually stop the murders, that won't actually protect our kids.

In September of last year, I introduced legislation that would be the most far-reaching school safety legislation ever enacted. It would double the number of police officers on campuses, devoting \$15 billion to putting armed police officers on campus to protect our kids, the single most important step we can do. It would also devote \$10 billion for mental health professionals on campuses because so many of these troubled murderers had warning signs leaping off the page. It also devotes \$2.56 billion for physical security at schools to help enhance the security of schools.

When I introduced this bill, it first came up as an amendment on the much-touted bipartisan gun control bill last year that did nothing to stop violent crime but satisfied the leftwing donors of the Democratic Party. When my amendment was voted on, on the Senate floor, I am sorry to say every single Democrat in this Chamber voted no—all of them, every one.

Afterwards, I went to this floor, I stood on this floor, and I tried to pass the bill by unanimous consent. And when that happened, the Senator from Connecticut stood up and objected.

Now, I have to say, leading up to that unanimous consent request, numerous reporters had asked me in the hallway: Why are the Democrats objecting to this?

And I was forced to say "I do not know," because, to date, they have not articulated any reason. They have not explained why they oppose more police officers in schools. They have not explained why they oppose more mental health counselors in schools. They have not explained why they oppose more funding for enhanced physical security in schools.

So I was quite interested to hear the Senator from Connecticut give his reasons. I was disappointed that day. The Senator from Connecticut stood up and uttered two words: "I object." Then he sat down. That was it. His answer was just no.

Mr. President, I stood on this floor then, and I said something that—I said:

God forbid there is going to be another school shooting—I pray to God there isn't—but we are going to find a day when another one of these happens, another deranged lunatic commits this kind of mass murder. And if there is not a police officer at the front door, I said, remember this moment, remember this moment. Because if the Senator from Connecticut had not stood up and said "I object," this bill would have passed the Senate unanimously.

If this bill had passed into law, \$15 billion to double the number of police officers on campus—and that was available at public schools, at private schools, at parochial schools—what that would have meant is that there is a very real possibility an armed police officer would have been at the front door of the Covenant School in Nashville.

As we look at what happened, every one of us—every one of us—who is a parent or a grandparent is beyond horrified at what sort of deranged person murders little children, but we also know that that shooter came to the front door and shot the front door open. If this bill had passed, funding for school security, that front door could have been made more secure so the shooter couldn't have blasted in.

But even more importantly, what many of us have watched in the body cam footage is horrific. It is deeply disturbing. But, I will tell you, it is also awe-inspiring. You saw the Nashville police officers arrive on campus about 15 minutes after the shooting began. They enter the campus. They are scared. They don't know what is going on, but they are looking for the shooter. They are wearing bulletproof vests. They are searching for the shooter. They are going up the stairs, and they hear the sound of gunshots. The police officers do what police officers should do: They head toward the shots. They risk their lives. And they encounter the shooter and shoot the shooter dead.

The heroism of those officers saved lives that day. If this bill had passed, those officers might not have been 15 minutes away; they might have been standing at the front door. The purpose of this bill was to have those officers at the front door so that when the deranged shooter showed up and tried to shoot in the door, the officers could stop the shooter right there and then, which would have meant that not a single child needed to die.

I told this body that if we didn't act, the consequences would be horrific. Yet the sad reality—I do not understand why our Democrat colleagues in this body do not support having police officers keep our kids safe; why, when it comes to this issue, the only thing that interests them is disarming the people at home who pose no threat rather than protecting our kids.

As I said, I wish I wasn't back here today. I wish this had passed last year. I wish Democrats were willing to work together on really solving this problem. But, sadly, this pattern replays over and over again.

I have two different bills that I am going to put before this body, but I am going to start with the first one, the one I have just described—\$15 billion for police officers to double the number of police officers on campus to protect our kids.

You know, when you go to the bank and you deposit money in the bank, there are armed police officers in the bank. Why? Because we want to protect the money we save. Why on Earth do we protect a stupid deposit more than our children? If there are parents who don't want police officers protecting their kids, I don't know those parents.

We have the opportunity right now to double the police officers on campus and keep kids safe. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1082, which is at the desk; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Reserving the right to object, as I understand, the Senator has two unanimous consent requests. I will object to both, and I will make my comments when the Senator makes his second unanimous consent request.

For now, on this first objection on this first request, so as to save time, I will wait for my comments on the second and simply object to this one.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. So history has repeated. We still don't have an explanation as to why police officers on campus is not a good thing. Maybe we will get it. We were told we will get a speech, so we will see what that is. That is what happened last time.

All right. The Democrats don't like that.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1081

Let me give you a simpler bill—a simpler bill that would spend unused COVID education funds. There is over \$100 billion in funds that Congress has appropriated to the schools. Under the restrictions put in place from the Democrats, that money cannot be used for school safety. That money cannot be used to make our kids safer.

In September, I introduced this bill as well. It is a one-page bill. It is a very simple bill. It says schools can choose to use that money to enhance school safety. It says if a school wants to use some of that money to hire a police officer, the school can do so. It says if the school wants to use some of that money to enhance their physical security, the school can do so. It gives flexibility to the schools.

In September when I attempted to pass this, I asked: Why would anyone possibly oppose this?

I don't know how a Democratic Senator goes home to your State—I don't

know how you go home to Connecticut or New Jersey or Michigan and look in the eyes of a superintendent, look in the eyes of a teacher, and say: No, I will not let you spend the money on school security. It doesn't matter if your kids are afraid. It doesn't matter if your teachers are afraid. We the Democrats in Congress know better than you, and you may not spend a dollar of this on school security.

Let me be clear. This would have passed in September except for two magic words uttered by the Senator from Connecticut: "I object."

Now, last time, he went on a discourse about how this was not the full legislative process, that we hadn't negotiated with him, and, goodness, that must be comfort to the parents who are scared at home, that we hadn't sat there in a detailed negotiation.

Every year, this body passes bill after bill after bill by unanimous consent. Every Senator here knows how to do that.

The reason it doesn't go through the committee process, by the way, is because the Democrats control the committees, and they don't want to debate this.

So if you hear a bunch of process arguments from the Senator from Connecticut—"Gosh"—what he said last time—"this isn't real," it is only not real because the Democrats are objecting. That is what makes it not real, because they are blocking it. But to say it is not passing because I am objecting is like the arsonist complaining there is a fire.

I ask you in all seriousness, Mr. President, how do you explain to a parent back home, how do you explain to a superintendent, how do you explain to a teacher that there is something wrong with your having the ability to spend this money on school safety? I don't know how to articulate that. I am looking forward to hearing it. We will see if we do.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1081, which is at the desk; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, the Senator is right—I have very little interest in engaging on the merits of these proposals in a dialogue on the floor of the Senate because they are not serious attempts to make our kids safer.

These unanimous consent requests that Senator CRUZ makes—they are going to get a lot of clicks online. The confrontation that he is looking for will probably lead to a bunch of cable news appearances being booked, but it is not going to save any kids' lives.

The Senator knows this is not how the Senate works. This isn't an autoc-

racy. It is not a dictatorship. You don't come down here and introduce a piece of legislation and 2 minutes later demand that the entirety of the Senate agree to it without any debate, any negotiation.

The Senator says these are the same bills he introduced last year, but as far as I can tell, he introduced the bills he is making unanimous consent requests on minutes ago. They are not even fully formed pieces of legislation. This thing is so ham-handed—one of the bills—that there are literally brackets and question marks in the text. The legislative drafters—at least in the version I see—haven't made decisions on when the money is being spent.

The Senator says there is this pattern that plays out after these shootings in which Democrats make demands about taking people's guns away but aren't serious about making our kids safer. Is that how it played out after the shooting in Uvalde? Is that what happened last summer? No, that is not what happened. What happened last summer after the shooting in the Senator's State is that serious Members of this body—Members of this body who are more interested in legislating than enacting political theater—sat down together and negotiated a bill to save children's lives. Did it solve all of the problems in this country? Did it guarantee every child's safety? No, it did not. But let's be clear. Senator CRUZ never expressed one iota of interest in being part of those negotiations. Other Republican Senators did.

While I understand he objects to the gun provisions in that bill, guess what—that bill also put \$15 billion into school safety, into mental health, into hardening our schools, into community anti-gun-violence programs.

I can't speak about the other Members of the group who authored that bill, but I never got a single phone call from Senator CRUZ during the month of negotiations suggesting that we add the language he is talking about to that proposal. Last summer, there were serious legislators who came to this floor to enact legislation, to set aside our differences and pass legislation that makes our kids safe—willing to make compromise. Senator CRUZ didn't even sniff that room.

He references the unanimous consent requests he made later last year that I objected to. I think I suggested then, as I suggest now, that the result of that unanimous consent request was to create political theater and book cable news hits. The result was not going to be a piece of legislation being enacted. I figured that if I was wrong about that, if the Senator's purpose was to pass a piece of legislation, that the result of my objection would have been to get outreach from the Senator's office, to try to figure out a way forward, to try to find a compromise. And I waited. And I waited. And I waited. And I waited. But not once did Senator CRUZ reach out and say, "Let's work together to get this

done," which confirmed my suspicions that these unanimous consent requests are not about passing legislation; they are just about creating conflict for the sake of conflict.

This legislation was introduced minutes ago, so I am not able to debate the merits of it on the floor of the Senate right now. It appears to make a whole bunch of changes to the not-for-profit Security Grant Program, which the Presiding Officer knows very well, changes that have little to do with school safety. It seems there are a bunch of processes changes to the not-for-profit security grant program. That is probably something worth having a conversation with the chairman of the committee about before we pass it by unanimous consent.

It makes broad structural changes to title IV, which is a very important program to schools. They use that money for school security, but they also use that money for a host of other important programs. That is probably worth having a conversation with the members of the Education Committee about.

A very quick look at this bill suggests it likely opens up the use of those funds to arming teachers in our school. I think that is a terrible idea.

This is all to say that this isn't how the process works. You don't drop a piece of legislation on the floor of the Senate and 2 minutes later demand that the whole Senate pass it. You do that if your intent is to create conflict for the purposes of publicity. I don't know what the Senator's intentions are, but if that was your intention, this is what you would do.

If you were interested in actually passing something, you would have dialed up the authors of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act and asked to be part of that negotiation. You would have reached out to my office after the objection last year and said: What is your objection? Let's sit down and do something together.

That is how legislation gets passed in this place. I know because I have done it on this topic.

I am not saying the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act solved the problem. I know we have more work to do. I know it because I spend time with those same families every single week. I know it because I live in a dangerous neighborhood in South Hartford. I talk to those kids who have to fear for their life when they go to school. That is why my purpose for being in the Senate is to work like hell across the aisle, through compromise, not by coming down here, dropping a bill on the floor and then immediately demanding that the entire Senate vote for it. That is not how we save kids' lives—compromising, working toward compromise, behind the scenes, not always in front of the cameras.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. As the Senator from Connecticut walks away because he is unwilling to debate the topic, I will note several things he said not a word about.

But let's focus on—he said: Oh, this bill is very hard to figure out; it is very complicated. Well, the second bill, the one he just objected to, is all of one-page long. I am going to read you the statutory text. The Senator from New Jersey is here. He is a learned Senator. It says:

The unobligated balance of funds made available in the COVID funding—

I won't read the actual citation, but the COVID funding:

The unobligated balance of funds made available . . . shall be made available to local educational agencies to keep elementary schools and secondary schools served by such agencies physically secure.

That is the entirety of the bill. You can use the \$100 billion that Congress has appropriated to make schools safer.

Now, not a word from the Senator from Connecticut addressed that bill. He just said: "I object." And as for his caterwauling that the first bill—gosh, he can't figure out what is in it; you don't do it this way. I will point out the first time I introduced it, it was Cruz-Barrasso, and every Senator voted on it because I introduced it as an amendment to the bill the Senator from Connecticut introduced.

Mind you, in the wake of Uvalde, with great fanfare, the Senator from Connecticut passed a meaningless gun control bill that did nothing to prevent what happened in Nashville. That is not going to prevent the next mass murder. Why? Because it doesn't target criminals. It doesn't go after the bad guys. It doesn't put police officers in a position to protect our kids. I find some rich irony that the Senator from Connecticut suggested: Gosh, the purpose of this is to get on cable news. I don't know if the Senator from Connecticut has difficulty getting on the news, but I can assure you that I don't.

What I do know is this is about stopping these damn murders. The Senator from Connecticut suggests this is about conflict with him. I can assure him, very few people outside of Connecticut have any awareness of what he says. Why is that? Well, for one thing, when we did this last time, there were zero reporters in the Gallery; now there are two. The corporate media doesn't report on this. If you turn on cable news, they won't tell you that the reason there wasn't a police officer at the Covenant School is because every Democrat in the Senate voted against it. Corporate media won't tell you the reason the Covenant School couldn't spend these funds on hiring a police officer and hardening that front door so you couldn't shoot through it is because the Senator from Connecticut objected. He knows—he knows, to an absolute certainty, that a dishonest press corps will not tell anybody.

By the way, he made great fanfare of saying: Well, the legislative text has a

bracket. What he didn't tell you is his staff gave him an old version of the bill, not the one that is filed. And he was focused, in particular, on the one edit that was made, which was to change the fiscal year because we are now 1 year later, so it was to alter the date from the appropriate date last year to the appropriate date this year. That was the amendment.

He reported: Gosh, no one knows what is in this. You all voted on it. You know what he didn't say once? Why having police officers—more police officers in schools—is a bad thing. He didn't talk at all about \$10 billion for mental health program counselors.

I am tired of these games. I told you that he would give you process arguments and, oh, boy, did he. He said: Gosh, CRUZ didn't call me. I guess his feelings were hurt.

I have also done this a long time. I have seen the political posturing that too many Democrats do on this issue. The Senator from Connecticut suggests that this is a newfound interest. I served 11 years on the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. I have fought for 11 years. I have introduced legislation after legislation after legislation to lock up gun criminals. If you commit a crime with a gun, you should be prosecuted and go to jail. If you are a felon or fugitive or someone with serious mental illness and you try to illegally buy guns, you should be prosecuted and sent to jail, and, repeatedly, Democrats block those bills.

The sad reality of this body is, if you are a mom at home who wants to be able to protect your kids, the Democrats are really eager to disarm you. But if you are a gangbanger in Chicago, they are not interested in a gun task force to lock you up and take the murderers off the street.

Why is it an unreasonable question to ask what is wrong with having more police officers to protect our kids?

I want to show you how little interest the Democrats have. The Senator from Connecticut is gone. He gave his little speech and ran away. This is supposed to be the world's greatest deliberative body. But as long as the press doesn't do its job, the Senator from Connecticut can send out a fundraising email tonight to all the gun control groups saying: Guess what. We are coming after the Second Amendment. Please click here.

That is cold comfort to the parents who are scared at home right now, to the kids who are scared at home right now.

The solutions put forth by the Democrats in this body are not designed to stop crime; this bill is. You know, for a long time, in the weeks and months following Uvalde, there has been a talking point raised by the left on Twitter and echoed just moments ago by the Senator from Connecticut that says: Well, we don't want more police because the police don't stop these crimes, and they point to Uvalde. I will say, having been in Uvalde right after

that shooting, what the police officers did there was tragic. Hundreds of officers showed up at that school, and for an hour and 14 minutes, they did nothing. They didn't go in and take out the shooter. That was true even as shots rang out repeatedly. That was true even as little children were calling 9-1-1 begging for help. For over an hour, they didn't go in. I agree the conduct of law enforcement that day was inexplicable and indefensible.

I will say, when I went to Uvalde immediately after the shooting, senior law enforcement there in Uvalde sat in the room and lied to me and lied to JOHN CORNYN and lied to Greg Abbott, the Governor, about what happened. The story they described was utterly false, as would come out in the days to follow. One of the things they claimed that day was to say: Oh, an officer was there when the shooter arrived. That was not true.

You want to know why having an officer there matters? Watch the body cam footage. In Nashville, those heroic officers who heard the sounds of gunshots ran toward them, risking their lives. There are children who are, thank God, alive because of the heroism of those officers. Is it too much to ask how things would have been different if the officer could have been at the front door to begin with? They could have been, if not for Senate Democrats.

The Senator from Connecticut said, gosh, he hasn't had time to read this bill that he voted on before; that he has objected to before. But, you know, it really did make his head hurt to have to read this legislative language. I tell you what. We are ready to go on a 2-week recess. When we come back, we can do this again. Senator from Connecticut, take 2 weeks to read the bill. It is not complicated. And then I look forward to the Senator from Connecticut telling me why, on behalf of the Democratic Party, he thinks having police officers on school campuses is a bad idea.

By the way, I would note, even though it is just the Senator from Connecticut objecting, every Democrat in this body voted against this bill, and not a single Democrat has come to the floor to say they disagree with what the Senator from Connecticut is doing. When he stands up and does this objection, he is doing it on behalf of the whole Democratic Party. I will make an invitation to any one of you. If there is a Democratic Member in this body who actually believes that having police officers protecting our kids would be a good thing; that actually believes having mental health program counselors in our schools would be a good thing; that actually believes that providing funding to enhance physical security in schools would be a good thing, then come join me. I don't have a whole lot of optimism that is going to happen. But if it doesn't, this is all going to happen again.

The bill passed last fall. Nobody—nobody, nobody, nobody—thinks it is

going to do anything to stop mass murders. It wasn't designed to do that. It was designed to assuage gun control activists. If you want to stop mass murders, go after the murderers. If you want to stop mass murders, protect our kids.

We can do this. But to do it, we have to have someone from the Democratic Party willing to stand up and say: Let's actually get it done. Right now, today, the answer from Democrats is thoughts and prayers. I agree, thoughts and prayers are not enough. How about action? By the way, they do want action. They would be happy to confiscate all the law-abiding citizens' firearms, which doesn't work and wouldn't have kept anybody safe. How about action to keep our kids safe?

If the Democrats had that objective in September of 2022, this horrific murder in Nashville could have been prevented. It should have been prevented. And we have a responsibility to do everything we can to prevent the next one.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 185

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I am back again, seeking unanimous consent for the passage of my FREEBIRD Act.

Now, previously, my request for unanimous consent was met with an objection, an objection on the grounds that we are still in the midst of a public health emergency.

It was obviated. This unanimous consent request was objected to on the grounds that if we were going to do this, we should end the vaccine requirement for foreign travelers and the public health emergency at the same time, in the words of the objector, to make it clean.

Well, just last night, the Senate voted to terminate the COVID-19 pandemic national emergency order. That makes this as clean as it gets.

We have passed this now, and early this morning the White House announced that the President will be signing that measure—which had previously been passed by the House—into law. So that is happening now. That means that this is as clean as it gets. These things would go out at the same time with a bang—as well they should.

Now, that also means that there is no reason why we shouldn't end this particular restriction, the restriction on unvaccinated foreign travelers coming into the United States today.

Now, to those who might think that the Senate passed something last night that might somehow make it unnecessary to pass the FREEBIRD Act, make it unnecessary, separately, to enact legislation ending the foreign traveler vaccine requirement, they are mistaken.

And they are mistaken because those two legal documents—the proclamation issued by President Trump in 2020 declaring a national public health emergency and the October 2021 Execu-

tive order issued by President Biden putting in place the foreign traveler vaccine requirement—are separate things; neither depends on the other. And so the fact that the public health emergency Executive order is now on its way out the door, it will be no more in a matter of hours or days, makes no difference as to this one. This one remains in effect unless or until it is undone.

So to paraphrase the words of the Member of the Senate from the Democratic Party who objected to this just a few days ago, we can make it clean. Now, we should make it clean. In fact, we should make it clean by getting rid of this just as the other expires.

Now, look, so basic question, right, why does this matter so much? Why do we care about the fact that we are requiring foreign travelers to prove that they have been vaccinated prior to entering the United States? Well, we care, and we should care because it is levying a really heavy cost on State and local economies and on the American economy and on American relationships across this country.

Continuing to keep this mandate in place at a time when President Biden himself has declared that the pandemic is over and is prepared, apparently, to sign into law legislation passed by both Houses, officially ending the order declaring the existence of a public health emergency over COVID, it doesn't make any sense to continue this, especially at a time when this body has voted and the President's prepared to sign the other measure.

Look, those who oppose this really are unjustified in what they are trying to do, especially because they are ignoring the new risk calculus that is affording Americans a renewed sense of normalcy, much needed normalcy after 3 years of chaos.

This policy has separated loved ones for far too long. It is time to end the COVID-19 vaccination requirement for foreign travelers, prohibit using Federal funds to carry out the requirement, and prevent the CDC from ordering future COVID-19 vaccine mandates for foreign travelers. It is costing us too much.

In 2021 alone, Utah visitors, travelers coming into Utah, spent nearly \$11 billion, generating over 130,000 jobs and almost \$2 billion in State and local tax revenue.

Now, look, Utah's tourism sector experienced so much decline during COVID, particularly during 2020. By 2021, and even more so by today, it really has recovered quite well, except in one area. We still haven't recovered, much less made any gains, with regard to foreign visitors to the State of Utah.

Why? Well, I think a lot of it has to do with this unnecessary, draconian requirement, a requirement that the developed world no longer recognizes the need for. We are outliers in the free world for keeping this in place. But by lifting the vaccine mandate, Utah and

the United States stand to benefit tremendously from increased international travel.

Look, it is not just that it is costing us tourism. It is costing us meaningful connections, connections that enrich and promote our shared humanity.

Right now, foreign travelers, including family members, including friends, business relations, and even international sports figures are being kept off of U.S. soil arbitrarily due to this draconian vaccine mandate.

Look, right now today, this very moment, we have the opportunity to reverse course. In fact, the House of Representatives has already passed this very bill ending the vaccine mandate, and it passed it with bipartisan support.

Today, we can restore our personal and business relationships, boost our tourism, not just in Utah but across America, and reengage in the competitive spirit that brings nations together.

It is time to end this mandate. It is time to join the rest of the developed and the free world. It is time to free the bird and to pass the FREEBIRD Act.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 14, H.R. 185; further, that the Lee substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill as amended be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BOOKER. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I am here on behalf of Senator SANDERS, who was pulled away from the floor on an important matter, and he asked me to object on this matter. He gave me some documentation and some points. I don't want to burden the Senate with reading everything I was given, but I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the RECORD the objection on behalf of Senator SANDERS, if there is no objection to that, sir.

And I will say, I really feel so blessed to be a Senator, and one of the great blessings for me has been getting to know my colleagues. I know folks on both sides of the aisle and have sincere friendships and admiration.

Senator LEE is one of the people I respect in this body the most. He is learned. I have learned from him. My positions on issues have evolved by taking time to actually listen to my colleague from Utah speak.

I see both colleagues from Utah are here. I need to get MENENDEZ down to this floor and get some firepower here.

But I have also learned a lot about Utah itself, and when he talks about the reasons for getting rid of this, they are very compelling to me. The reality

is, tourism is one of our greatest industries. It creates jobs and opportunities.

When he talks about sports teams—I am not sure if it is because he is a sports fan—I think he understands that sports teams help promote economic growth and economic opportunity. And even more than that, what I have learned from my colleague and my friend is that Utah is a very special place.

I remember the Senator from Utah told me that I think one of the cities in Utah is one of the places in America that most foreign languages are spoken and mastered in all of our country, and I imagine because of the extensive foreign travel, there are real connections.

And he said something that resonated with my spirit, which is this idea that it is affecting families; that we might have blended families. Americans do often marry people from outside of our country.

All of those reasons I feel are very compelling. When I read Senator SANDERS' remarks here, though, I found them compelling as well. And one of the things I found most compelling—I don't know about the Senator from Utah, but I actually have a science degree, a political science degree, so I tend to rely on health professionals.

And then Senator SANDERS' remarks, all of which I will put in the RECORD, talk to the point about the fact that people are still dying in the United States from COVID, but they also point out that COVID didn't originate here.

We know it came from another country. We know that a zoonotic disease spread from wet markets in other countries into human beings. It then traveled to our Nation, most likely, and spread to us. We know that variants are still happening. Many of them can come from outside of our country, and there are many health professionals who believe that doing the right thing, ensuring people are vaccinated, may help us to stop a future variant.

Now, again, there are reasonable objections on the other side on this, and my hope is that perhaps we as a body can come together and find a just way forward.

We are, indeed, a body where a lot more happens in a bipartisan way than I think most of the public understands.

And I know from my experience of 9 years in the Senate that a lot of the bipartisan legislation I respect most, Senator LEE, especially on our Judiciary Committee, has been involved in those.

So I, on behalf of Senator SANDERS, am objecting because of his reasons, but I do hope to continue my personal conversations with Senator LEE on that.

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

H.R. 185 would terminate the current requirement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for proof of COVID-19 vaccination for foreign travelers

entering the U.S. The requirement was first imposed in October 2021, and renewed in April 2022 and specifically requires that incoming travelers are "fully vaccinated" against COVID, which means they've received the primary series of the COVID vaccine.

VOTE RECOMMENDATION: OPPOSE H.R. 185

1. Senator Lee's bill proposes to overturn the current COVID-19 vaccination requirements for foreign travelers entering the United States by air.

2. COVID vaccines are one of the most important tools we have to protect against the pandemic.

3. While I know many people want the COVID pandemic to be over—Americans are still getting sick and dying from this illness every day.

4. This bill not only undermines the recommendations from our public health officials—it further harms public confidence in our public health system.

5. It is irresponsible to take away tools from the Administration that they might need in the future to protect against COVID.

6. I object.

Mr. BOOKER. So, officially, I object. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. If I can respond very quickly because I know the floor is backed up, and I know we want to get back on schedule.

First of all, I really appreciate the kind remarks from the Senator from New Jersey. He is a dear friend. I am a former resident of his State, and I first heard his name when I lived there about 25 years ago.

I have always enjoyed working with him, and I appreciate the dignified manner in which he responded to this request today. He drew the short stick, and you have got a job to do. I get it.

I do look forward to working with you on this because I suspect you and I could get to the point where we agree on this. I would love nothing more than to add you as a cosponsor, but the bottom line is, I haven't reviewed what Senator SANDERS has submitted through Senator BOOKER, but I look forward to doing that.

I surmise, based on the summary, that these are relying on certain experts, some of the same experts who have given some phenomenally bad advice, much of which turned out to be wrong; the same experts who told us it didn't leak from a lab; the same experts who told us that it wouldn't spread among the vaccinated; the same experts who have told us that we should have to mask 2-year-old children when getting on a plane; that there would be no adverse consequences from sending children to school during COVID and that it was absolutely necessary and apparent to do so—some of the same experts who tell us to vaccinate young children, sometimes infants, with this particular vaccine.

So I have great reluctance to defer to those same experts, when especially—especially considering the fact that even though some of those very same experts are telling us not to end the public health emergency, we have now

done so, and President Biden is going to sign that into law.

Let's end the madness of deference to experts who have been proven time and time again to be wrong.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed 10 minutes before our vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, yes, the vote is at 1:45.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Romney	Smith	Wanrock
Rosen	Stabenow	Warren
Rounds	Tester	Welch
Schatz	Thune	Whitehouse
Schumer	Tillis	Wicker
Shaheen	Van Hollen	Wyden
Sinema	Warner	Young

NAYS—27

Blackburn	Daines	Mullin
Braun	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Budd	Johnson	Rubio
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Vance

NOT VOTING—10

Barrasso	Hagerty	Sanders
Cramer	McConnell	Schmitt
Feinstein	Moran	
Fetterman	Murkowski	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The senior Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, earlier this week, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Under Secretary Mayorkas's leadership over these last 2 years, we have seen more than 4.8 million migrants encountered at the southern border. We have seen deadly drugs pouring into our country, killing more than 108,000 Americans in a single year. There is no question but that the transnational criminal organizations, known as the cartels, are fueling the chaos and the destruction.

When Attorney General Merrick Garland testified before the Judiciary Committee just a few weeks earlier, I brought up the role that the cartels were playing in this ongoing crisis. I asked the Attorney General if he was familiar with the business model of the cartels: Flood the border with migrants, overwhelm law enforcement, and then allow the movement of the illegal drugs across the border and into the interior of the United States.

Attorney General Garland said, yes, he was aware—not only that, he highlighted actions that he had taken at the Department of Justice to crack down on these operations.

Earlier this week, when I posed the same question to Secretary Mayorkas—I asked if he was familiar with this tried-and-true strategy of the cartels, and he was clueless. He said: I am not aware of any such strategy.

I don't know how that could possibly be true. This is a well-known tactic that has been used throughout Secretary Mayorkas's tenure. One of the

most notable examples was in 2021 when the small town of Del Rio, TX, all of a sudden was flooded with 15,000 migrants from Haiti. Thirty-five thousand people live in that small town, and they were overwhelmed by the huge volume of people from—I know it is hard to imagine but from Haiti.

To state the obvious, the Del Rio Border Patrol Sector doesn't have the capacity to process or care for that many individuals at one time. In an attempt to help, the administration moved agents from other checkpoints to the sector where the surge was happening. But, after all, that is exactly what the cartels had hoped for. As there was a surge of agents to Del Rio, that left other portions of the border unprotected.

Administration officials later told congressional staff that this massive surge of migrants was a coordinated effort by the cartels. They directed Haitian migrants to a single location so that other areas would be left uncovered and clear a path for their illicit trade.

Officials from the Biden administration admitted that this surge was coordinated by the cartels, but yet the Secretary of Homeland Security is unaware? How could that possibly be? Secretary Mayorkas is either trying to deceive the Senate or he is completely unaware of the reality on the ground. I think both of those are fireable offenses. Either you are lying or you are completely oblivious to the threat to public safety posed by the current crisis, which is singularly of the making of the Biden administration and their unwillingness to use the tools they have, the laws that are already on the books, in order to deal with this crisis, this humanitarian crisis and this public health crisis.

Every day, the United States is getting played, and criminal organizations whose illegal businesses are making them a lot of money are getting richer. These groups are what I like to call commodity-agnostic because they deal in any product or service that makes them money. They really don't care. They certainly don't care about the migrants, who are frequently abused and many of whom unfortunately are left to die on that long and dangerous journey from their home.

We are well aware of their drug trafficking operations, which bring all sorts of illegal drugs into the United States. Over the years, law enforcement has interdicted everything from marijuana to methamphetamine to cocaine and heroin, but recently, we have seen an alarming rise in fentanyl.

When I was in Mexico City just a couple of weeks ago visiting with the Drug Enforcement Administration, they said fentanyl is made from chemicals that are imported from China to Mexico, where the cartels simply mix them up and then put them through an industrial-size pill press and make them look like regular prescription drugs, although these are laced with

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Laura Taylor-Kale, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. (New Position)

VOTE ON TAYLOR-KALE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Taylor-Kale nomination?

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays, or whatever means yes and no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT).

The result was announced—yeas 63, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 82 Ex.]

YEAS—63

Baldwin	Duckworth	King
Bennet	Durbin	Klobuchar
Blumenthal	Ernst	Lujan
Booker	Fischer	Manchin
Boozman	Gillibrand	Markey
Brown	Graham	Menendez
Cantwell	Grassley	Merkley
Capito	Hassan	Murphy
Cardin	Heinrich	Murray
Carper	Hickenlooper	Ossoff
Casey	Hirono	Padilla
Collins	Hoeven	Peters
Coons	Kaine	Reed
Cortez Masto	Kelly	Ricketts