in constant fear of deportation. They are our neighbors, our teachers, our nurses, our grocery store workers, our childcare providers. They are the essential workers whom we have all thanked each and every day throughout this pandemic who live in constant fear that their lives will be upended and their families ripped apart at any moment, depending on the politics of the day in Washington.

The real crisis is that we have strayed so far from our founding principles as a Nation of immigrants and that we have strayed so far from the creed emblazoned on the very statue that we erected to welcome immigrants into New York Harbor saying:

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

So I am disappointed but, sadly, not surprised that this resolution is nothing more than a cynical attempt to perpetuate the semantic nonsense of the day. Our constituents didn't send us to the Senate or to Congress to identify problems. They sent us here to develop and enact solutions.

I am more than willing to sit down with my colleague here to try to come up with some solutions to address what is happening at the border—solutions that address the lack of resources and the broken processes left by the previous administration, solutions that recognize the fundamental humanity of these desperate children and families who simply want to live to see their next birthday, and solutions that stay true to the values of this Nation.

I have an amendment to the resolution at the desk to strike the text of the Inhofe resolution and to insert the following:

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that our outdated immigration laws and the lack of a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants who form the backbone of communities across the United States constitutes a crisis and that the United States Senate must take up immigration reform this year.

I ask that Senator INHOFE's request be modified as follows: that the Padilla substitute amendment at the desk to the resolution be considered and agreed to; that the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. INHOFE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. PADILLA. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I hope everyone heard this. I haven't met the Senator from California real well yet. I look forward to it. I look forward to serving with him, but I hope that everyone heard what is going on now: Just open the borders.

You know, people in other countries—I won't mention some of them because I don't want them to be put in an awkward position—they say: Why in the world don't we have stronger borders in the United States of America? And we don't.

Our previous President, I talked to him this morning. I talked to former President Trump this morning, and I talked about what is going on down there at the border. And the reason I am familiar with this—much more familiar than the Senator from California or anyone else—is that I worked down there for 30 years on that border, all the way from Brownsville, TX, to McAllen. I know the border people down there. I know the agents down there. And for them to tell me that they have been told not to talk to the media about what is going on—I hope everyone knows what is going on right now, today. This is going on.

You know, President Trump is all for people coming into America the legal way. He has made that very clear over and over again. He has spent time down on the border, both borders, making sure that we can have a legal—one of the most gratifying things in my job as a U.S. Senator, and I have been in these Chambers now since 1994—one of the most enjoyable things is to go to naturalization ceremonies. And you talk to these people who have come and worked to come across legally to our country. I defy you to find any one of these individuals who has come here legally and gone through this naturalization process—they know more about the history of this country than people on the street, than people who were born here and people who are serving here in the U.S. Senate. They know the language. They learn the language. They did it the hard way. How do you tell them: You have gone through all this in the process of becoming legal, but you didn't have to do that. You just march right in. They are inviting you in. They want you in.

Put it back up. Yes, that is what is going on right now. That is what is going on at the border. So I want everyone to know what is happening now.

We can be sympathetic to a lot of people, but the idea of saying that we had a President who was putting kids in cages, come on. Let's get real. We don't want to do that. We don't have to do that. We just want to make it very clear to the American people that we have borders, and we ought to be protecting these borders.

A lot of the people who come in, they aren't necessarily from Central America or from Mexico. These are—a lot of them are terrorists coming over. They are coming from the Middle East, coming from all over the world, coming into our porous borders.

Now, is that what people want? No, it is not. Overwhelmingly, they have rejected the idea of open borders, letting everyone come in.

Well, we are to going stay with this, and I am going to resubmit this very simple resolution, as follows:

It is the sense of the Senate that the current influx of migrants at the southern land border of the United States constitutes a crisis.

It is a crisis.

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.

Mr. MURPHY. 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. MURPHY. Mr. President, Republicans are going to be on the floor today, taking a sudden 100-percent sincere interest in immigration reform. They are going to propose that the Senate take up a handful of bills to address what they call a crisis created by President Biden on our southern border.

Forgive me for being blunt, but give me a break. Republicans suddenly care about the border because they don't want to talk about the real crisis that President Donald Trump created and that President Biden is fixing: the COVID crisis and our Nation's economic crisis. Republicans don't want to fix our broken immigration laws. They want to distract Americans from the real story right now, which is the implementation of the very popular American Rescue Plan.

There are $1,400 checks that are arriving in people's bank accounts right now. School budgets finally have enough resources to catch up on all of the lost learning for our kids; childhood poverty is about to be cut in half; more production of vaccines. That is the real story.

You know how I know the Republicans are less than sincere in this interest in immigration policy? First, because they controlled the Senate for 6 years and not once during the roughly 2,100 days that they were in charge did they try to honestly bring a comprehensive immigration reform proposal to the floor.

I checked. Two of the bills they are going to ask unanimous consent for today were brought up for show votes in the middle of the 2016 Presidential election as a means of helping Donald Trump's candidacy, but in neither instance was there actually any attempt to try to find common ground to actually pass something.

Go back even further. In 2013, when Democrats were in the Senate, that is when we actually did pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill. But it was Republicans who opposed it—not all, but all of the opposition came from Republicans—and it was the House Republican majority that refused to even consider the bill. That is where it died. So spare me this sudden concern for immigration policy.

But since Republicans are now newly concerned about what is happening on the border, it probably makes sense for us to level set the facts. The facts. So here are four of them.

The first is a pretty simple one. Republicans will tell you that Joe Biden created this crisis, that his policies are the reason why we have seen an increase in migration to the border. But here is the chart, and I want you to zero in on the end of it. As you can see, apprehensions at the border, which are a pretty decent indication of the number of people who are crossing without documentation, started going up in the middle of 2020 precipitously. All that is occurring now is a continuation of these increases. Apprehensions and crossings at the border didn't start increasing on Inauguration Day; they started increasing back in the middle and end of 2020. So you can't say that this was a creation of Joe Biden's policies if what we are witnessing now is a continuation of a trend that began at the end of last year. In fact, as you can see here, the 10-year high for apprehensions at the border happened right in the middle of the Trump administration—a time during which the President was crowing that his policies at the border were the toughest ever.

Here is the second fact. The border is not open, as Republicans falsely claim. Here is what is happening right now on our southern border. Since the pandemic began, the administration invoked something called title 42 that allows, temporarily, during a public health emergency, the Border Patrol to turn everyone back around and send them back into Mexico regardless of whether they have an asylum claim that is legitimate or not. Under law, that is a temporary authority that is only allowed to be used during a public health emergency, and President Trump was using that authority.

The problem was that for these kids who were showing up at the border, who had legitimate asylum claims, right, whose lives were in danger in the places they were coming from, when we turned them around and sent them back to the Mexican border, we were essentially leaving them to die. Their parents weren't there. The smugglers who brought them to the United States had already left.

This was a disastrous, inhumane, unconscionable policy, to turn these kids back around to the border and leave them to the smugglers, to the sex traffickers with no one to help. So the only change President Biden made was to say that these unaccompanied minors need to be protected; we need to process their asylum claims. But President Biden is still turning around, under title 42 authority, every single adult, every group of adults, and every family who comes to the border, under title 42 authority.

The border is not open. All that has changed is that the prior law that was applied before the pandemic began is being applied selectively to unaccompanied minors.

Let's be clear. The authority to expel everybody being applied now to everybody except for unaccompanied minors, that is a temporary authority—an authority that Donald Trump didn't even invoke until the pandemic began.

Third, it is not even clear that what is happening now is anything other than a natural increase in migration during the winter, combined with the buildup of demand from title 42 enforcement in 2020.

The Washington Post data analysts took a look at the recent data on border crossings year to year and month to month, and here is what they said:

> We looked at data from [the] U.S. Customs and Border Protection to see whether there's a ''crisis''—or even a ''surge,'' as many news outlets have characterized it. We analyzed monthly CBP data from 2012 to now and [we] found no crisis or surge that can be attributed to Biden administration policies. Rather, the current increase in apprehensions fits a predictable pattern of seasonal changes in undocumented immigration combined with a backlog of demand because of 2020's coronavirus border closure.

What they are essentially saying is that because of conditions on the ground in Central America and Mexico, you saw an increase in crossings and apprehensions in 2018 and 2019 that vanished only in 2020 because of title 42 authority that is now starting back up again.

Again, the data backs this up. This year, from January to February, there was a 28-percent increase in crossings. January to February 2019, there was a 31-percent increase. Go back to 2018; February to March, a 25-percent increase. For the last 3 years, outside of the pandemic environment, during the winter, you will see a routine 25- to 30-percent increase in presentations at the border. This is when people normally cross, during the relatively colder weather months of the winter.

Second, these numbers are really deceiving because these aren't unique individuals; this is just total number of apprehensions. So what is happening under title 42 is that adults are being immediately removed right back to Mexico, but then they are immediately attempting to recross. So many of these numbers look high because you have individuals who never got the chance to make an asylum claim who are crossing multiple times at the border.

The fourth fact is that there is little evidence that American policy at the border has much to do with migration rates. The evidence, the facts show that it is conditions on the ground in the origin nations that are what determine whether people pack up their homes and leave for America.

Again, this chart is a good indication of that fact, because Donald Trump would tell you that his policies were tougher than anybody's, but the 10-year high in crossings, apprehensions happened in the middle of Donald Trump's inhumane border policies. Why? Because during this time, conditions are abysmal. Violence is spiking in many places from which these migrants are coming.

Just as a matter of sort of further explanation, if we brought this chart back into the Bush administration, you would find that crossings were much higher, at a much higher rate during the Bush administration than at any time during the Obama administration.

People come to the United States because they are fleeing violence, they are fleeing economic desperation, not because of some message they get from the U.S. Government.

One study I was looking at the other day, a comprehensive study of rationales for crossings data on the times that people cross, says this:

> [T]ougher border controls have had remarkably little influence on the propensity to migrate illegally.

These are the facts. These are the facts. Republicans need to stop looking at immigration as a political opportunity. We need to start dealing with the truth.

The number of immigrants showing up at the border today is large, but the winter increase isn't bigger than either of the last two winters prior to the pandemic with respect to percentage increase. It didn't start when Joe Biden became President or because of Joe Biden's policies. The increase started last year, when Donald Trump was President.

To the extent that Republicans oppose President Biden's lifting of the title 42 removal proceedings for kids, what is your alternative? Do you support just dumping these kids, these 10- and 11-year-olds, on the other side of the border, scared and alone, and just leaving them to die or to be forced into the arms of drug cartels or traffickers in Northern Mexico? That is un-American, and I am glad my President chose to end that inhumane, temporary policy.

But even if President Biden continued title 42 authority for kids for a few more months, expedited removal can't last forever. The law doesn't allow it. So once again, pretty soon, every migrant is going to be able to have the chance to apply for asylum, as they should. And herein lies an opportunity. Let's work together to fix what is a legitimately broken system.

I will give an example. People should be able to apply for asylum in the United States. We built this Nation by allowing people to come here from very dangerous places. But the asylum process takes too long—years between when you present yourself at the border and when you get a final decision on whether you can stay in the United States. Let's fix that. It is within our ability as Members of Congress to fix that. The administration can't do it. They need resources. They need new law and new authorities.

Republicans and Democrats could choose to—instead of playing politics, instead of offering up motions today that are sure to lose, we could sit down and try to do something about it. But

for 6 years, Republicans had the opportunity to bring together a conversation around comprehensive immigration reform, and they didn't. Hopefully, we will have the opportunity to do that now.

Lastly, behind every single one of these individuals coming to the border is a story, is a real human being. Ask yourself, if your child were being recruited into vicious drug gangs with a high likelihood of serious harm or death, would you not take steps to keep your child safe? Would you not bring them to a place like America that was safer for that child?

I visited, on Friday, the southwest border. I was in El Paso with a group of bipartisan colleagues and Secretary Mayorkas, who is doing a good job, who is managing this emergency with skill. I met a little girl, about 13 years old, who was in one of these processing facilities waiting to be moved into the asylum process. She was truly scared. She was truly scared. She knew she was going to have a chance to reunite with her family in the United States, but these detention centers—they are better than they were in 2019, but they are no place for kids.

That little girl was coming from Guatemala, a place where there are certain neighborhoods that are more violent than any war zone in the Middle East, a place where murder rates eclipse anything we can even imagine in the United States.

So that little girl, she needs America to survive, but I would argue that America needs her more because without her and the thousands of other children arriving at our border, hungry for a better life, we are going to risk abandoning the entire original idea of this great, one-of-a-kind Nation, a Nation that opens its arms to those who are fleeing violence and desperation. It is not just our tradition; it is our definition as a country—more reason for those of us in the U.S. Senate to resist the temptation to play politics with these kids' lives and with the very complicated, nuanced, important issue of immigration and instead find ways to be truthful about what is happening at the border as a means to come together and do something about it.

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.

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

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

PPP EXTENSION ACT OF 2021

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to urge swift passage of the PPP Extension Act, which will extend the March 31 deadline for the Paycheck Protection Program 2 months, to May 31, and give the SBA an additional month, through June 30, to process any backlogged applications.

This Saturday, March 27, will be the 1-year date since the CARES Act was enacted. In that time, SBA has approved 8.2 million PPP loans worth more than $715 billion.

These loans have saved small businesses throughout our Nation. They would not be here today but for this program. It also saved the stress on our unemployment insurance system by keeping small business employees on the payroll. And as I am sure the Presiding Officer knows, for a small business, it is difficult to find a workforce and to keep a workforce, and the Paycheck Protection Program allowed small businesses to maintain their workforce so that when the pandemic is over, they are going to be ready for our growing economy.

The world feels a little different today than it did a year ago. The American people are finally beginning to see a light at the end of the tunnel. More than 124 million vaccine doses have been administered, and public health officials nationwide are beginning to ease restrictions on public gatherings.

We can see a light at the end of the tunnel, but we are not there yet. Small businesses are struggling, but in spite of those struggles, small businesses are still showing up for our communities.

The Baltimore Sun recently published a story about a restaurant in my hometown of Baltimore that captured the essence of the value that small businesses bring to our communities.

Steve Chu and Ephrem Abebe, coowners of the popular restaurant in Baltimore named Ekiben, recently drove 6 hours from Baltimore to Vermont to prepare a meal for a longtime customer who was on her deathbed. They did this at their own cost because that is what small business owners do. They are part of our community. Afterward, Mr. Chu and Mr. Abebe called the decision a ''no-brainer'' and viewed their trip as a way to say thank you to a customer who had supported them for years.

That is what makes small businesses special. They are more than places we go to buy products or enjoy a meal. They are vital pillars in our community. That story and countless others like it are why we passed the PPP program initially and why we must pass the PPP Extension Act—so PPP can continue to be a lifeline for small businesses in the coming months.

Congress and the Biden administration have implemented significant improvements to the PPP in recent months that have made the program more equitable and useful. So we must now extend the deadline to allow small businesses and nonprofits to take full advantage and receive the help that they need.

In December, Congress passed the bipartisan Economic Aid Act, which provided an additional $284 billion to PPP and made second-round PPP loans available to small businesses that had spent their initial PPP loan and can demonstrate a 25-percent loss in revenue. The bill also expanded eligibility of PPP to include certain local newspapers, TV stations and radio stations, as well as 501(c)6 nonprofits.

I must remind my colleagues that while the SBA was beginning to implement the improvements we made to the PPP in the Economic Aid Act, the Agency was also undergoing a transition from the Trump administration to the Biden administration. Transitions, even under the best circumstances, can be disruptive to an Agency's work.

On February 22, the Biden administration took strong action to get funding to small businesses that were either left out or underfunded during prior rounds of PPP. The administration implemented a 14-day exclusive window for small businesses with fewer than 20 employees. It updated the maximum loan calculation formula for sole proprietors, and it eliminated rules prohibiting small businesses owned by formerly incarcerated individuals and individuals with delinquent Federal student loans from securing a PPP loan.

It made it possible and much more worthwhile for small businesses to apply for PPP loans, but it takes time. PPP is a forgivable loan, but you have to have a financial institution to make that loan. It has to be processed, it has to be approved, and it can't be done by the end of this month.

During the exclusivity period, SBA approved PPP loans for more than 400,000 small businesses and nonprofits with fewer than 20 employees, nearly half of which were first-time borrowers. We are reaching the hard to serve, the most needy of the small businesses. They finally got help.

Earlier this month, we passed the historic American Rescue Plan. The plan expanded PPP eligibility even more, to include more nonprofits as well as digital news platforms. The plan provides overdue aid to the local chapters of large nonprofits, such as the YMCA and Goodwill, which had not had prior access to PPP due to having multiple locations totaling more than 500 employees. The plan makes these nonprofits eligible for PPP loans worth up to $10 million, as long as each location does not exceed the employee limit. That makes sense.

During a hearing examining PPP last week, the small business community heard testimony from John Hoey, who leads the YMCA chapter that serves the Baltimore region. John urged us to extend the PPP to give nonprofit leaders more time to understand the program. He said:

> I can tell you that colleagues of mine who run large Ys around the country and large nonprofits in Baltimore are still trying to understand the program and figure out if they qualify. I think a 3-month extension is not only warranted but owed to all of us after what we've been through this past year.

We also heard testimony from Lisa Mensah, who leads the Opportunity Finance Network, which is the national