
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

JOURNAL OF THE SENATE.



MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2025

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JOURNAL OF THE SENATE

Monday, April 28, 2025.

Met at nineteen minutes past eleven o'clock A.M. (Mr. Brownsberger in the Chair).

The Chair (Mr. Brownsberger), members, guests and staff then recited the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Pledge of
allegiance.

Reports.

The following reports were severally received and placed on file, to wit:

Report of the Office of the Comptroller (pursuant to line item 1599-2040 of Section 2B of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024) submitting its Fiscal Year 2025 Third Quarter Prior Year Deficiency report (a copy having been forwarded to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means) (received April 25, 2025); and

Comptroller,--
FY25 deficiency
report.
SD2848

Report of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (pursuant to Section 5 of Chapter 27 of the General Laws) submitting its Massachusetts Parole Board 2023 annual report (received April 25, 2025).

EOPSS,-- Parole
Board 2023 report.
SD2849

Committee Discharged.

Mr. Payano, for the committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure, reported, asking to be discharged from further consideration

Of the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 215) of John J. Cronin for legislation updating the definition of physical therapy;

Physical therapy,--
definition.

Of the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 248) of John F. Keenan and Paul W. Mark for legislation to license and regulate surgical assistants; and

Surgical assistants,-
- requirements.

Of the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 253) of Jason M. Lewis for legislation to modernize licensure of dietitians and nutritionists by creating a Dietetics and Nutrition board;

Dietitians and
nutritionists,--
licensure.

And recommending that the same severally be referred to the committee on Public Health.

Severally, under Senate Rule 36, the reports were considered forthwith and accepted.

Severally sent to the House for concurrence.

PAPERS FROM THE HOUSE.

Notice was received from the House of Representatives announcing the following appointment by the Minority Leader:

Jamie Oppedisano of Hingham has been appointed to serve as his designee (under Section 14 of Chapter 14 of the General Laws) to the Tax Expenditure Review Commission, replacing Representative Soter of Bellingham.

Tax Expenditure
Review
Commission,--
appointment.

Petitions were severally referred, in concurrence, as follows, to wit:

Petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4055) of John Barrett, III (by vote of the town) relative to establishing recall elections in the town of Lanesborough;

Lanesborough,--
recall elections.

To the committee on Election Laws.

Petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4056) of John Barrett, III (by vote of the town) for legislation to increase the membership of the select board of the town of Lanesborough; and

Lanesborough,--
select board.

Petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4057) of Andres X. Vargas (with the approval of the mayor and city council) that the city of Haverhill be authorized to increase the membership of the board of health in said city from three members to five members;

Haverhill,-- board
of health.

Severally to the committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.

The following remarks were ordered printed in the Journal of the Senate (see Senate Journal for May 1, 2025).

Remarks of Senate President Karen E. Spilka.

Good morning. I rise today because I'm afraid we are entering a dark chapter of our nation's history – and we, as the Massachusetts State Senate – must bear witness to what we are seeing and hearing, and use our voices to push back against those in power who would reject the rule of law and due process for all of us in this country.

Remarks of Senate
President Karen E.
Spilka.

Tomorrow, Donald Trump will have been in the office of the Presidency for just 100 days. But in such a short time, America is becoming unrecognizable. I, for one, cannot sit idly by as we hear story after story – day after day – of residents being grabbed off the streets – kidnapped – and held with no access to justice. Again, making America a place we hardly recognize.

And as someone who lost family members in the Holocaust, I do not say this lightly. But what we are experiencing in America today is starting to feel like Europe in the 1930s – and it is not just terrifying, it is enraging. This is not who we are – this is not the country that my family fled to, and my father fought for.

Many of you know my family's story, but I believe it's important to tell it again today in the context of what the Trump Administration is doing to target immigrants, and, if the President gets his way, to target citizens as well. My story begins with the story of a young man named Joseph in Russia – now Poland—in 1906. One day, he was protesting the oppressive policies of the Czar with his best friend, only to later discover the body of that dear friend hanging in the public square of his small village.

Joseph's friend had been killed for his religious and political beliefs, and Joseph's father knew his son would be next. So he said goodbye and sent his son to America to save his life. That young man, who left everything he knew and everyone he loved, was my grandfather, Joseph Goldstein. And I am reminded, now more than ever, that if my grandfather had not escaped – and if America hadn't welcomed him with open arms – I would not be here today.

Many of you also know the story of my father, but I believe – that it is important to tell his story again in the context of what is happening in America today. As a soldier during World War II, my father helped liberate the Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald, and what he experienced there would haunt him for the rest of his life. Like so many veterans of that time, he suffered from undiagnosed mental illness – which would probably be diagnosed today as PTSD – in the years after returning home.

My entire family suffered because of my father's illness, and he never got the opportunity to live out the rest of his years in peace, proud of his efforts to secure freedom around the world. So, hear me when I say this: as the granddaughter of an immigrant fleeing political persecution; a descendant of those who stayed in Europe and were subsequently murdered by Nazis; and the daughter who lost her beloved father to the horrors of the war even though he came back alive. I feel the danger of what is happening in America today deep in my bones.

And I'm sure many of you do too.

Like many of you, I have watched in horror as the Administration has kidnapped residents off our streets. Rümeyza Öztürk, a 30-year-old Turkish citizen studying at Tufts University on an F-1 student visa was taken off the street by ICE agents while she was walking to dinner.

Juan Francisco Mendez had his car window violently smashed in New Bedford and he and his wife were dragged from the car by ICE agents before Juan was seized and detained. Kseniia Petrova, a Russian-born Harvard-affiliated cancer researcher who lives in the United States legally, was detained at Logan Airport for a minor infraction and faces deportation back to Russia. And just this past weekend, WCVB news reported that masked ICE agents pulled over a van in Winthrop and took two people into custody.

All of these people are here for a reason – maybe a reason similar to what drove my grandfather from his homeland. And rather than being welcomed by a country that values freedom and the rule of law above all else, they are now at risk of being denied due process – an idea so foundational to who we are as a nation that John Adams himself defended British soldiers – our adversaries – after the Boston Massacre, which took place just down the street.

And an idea so critical to us a Commonwealth that it is enshrined both in the Massachusetts Constitution and the United States Constitution. I don't need to tell you that this is not normal – and it can never be allowed to be normal in the United States of America. I think we can all agree that we don't want violent criminals on our streets – and the law should deal with criminals, whether they are born in this country or come here from somewhere else.

But that is not what we are facing at this moment. What we are facing is a capricious, vengeful and cruel Administration that has co-opted federal law enforcement agents and openly defied the courts – the exact opposite of the law and order that Trump and his supporters have proclaimed to care about so much. And I for one will not stay silent as this country that I love, that my father fought for, is forcefully remade into the very type of unchecked authoritarian regime that he fought against.

We must stand up – and we must demand more from our elected representatives in Congress – to act as the check on unfettered Executive power the Constitution demands of them, and then to pass meaningful immigration reform once this moment of extreme danger has passed.

As a reminder to us all, Congress is meant to be the first among equals in the representative democracy envisioned by the constitution – not the President. Just as in our Constitution here in Massachusetts, the US Constitution sets out a system of checks and balances with separation of powers among our three branches of government.

As James Madison said in 1788 in Federalist Paper 47, “The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands – whether of one, a few, or many – and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.”

While Congress is handing over its power to Trump, the courts still largely stand independent, and so we must all use our voices to clearly object to the Trump Administration defying the courts – and insist that the president follow the rule of law.

The good news is that most Americans seem to be waking up to the idea that what is happening right now is fundamentally un-American. According to an NBC News poll released yesterday, 8 in 10 say legal due process for immigrants is “somewhat” or “very” important. Other polls released this past weekend show that the majority of Americans disagree with the Trump Administration's handling of immigration with more than 50 per cent of respondents to a Washington Post/Ipsos poll opposed to sending immigrants to El Salvador without a court hearing.

We know that Trump is using the case of Kilmar Abrego Garcia as a test of his limits. And I am proud of the many Americans who have raised their voices in alarm about the lack of due process and flagrant disregard for the law his case has raised. It is absolutely outrageous that the President of the United States can be so callous about the rights of a man who has lost his freedom to what Trump's own people have admitted was an administrative error.

Who are we, and what country is this?

If we are to remain the America we know and love, we must do all we can to fight back against this 21st century tyranny. Because make no mistake – this regime has clearly demonstrated that it hates democracy as we know it, and wishes to break the spine of America so it can bend us to their will. That is why we have been faced with a firehose of law-defying, anti-democratic and truly breathtakingly unbelievable actions in the first 100 days of this presidency. They want us broken, unsteady on our feet, overwhelmed and scared, unsure which actions to take to fight back.

But we are not defeated – and we all have a voice.

We also have power – the power invested in us by the constitution and by the people who voted for us.

I'll admit I don't have all of the answers, and as a state legislature we are limited in what we can do to curb the worst impulses of a federal government determined to break laws – and a Congress that has voluntarily surrendered its power.

But I will be damned if I am going to stay silent about what is happening in this country, and I hope all of you here will join me in pointing out the fundamentally anti-democratic and anti-American actions of this presidency. This is about immigrants, yes – but it is also about so much more.

We are in a battle for the soul of America. And we are the foot soldiers who will help determine whether this country remains the metaphorical “shining City on a Hill” that we have cherished – even with all its imperfections – for two hundred and fifty years. As Thomas Paine once proclaimed, “...let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America the law is king.”

The law is king – not a man or woman, not a President, and certainly not Donald Trump

So let it be entered into the record today that I unequivocally object to the dissolution of due process and the rule of law in America. And, as long as I am Senate President, Massachusetts will resist this new tyranny. And the Senate will continue to embrace the principles and blueprint of our Response 2025 initiative to protect our residents, defend our values and help lead this great nation past this moment of grave danger.

So far, as part of Response 2025, the Senate has held a hearing about the threats to our leadership in climate change, filed a bill to strengthen protections for those seeking and providing health care, and Steering and Policy Committee members have begun meeting with all of you to gather ideas and actions we can take to protect, defend and lead.

Today is a part of this response 2025, and I thank you and welcome all who join me today. Thank you.

Remarks of Senator Barry R. Finegold.

Thank you, Mr. President and through you to the members. I also want to thank you Madam President for your timely and historical insights in this very challenging time.

It's not ok... that people get abducted in the middle of the street and are not given due process.

It's not ok...when you have college students who don't want their name affiliated with an article they write in a college newspaper.

It's not ok...when there is fear and retaliation in higher education to their people and

Remarks of Senator
Barry R. Finegold.

their professors.

It's not ok... when Judges get arrested.

Never in a time have I been around where economically, where the dollar has been weaker and the trust in the US treasuries, the international currency of the world, has been in doubt. That too should make us all pause and cause for alarm.

And I do think...what we can do...

I want to echo what the Senate President said and thank her for her leadership.

And yes, one of the things we have to do in the upcoming budget it we do have to increase funding for the Attorney General, to keep up with all these lawsuits. That is something that we need to continue to do and support.

But I also think there is also a bigger threat that is out there. It is something we have talked about. When we look at the last election that happened, we always focus on a few states that made the difference -Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan. Well, if states like Massachusetts continue to lose its population, states like California, Maryland, those states won't even matter in the sense of a candidate that we might all support being able to win. So the things that we have to think about here in the Commonwealth, which we have already started to do, is we have to start to keep young people in the Commonwealth. We cannot afford to lose another Congressperson; we cannot afford for our electoral college to go to some other state.

How do we do that?

A lot of things we have already started. Our support for higher education. We have to be the best state in the nation for higher education. Making community college free, making the University of Massachusetts Amherst the best public higher education institute in the country. Making sure that our young people are not coming out of school with \$250,000 worth of debt.

And last year like we did in the economic development bill. Making sure there are great paying jobs here in the commonwealth for our young people. Make them want to stay here in the Commonwealth.

Transportation is something that we have all spent a lot of time working on. I know I come from a district where we have a commuter rail that runs every hour, hour and a half. We need transportation that runs every half an hour so people can come to Boston and get the great jobs that are needed.

And the thing that we are hearing about so much in abundance; about changing the way we think. We did some amazing work last year with housing when we did ADUs but that is the tip of the iceberg. It is still too expensive here in Massachusetts for housing. We need to break down those barriers when it comes to affordability here in Massachusetts. What Cambridge has done, what Somerville is doing – we have to follow that lead, we have to make it more affordable for young people to stay in the Commonwealth.

I understand the challenges in front of us, on so many different levels and I want to echo and praise what the Senate President said of so much of this stuff is so offensive. But I also will say for 250 years, Massachusetts has led the way, standing up for what's right – and we won't back down now. These are difficult times, but when our country faced another existential challenge, the legendary journalist Edward R. Murrow said, 'Difficulty is the excuse history never accepts.'

Thank you, Mr. President.

Remarks of Senator Adam Gomez.

Thank you, Senate President, for your leadership as we stand united in defending our residents and the values that define our community. This time has come for us to voice our opposition to the actions of the Trump Administration, which seek to undermine the

Remarks of Senator
Adam Gomez.

fundamental rights and protections guaranteed to each and every one of us.

Let me share a personal story that illustrates the impact of these policies.

As a kidney transplant recipient, I understand firsthand the critical importance of medical research and the dedicated professionals behind it. The Trump administration's recent actions—deporting international medical students and scientists, and slashing funding for institutions like Harvard and MIT—pose a direct threat to Massachusetts' health and innovation sectors. These measures not only jeopardize ongoing research into life-saving treatments but also risk dismantling the very infrastructure that supports our state's medical advancements. We as the leaders of “meds and eds” in the nation are directly in the crosshairs. It's alarming to see policies that could force the closure of labs and the departure of talented researchers who contribute so significantly to our community's well-being.

Massachusetts has long been a leader in medical research, with institutions that rely heavily on federal funding to drive breakthroughs in treating diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's, and diabetes. The administration's cuts to the National Institutes of Health funding threaten to stall this progress, potentially costing lives and undermining our state's economy. As someone whose life was saved by medical innovation, I find these actions deeply concerning. We must stand together to protect the integrity of our research institutions and ensure that Massachusetts continues to be a beacon of hope and healing for all.

Most recently, The Trump administration's decision to cut nearly \$1 million in critical asthma prevention funding for Western Massachusetts is not just misguided—it's heartless. These funds were a lifeline for families in Chicopee, Holyoke, and Springfield, where too many children already struggle to breathe every single day. Stripping away these resources abandons our most vulnerable residents and deepens health disparities in communities that deserve better, and will only cost our state and country more in the long run.

These stories are not just isolated incidents; they represent a concerning trend—a pattern of behavior aimed at eroding due process and undermining the rule of law. It is unacceptable that in our country, where justice and fairness should prevail, we witness attempts to divide and dismantle the very fabric of our society. Our communities are grappling with unprecedented challenges, and we must unite to provide some of our most vulnerable residents with the protections and tools they need to confront the threat of detention and deportation.

Legal representation can often make a significant difference in immigration court proceedings. Detained immigrants with legal counsel are 10 times more likely to secure a favorable outcome compared to those without legal representation.

Despite this, in Massachusetts, over half of immigrants with pending cases are navigating their proceedings without legal assistance.

This session I have filed a bill that aims to address this disparity by securing state funding for legal services to represent Massachusetts residents at risk of deportation, regardless of their dedication and contributions to our communities. It would establish a comprehensive program that combines public and private funding to provide free immigration legal defense, particularly for those held in federal immigration detention.

We must bridge this gap and ensure that immigrants in need have access to legal representation to achieve equitable outcomes.

Thank you all for being here today. We have a challenging task ahead, but I am ready to face it with each and every one of you.

As elected officials, it is our responsibility to speak out against these injustices. We must ensure that every resident feels safe, protected, and heard. I urge my colleagues to join me in publicly condemning these actions and reaffirming our unwavering commitment to upholding the rights of all individuals, regardless of their background.

In conclusion, let us send a clear message that we will not allow fear to dictate our

policies or permit the erosion of the rights we hold dear. Together, we will persist in advocating for policies that safeguard our residents, support our communities, and defend our shared values. Thank you

Remarks of Senator Sal N. DiDomenico.

Thank you, Mr. President. I want to thank our Senate President for allowing us to all come together today to speak on a very important issue and very important things that are happening to this state and to this country.

Remarks of Senator
Sal N. DiDomenico.

There's chaos happening in our government, by design. What is happening is not normal. It's not okay. I am outraged at what our President is doing in D.C. My grandparents were immigrants, and they achieved the American dream. Our country was built on the backs of immigrants. Immigrants have come to our nation throughout the last century and a half and made our country what it is today. Now, the faces may have changed overtime, but the obstacles and the challenges are the same. The dreams are the same. And what is happening today, by the highest level of our government, is an atrocity and an attack and an assault on immigrants through our nation. Our immigrants are poor people, people living in with need, all populations. Everyone is on the table. It's almost like there's a checklist in the Oval Office of, "How can I hurt people," and checking as you go down the line. That is what is happening. It is real and impacting us. And if people don't think it's impacting them, just wait. It'll reach you too, some very soon.

He is consistently undermining, if not outright ignoring the rule of law, particularly with due process. Due process means that our legal system is fair. The governments follow established rules and procedures for taking any rights or liberties away. The government can't just throw people in prison and never give them a hearing or a right to plead their case. Innocent until proven guilty has been steadfast in our country since the founding of our nation. We grew up with these concepts so deeply embedded in our system that I think we take them for granted sometimes. But we need to open our eyes and realize how special our country is because we are governed by established laws and process. No one is above the law, not me, not you, and certainly not the President of the United States. Not anyone. We believe everyone is innocent until proven guilty and we believe everyone is equal under the law.

When he weaponizes the government against people he doesn't agree with, he puts every citizen at his mercy, and that is just not okay. He's legally detaining and deporting immigrants without due process. He is sending federal agents who wear masks, we only see this on the news, other countries wearing masks to detain US residents. He detains and deports immigrants without warrants or judicial oversight. And when judges do check his power, he's ignoring those court orders. And then again, that is not okay. When he disagrees with judges, he says he's above the law, that judges are wrong, that he is the law. Judges are not overseeing anymore. Trump thinks he is the Supreme Court, every court in the nation.

Something that's very personal to me and my office, is that he's also rolling back protections for transgender Americans across federal agencies. He's trying to ban trans people from the military, stripping their health care rights, and essentially trying to erase trans identities from government records. He is taking this to a level that we have never, ever seen before and trying to erase people who are living in our country.

These examples are not just policy reversals, they are attempts to redefine who is entitled to civil rights in our country. He's targeting marginalized groups for political gain. He wants us to believe that immigrants, or women, or poor people, or veterans, or federal employees are the reason we why have inflation, are the reason you can't find a job, or whatever number of ridiculous ideas he has put out there. He's trying to divide and create chaos so we cannot see what he's actually trying to do, which is trying to gain political power

at all costs, and not share with all of us, but just for the elite at the very top. This is not okay.

History shows the erosion of rights start at the margins and creep inwards. The same legal justifications used to deport families or to discriminate against trans people can later be used against all of us. Make no mistake, history has shown us that government can deny basic rights to one group, and it will also deny rights to any other group. Trump is trying to normalize a government that picks and chooses who deserves freedom, safety, and justice based on his own beliefs. That's not what our country was founded on. And it's not what we are about. Protecting the rights of the most vulnerable population in our society is just not the right and moral thing to do, it is essential to the integrity of our democracy. A government that tramples on the rights of some will eventually trample on the rights of all, and again, that is not okay.

The federal government has already arbitrarily cut funding and programs that are proposing even bigger cuts that are affecting my district and the entire Commonwealth. Cuts to health and public health research will roll back the advances that we have made not only in this country but in our state and my very own district, in particular. Cambridge is considered one of the biggest biotech hubs in the world. One of the first vaccines was developed right here in Kendall Square. Cambridge companies are advancing treatments for Alzheimer's, MS, Cystic Fibrosis, and Trump's cuts have cost our state more than \$1.5 billion, and thousands of jobs. Why would anyone think it's a good idea to cut research that can help cure cancer, and other debilitating diseases? And on a personal note, many of you know my mom had ALS, and his cuts are threatening treatment and a possible cure of ALS going forward.

Why would anyone think this is a good idea, to cut life-changing medication that will change the lives of individuals and families that love those individuals as well? Why would it be a good idea to cut jobs and harm our economy? This is ridiculous, and that is what is happening today.

The Trump administration has also cut 90 million dollars from an obscure line item that people do not really think about unless it affects your community. It's called the Commonwealth BRIC grants, which stands for Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grants. 50 million dollars of a 90-million-dollar appropriation for this state was going to Everett and Chelsea for the Island End project for resiliency protections. I've been working on this project for years, very close with Everett and Chelsea to create climate mitigation and disaster prevention for this area. This funding was planned to protect people and countless businesses in Everett and Chelsea from severe flooding and over 7 billion dollars of economic activity. And ironically, during the president's last term, he created this fund, created the money that was going to go to resiliency in our communities. And now, when he comes back to office, he cuts the same program that he thought was a good idea in his previous administration. This will bring severe flooding to the area. And our president wants to cut that funding.

He is now proposing to eliminate Head Start and the Education Department. I am a product of Head Start. I know how important Head Start is – and all the educational funding that we receive to our state, it is not just an extra. It is critical to the advancement of our kids. He's preventing parents from going to work and supporting their families by cutting this. He is also not really caring about children in our state but doing just the opposite of what he is pretending to do.

And lastly, I'll just talk about my constituents in Chelsea, and other parts of my district, but Chelsea in particular. My residents are afraid to go to work, kids are afraid to go to school, and kids are getting upset when their parents don't come home from work on time. They can't go to Market Basket without looking over their shoulders. They're staying away from ESL classes; they're staying away from job-training classes. All things that we want immigrants to do, by the way, learn English, get a job, pay taxes, right? He's inhibiting and

putting barriers in front of all those things that we want immigrants to do, and he says immigrants to do. But his actions are doing the reverse, and in the process scaring people and children. Again, I believe by design. I believe that with all my heart, because the more fear and chaos in our country, the more power he pretends to gain, and he is trying to consolidate power at a higher level.

I'm hearing from businesses in Chelsea, who are not making money any longer because people are not shopping in those stores. La Colaborativa, which is one of the best human service agencies in the entire state, has been targeted by people who are loyal to the president, who are coming and videotaping all the entrances and exits to that facility, and threatening the employees and saying they're next. Threatening people who are coming in to get services at La Colaborativa and telling them they are next as well. They don't define what "next" means, but we all know what "next" means. We also know people have been targeted in this community and detained without due process, who have work visas, who are here legally, who have been detained by ICE in Chelsea. This is not anecdotal. This is not a story in another state or another country that we think sometimes if we watch news reports. This is happening in Chelsea, Massachusetts and other cities across our state. This is here now. This is the new normal from our federal government, coming into our communities and instilling fear in our residents and again in our children.

I am disgusted by what I am seeing. I used to be sad, now I'm angry. I used to say, "What can we do?" Now I say, "We have to fight back." No more sitting back, saying it's not my problem. No more saying it doesn't affect me so I'm going to turn my head. No more saying I'm going to remain silent on this issue because again, I don't want to rock the boat. And again, I don't want to hear that it's not my time, it's not my issue. It is all of our issues to speak up or we abdicate power to a dictator. This is how it happens. We remain silent, he takes over, and we will have a country we don't recognize in the next three or four years. Only 100 days and all this chaos and destruction has happened. And, I'll say this, I am sure, and I actually hope, that whatever happens today does reach the Oval Office. He's so narcissistic that he'll find this session potentially and hear all of us speak. I hope he does, because we are not going to bend the knee. We are not giving into the president. We are a democracy, and we want to fight back, pass legislation, do the right thing and speak up for what is morally right for our residents and the country. I am tired of this.

The president is hurting people I care about; he's hurting the communities that I care about, hurting the state that I care about, and hurting a country that I deeply care about. I don't say this lightly, I respect the office of the president of the United States. I think we all do. But I will say, and again I don't say this lightly, because I wasn't planning on saying this and I am getting so wrapped up, but I do not respect the occupant of the president. I don't respect him because he doesn't respect, again, people that I care about, the communities I care about, or the country that I care about. And that says a lot. And I would never think of saying that in any other time, not in history. But it has to be said. It has to be said out loud, publicly, and I have to show people I'm not afraid to speak those words and say those words as well. We have emboldened a new generation, a new group of people who find it okay to be hateful, because the person at the top has given them full authority to do so. And they have taken that mantle, because he has told them it is okay to do that, because he is doing that. We cannot allow our country to become that kind of a place, for now and the future. And we definitely have to find a way -- and we will -- in this chamber to fight back and make meaningful change to protect the residents of the state going forward. Thank you.

Remarks of Senator Robyn K. Kennedy.

I rise today not just as a member of this Senate, but as a resident of the Commonwealth and of a nation that is facing a pivotal moment in its storied history. I rise with you, Madam

Remarks of Senator
Robyn K. Kennedy.

President, and I rise with my colleagues in their deep concerns and outrage about the multifaceted attacks on our residents.

I join in the outrage in cuts to basic services that uplift our residents, cuts to the promise to our elders and to our future generations, and cuts to the research that saves lives. At UMass Chan in Worcester 595 trials life-saving clinical trials are at risk. 12,000 individuals in Central Massachusetts that are on life-saving treatments.

One lab studying cures for pediatric cancer has already been shut down. This is not common sense, This is just cruelty.

We are here today because we recognize a truth that cannot be ignored. Our very democracy is on the line.

The rule of law - something we have been taught to cherish, to defend, to honor and to hold sacred - is being chipped away right before us. What once felt like a steady pillar of our democracy is increasingly fragile. We are watching as the very systems meant to ensure fairness and accountability are twisted, ignored or outright attacked.

As we speak, residents of the Commonwealth—our friends, our neighbors, our community members, our constituents—are being taken from our streets without due process. This is unfolding right here, in the heart of our communities - on familiar streets, in workplaces, outside homes.

There is no secrecy to it - just a quiet, devastating normalization of injustice.

The Trump Administration's actions are a direct attack on the most basic rights that define us as Americans. Empowering federal agents to act without accountability shakes our very foundation of our democracy. When armed federal agents are empowered to snatch people off the streets, we are no longer a nation of laws. We are a nation of fear.

But fear has never been — and must never be — the currency of our democracy.

Just this past Friday, I attended the YWCA's Stand Against Racism event - a powerful gathering of community called together to collectively commit to standing boldly against racism and all its grasps on our systems.

During the event, we reflected in the history of the YWCA and the 135 years of work done by our foremothers.

From the YW's earliest days in 1885 to provide housing for single women, to the first desegregated public cafeteria in 1938, to the first national organization to develop an interracial charter in 1945, to 1970 where the YWCA USA, led by Black Women, adopted the One Imperative to "thrust our collective power towards the elimination of racism" noting that if we don't center eliminating racism, we will not achieve the goal of empowering women, the women of the YWCA have never shied away from the hard work of building a more equitable world.

Through the keynote speaker, we also called in our ancestors. Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells, Lottie Thompson, Clara Day, Bessie Coleman, Elizabeth Freeman.

We were grounded in the reminder that at no point was this work easy. At no point was power given.

And yet our foremothers who came before us fought, relentlessly, for a more just and equitable world. They didn't have the luxury of silence. They didn't wait for permission. They saw injustice and met it head-on, with their lives at risk and at the cost of losing others.

What Friday's event made clear is that we are the heirs of their fight. The work they began is now ours to continue.

We are Massachusetts.

The Commonwealth that stood tall on the battlefields of Lexington and Concord. At the first National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, The first to codify the right of our residents to marry whom they love. We have always stood tall for the betterment of our people and we must do it once more.

We have always believed in the power of immigration to strengthen, not weaken, our

communities. We believe that diversity is a source of pride and resilience. We believe that the Constitution applies to everyone, not just to the privileged few. And we believe that the government must answer to the people, not the other way around.

We will not stand by while fear replaces justice.

We will not stand by while our residents are stripped of their dignity and their rights.

While we may not have the power to physically stop armed federal agents, we have something even stronger: our collective voice, our moral clarity, and our unbreakable commitment to the rule of law. Today, we use that voice — loudly, clearly, and unapologetically.

We must speak out for those who have been heavily impacted by these injustices in an attempt that it stops here.

We must speak out for Rumeysa Öztürk- a 30-year-old PhD student at Tufts University who was detained by plainclothes ICE agents near her home for writing an op-ed for her campus paper.

We must speak out for Juan Francisco Mendez - a 29-year-old, Guatemalan national with no criminal record seeking asylum based on his wife's granted asylum.

We must speak out for Kseniia Petrova - a 30-year-old Russian scientist at Harvard Medical School returning to Boston from France.

We must speak out in condemnation — in the strongest possible terms — of the cruelty, the lawlessness, and the injustice we are witnessing.

We must show our residents that their government will fight for them, not against them.

Let history show that in this dark hour, we did not falter.

We did not look away.

We stood firm, we spoke out, and we fought to defend the very soul of our democracy.

And there will be some that say these are just words but let me remind us that words matter. Words have power to spark a revolution.

I will conclude with a quote from Pope Francis, who we lost last week.

“Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women, and men who leave or are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more.”

To all immigrants and refugees, whether you have been here your whole life or have just made Massachusetts your home, know that you are our community. Know that we value you and we are grateful you are here.

Remarks of Senator Jason M. Lewis.

Thank you, Mr. President. I'm deeply grateful to Senate President for her leadership and to all of our colleagues for speaking clearly and forcefully in defense of the values that we have long cherished here in Massachusetts and all across the United States of America.

For each of us, our identity is made up of many different things. For me, I'm a husband, I'm a father of two wonderful daughters, I'm an American, I'm a resident of Massachusetts, I'm a state Senator, great privilege that we share...and I'm an immigrant.

I was born in South Africa in 1968, and I lived there until 1980 when my family emigrated to the United States. I grew up in the 1970's when South Africa was still under a racist apartheid government. As a white person I did not directly suffer from the horrors of apartheid, but even as a child I certainly saw what apartheid did to people of color and how it warped the society that I grew up in. My parents saw America as a place that had different values, a place where they could raise their children in a society that believed in justice and that believed in equality for all people, and where their children would certainly have opportunities that would not be available to them in South Africa.

It was not easy for my parents; they had to leave behind their native country, the place

Remarks of Senator
Jason M. Lewis.

they were both born in, raised in, went to school, had their careers, they had their friends there, family members, social networks; I greatly admire the courage of my parents; I don't tell them that as often as I should but I know that was a difficult decision and they made that decision for the benefit of their children. My parents spoke English, it was their first language, it's my first language. They had the help of an American company that my father worked for in South Africa and that company helped us relocate to the United States, they helped arranged for our green cards; my parents were also fortunate enough to have sufficient financial resources to be able to consider making a move like that. Many immigrants, especially refugees, do not have any of these advantages. Many of these people are coming from horrific conditions, war torn places, places where there is political violence, civil war, famine, other deprivations, no economic opportunity; and it takes immense strength, determination that I can't even imagine, resilience, and grit for these folks to even think about leaving their native countries; as bad as the conditions may be, to travel thousands of miles to a place they've probably never been, they may not know anyone, or maybe they have a distant cousin; but to relocate themselves and especially their children is incredibly daunting. And nowhere is this more true than for those who are refugees. By definition they have been dislocated, they've faced unbelievable trauma. Consider the fate of Afghan refugees. Many of these are people that actually helped United States Military and were part of the United States Civil Service efforts to try to help rebuild that country. They have put themselves in grave danger with the return of the Taliban in that country and this is true for men and especially, of course true for women. Some of these are people that have been through the full vetting process, you know that refugees go through and are now supposed to be allowed to enter the United States and at this point in time the refugee program has been entirely frozen. It is just unimaginable to me, as I am sure it is to all of you.

Immigrants from all corners of the globe have long made Massachusetts and the United States stronger and richer. Many economists point to immigration as one of the key sources of America's dynamism and success through the centuries.

Did you know that more than 25% of all entrepreneurs in Massachusetts are immigrants? The companies that they founded generate tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars for our state and national economy. Immigrant entrepreneurs have played a particularly important role in the biotech industry, one of our state's most important sectors. Immigrants founded such notable Massachusetts companies as Biogen, Boston Scientific and Moderna. In fact, one in four of our biotech companies, in this state, has at least one founder who was born abroad.

Immigrants, of course, are not just essential to our workforce and to a strong and vibrant economy. They contribute in so many ways to our culture and our well-being -- from art to music to science to food. More than a third of all US Nobel Laureates were born in another country; more than a third. Every Nobel Laureate in the United States was born abroad. Since the founding of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1881, more than half of their musicians have been immigrants. I of course could go on and on citing similar statistics with the contributions that immigrants have and continue to make to our communities.

International students are of great value to our higher education institutions and to our country more broadly. International students bring different perspectives and experiences to our campuses that US Native born students benefit from when they attend those campuses, those colleges and universities together. Many of these international students will stay in the United States, stay in Massachusetts and the United States, and they will work and contribute their talents after graduation. The excellence of our higher education system and the fact that it attracts top students from all around the world is in fact a huge advantage, a huge competitive advantage for Massachusetts and for the United States.

Now, of course, we need an orderly process for managing immigration to this country.

I certainly understand why many Americans have concerns about immigration given how broken our current system is and has been for a long time, but this is something we can and should fix in Congress.

Today our country is led by a President who demonizes immigrants. Many of his administration's immigration policies are clearly unlawful and unconstitutional. They are cruel and inhumane. And they are misguided and just plain dumb. What they are doing is inflicting great suffering on individuals and families who do not deserve to be treated this way. And they are damaging our state and our national economy and our nation's future prospects for growth, for innovation, and for international leadership.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will all need to have courage. Courage to stand up for our immigrant neighbors and others who are vulnerable and who are being targeted. We must continue to be guided by our values in Massachusetts, where we believe in the dignity of all people. I am deeply grateful to our state's leaders for their clear convictions and their moral clarity in opposing the immigration policies of the Trump administration - especially Senate President Spilka, Speaker of the House Mariano, Governor Healey, Attorney General Campbell, and our Congressional delegation. Thank you all.

Remarks of Senator Pavel M. Payano.

Thank you, Mr. President, and through you to the members.

I remember the first moment as a child when I thought to myself, *I am proud to be an American*. I was living in a country that stood for freedom, justice, and the promise of opportunity. My father was a history teacher, and he lived by a principle that guided everything he did: *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."* This became my personal mantra as well. From the age of six, I was essentially a permanent student in his American and World History class, learning not just about dates and events, but about the fundamental truths that shape our world.

Sixty years ago, my father came to this country to escape political persecution. At 16, he was a headstrong, opinionated teenager. The government of his home country the Dominican Republic was not a fan of his views. He was fortunate enough to be given a choice: self-exile or the very real risk of being detained without trial, without rights, and without recourse. This experience impacted him deeply. It is why, throughout my life, my father worked tirelessly to teach me not just about why democracy is important, but about the dangers that await when nations fail to safeguard their systems.

From him, I learned that democracy is a precious thing. It is not a guarantee—it is a gift, one that we must actively protect and cherish. Our Founding Fathers understood this well. Benjamin Franklin, when asked what kind of government they had created, famously replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." That question—*"if you can keep it"*—reverberates through history, reminding us that democracy is fragile. It demands our constant vigilance and unwavering commitment.

Democracy is a delicate balance. It requires that we hold fast to the principles of justice, equality, and the rule of law. But we must also acknowledge how easily it can slip away. How easily it can fall into the hands of those who seek to divide, deceive, and manipulate for their own gain. History is full of nations where democracy has failed. In the ashes of these fallen democracies, we see the same patterns emerge. The erosion of rights often begins quietly—perhaps with the undermining of courts, attacks on the press, or the weakening of civil liberties. The voices of the people become drowned out by the overwhelming, corrupting influence of power.

What happens next? Rights are taken away, one group at a time. It often starts with scapegoats—small groups labeled as the enemy—isolated, demonized, and stripped of their rights. But as time goes on, more groups become part of the target. Their rights are chipped

Remarks of Senator
Pavel M. Payano.

away too.

The rule of law bends to serve those who wield power, not those it was meant to protect. Independent institutions—like colleges, universities, and the free press—are weakened or silenced. Fear is used to control, to discredit, and to divide. Eventually, the people—once free—are left with nothing but the illusion of liberty.

This is how democracy falls. Not with a loud crash, but with quiet, calculated steps. It falls when people become complacent, when they forget that freedom is never secure by default. It falls when citizens fail to understand that democracy requires constant care, constant defense, and active participation.

As the great civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr., said, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” It bends toward justice—if we are brave enough to make it bend. We must be the ones to speak out when we see injustice. We must be the ones to defend our freedoms, even when it is hardest. Even when it seems impossible. Democracy is not invincible. It requires our courage, our vigilance, and our commitment. We must defend the rule of law, ensuring that the rights of every person are protected and that justice is never negotiable.

This nation was founded on the belief that all people are created equal, endowed with certain unalienable rights—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These words are not just ideals—they are the foundation upon which this country stands. The Constitution does not speak only to citizens; it speaks to persons—every person, affirming their fundamental rights. This distinction is critical. We are a nation that protects the rights of all people, not just those with citizenship papers. And it is our solemn duty to defend these rights—not just for ourselves, but for future generations.

In times like these, it is easy to feel as though the weight of the world is too much to bear. But let me tell you: we are not powerless. We have the strength of our voices. We have the power of our collective will. Thomas Paine, whom our Senate President quoted in her remarks, wrote in his famous pamphlet *Common Sense*, “The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.”

So, as my father taught me years ago, let us not forget the lessons of history. Let us not grow complacent or believe that democracy will protect itself. As Senators, we all took an oath to defend and protect the Constitution. We are the guardians of this republic, and it is our sacred duty to ensure the American experiment endures. I am proud to be a part of a democratic body here in the Massachusetts Senate that stands up for the rights of our constituents and supports the most vulnerable in our communities.

Together, we must ensure that our democracy will not only survive, but thrive—not just as a hope for today, but as a beacon of freedom for the entire world to see. I look forward to the hard work ahead with my colleagues to ensure that democratic ideals are prioritized moving forward. Thank you.

Remarks of Senator Lydia Edwards.

This doesn't happen often, and I want people to know that. We don't do this normally, because this moment is not a normal time.

We are the 194th Senate, State Senate, convening. And it's important for us to remember where we've come from, and how this body has led the way repeatedly throughout history. We can look at the time we led the way with marriage equality.

We can look further back when we led the way with interracial marriage. We can look back to when we led the nation on freeing our slaves. And what this body has done consistently is meet the moment.

We've met it in a pandemic and we have met it in times of crisis and racial conflict, and yet every single time this body of incredible individuals has met the moment. I

Remarks of Senator
Lydia Edwards

remember we had a conversation, another public conversation, where we were called to ask to meet the moment. It was about antisemitism, and we stood up and we had different comments about what we were doing with the rise of it in this Commonwealth.

One of our colleagues said, "If they come for me, will you be there? Who's going to protect me?" As legislators, it's a different question.

The question for all of us is if they come for you and yours, how will you respond? And who is you and yours? For me, it's the veterans in my district.

It's the women in my district. Transgender individuals, labor unions, students, federal workers who've lost their jobs, people suffering through illness, people who can barely afford to pay rent. Those are me and mine, and I can assure you, and to the people of the Commonwealth who are seeing this, every single one of us has that population and those people, and those students.

And every single one of us has also a special population of immigrants. They are me and mine. They are each of ours.

We are their brothers' keepers. I'm honored to represent East Boston, second only to Ellis Island, when it comes to the amount of immigrants who came into this Commonwealth. While I respect that my colleague may represent immigrant city, I will say a lot of those immigrants came through East Boston.

We would not exist, I would not have a local economy, if it wasn't for immigrants to this day. Now, the question I have for a lot of us is, do we remember that we've tackled a lot of these issues before? The big question before many of us, for centuries, since the founding of this country, is what do papers mean?

We answered that question incorrectly for a couple hundred years, where we said, "Your papers determine if you're a human being. Your papers determine if you're free. Your papers determine if you're deserving of rights, depending on what state or territory you were in."

We've answered that question incorrectly for a long time. Then we had to have that moment, where we came together, and we actually had that moment more tore apart, where we defined, finally, and said, papers do not define who you are—your patriotism, your humanity, your deserving of rights—papers do not define that. And I believe that we need to have that same mentality when we're dealing with individuals who may be undocumented.

Your papers do not define who you are. Now, am I comparing undocumented individuals with those who were enslaved? Absolutely not.

I'm comparing and asking this Commonwealth to hold up a mirror to when we faced those kinds of questions. We have a history where we faced it, sometimes incorrectly. And we have a future that we have to assure is better than our present.

So, when I think about those questions, I think actually about the everyday New Englanders. 'Cause often times it's the everyday individual, not necessarily the politicians, that make the history. The everyday New Englander who did answer the question correctly when the federal government didn't, who stood up, revolted, or insisted and quietly was a conductor on the Underground Railroad.

They answered the question through action. They answered the question through bravery. That's our legacy.

That's who we are. That is worth fighting for—to remember that. So we hold up this mirror today and make a recommitment to our constituents.

We will not forget you. We will fight. And we do this knowing that we are facing abnormal times and an acute, horrific oppression.

The two men that were picked up in Winthrop were my constituents, me and mine, and you and yours. Nicole Moni, a U.S. citizen, born in the Commonwealth and an immigration attorney, received a letter asking her to self-deport. Me and mine, you and yours.

Arresting judges? Like Hannah Duggan? I was in Wisconsin, but we can't forget Judge Shelley Joseph, who, during the first Trump administration, was arrested here in this Commonwealth.

When we hold that mirror up to that last time, what lessons do we see in it? What did we learn? I'm choosing to be on the railroad to justice.

And I believe every single one of you are as well, because it's my patriotic duty, and it's yours as well. And to the people watching what we have done with that choice—it is remarkable. I am so grateful for the colleagues, my friends, the individuals I get to serve with.

We are a special body. We are a body that started an immigration caucus. We are a body that needs to seriously consider not just legislation that continues our access to justice by including immigrants.

Because we have expanded access to justice in housing court—we need to think about immigration court. We also need to think about legislation that doesn't just protect our judges from doxing, but protects our state judges from oppression from the federal government.

We make laws here. We need to think about how we protect the judges of those laws here. We do support our public safety officers, and the best support that we can give them is to make sure that they are not distracted with trying to be co-opted by a dictator, making sure they have the funds and the education that they need to maintain the hard-fought trust with our constituents.

Above all else, we need to invest in education. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are the American way. We are a diverse nation. We have fought for centuries for equity, and we demand inclusion.

These are not dirty words. They need to be part of our policymaking and our conversations and our agencies, and how we think about a better future for our children. So we, as lawmakers, need to make sure that where the federal government pulls away, we pull back in, we pull them in.

We will protect you. We will educate. And by the way, we will not run away from the times that we fell short as a Commonwealth, as a nation, because we need to learn from those moments so that we do not repeat those moments.

History is our friend. It is a beautiful thing to know who was part of making this nation, and we demand it to be known. Now, I say this—it's not lost on me.

I say this with the bust of Frederick Douglass behind me. As a Black woman in this body, when he was alive, he could not have seen this body as diverse, equitable, and inclusive as it is. We say all of our speeches today under the quote: "Truth, justice, liberty, and humanity will ultimately prevail," from the same man.

So our commitment today, to our constituents, and to the entire Commonwealth, is: this isn't for decoration.

That bust, and that quote, aren't just to be performative. They are calls to action. Every time we convene, every time we think, I know I will be asking: what would Douglass do?

An enslaved man who went on to believe in the nation that had enslaved him—so much so, he committed his children to the war to save the nation. Talk about having to have a mirror held up to you. I don't know that I would have had the strength or the will.

But I know I owe it to him and his dream, to Dr. King's dream, to Elizabeth Freeman's dream—to try. I am scared. I don't know what to do. I am scared. I don't know how to do it. I am scared that I could ruin my career. I am scared.

And as my colleague said, "If I am scared, God only knows what the children in my schools feel."

So I say: we come together, we answer this call, and I assure each and every single one of my colleagues—I have your back.

And thank you so much for having mine, and thank you so much for joining the caucus and coming up with ideas and the laws that we have done together.

We have a long road ahead of us. I will walk it—because you are walking it with me. Thank you.

Remarks of Senator John F. Keenan.

I am so proud to represent the Norfolk and Plymouth District in this Senate, a district that includes my hometown of Quincy and neighboring Braintree as well as the towns of Abington, Hanover, Holbrook, and Rockland.

Braintree, which is the name of the town at the time of the birth of John Adams, where his birth certificate is on record.

Quincy, where the birthplaces of John and John Quincy Adams are located, where you can visit their home - the Old House at Peace field, and where John and Abigail Adams, and John Quincy and Louisa Catherine are buried.

John Adams, early in his law career, often traveled from his home to Boston, and to Maine and Worcester, and points beyond, as he argued his cases. His reputation grew as he defended the likes of John Hancock, the wealthiest person in Boston, who was accused in 1768 by the British of using his sloop Liberty to smuggle wine. With Adams defending, Hancock was acquitted.

In 1769, about a year later, a boat called the Pitt Packet, with a crew of Irish sailors, was boarded by the British off Marblehead. A search began, and one of the crew, Michael Corbet, afraid of what was called “impressment” warned that he would not be taken. Corbet drew a line on the deck and warned the British Lieutenant that if he crossed it, Corbet would kill him. The Lieutenant crossed, and Corbet killed him with a harpoon. Adams defended Corbet and the other sailors, and they too were acquitted.

As a result of defending the two cases against British actions, Adams’ reputation as a lawyer grew, as did his reputation as a patriot.

On March 5, 1770, just down the street from here, in front of what we now call the Old State House, British soldiers fired upon a crowd – a group of agitators, a mob. Three in the crowd fell instantly dead, two others died over the next few days. Patriots, including Sam Adams and the Sons of Liberty, spread the word of the massacre that had occurred in Boston. Outrage against the British followed. British Captain Preston and 7 soldiers were charged with murder. Nobody would defend them. Captain Preston asked Boston lawyer Josiah Quincy to defend him, who refused unless John Adams joined him. Adams agreed to defend the soldiers, risking the safety of his family and his reputation as a lawyer and patriot. Of the eight soldiers, 6 were acquitted and 2 were found guilty of manslaughter.

The residents of Boston and those of the other colonies were angry. Adams was criticized, and his law practice suffered. But to John Adams, the rule of law, the belief that there could be “liberty and order”, the belief that the law must “preserve a steady undeviating course,” that it cannot bend to the “wanton tempers of men,” was paramount. For him, it was better to save one “unfortunate victim of tyranny,” even if that meant many guilty may go unpunished.

John Adams believed in due process and was not afraid to turn his beliefs to action.

Now here we are, some 255 years later. We see people taken from sidewalks, their homes, their cars, and their places of work by the government. It’s being done in the name of safety, our President saying that we must make our communities safe again, protecting them from what he calls the rapists, terrorists, and murderers that have come from foreign lands.

And what is so alarming is that so many, too many, justify and amplify his actions and words, saying “they” are here illegally, “they” are criminals, “they” are not citizens, and

Remarks of Senator
John F. Keenan.

that “they” do not deserve due process.

Those who are willing to accept the taking of rights of others in support of the President ignore or forget the 14th Amendment to our Constitution:

No State shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Those justifying and amplifying the President’s actions ignore or forget that the United States Supreme Court has consistently ruled that,

“The fourteenth amendment to the constitution is not confined to the protection of citizens . . . These provisions are universal in their application to all persons within the territorial jurisdiction, without regard to any differences of race, of color, or nationality; and the equal protection of the laws is a pledge of the protection of equal laws.” *Wong Wing et al. v. United States*, 163 U.S. 228 (1896) citing, *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 U. S. 369, 6 Sup. Ct. 1064 32

I will leave it to legal experts to determine the exact process owed those who are being seized by the government under the Alien Enemies Act, and whether invoking that act is itself is even constitutional, but it is clear that due process has been denied.

The Supreme Court in its recent decision in the matter of Kristi Noem, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, et al v. Kilmar Armando Arbregio Garcia, made it clear that Garcia was denied process, and that the Government is required to “ensure that his case is handled as it would have been had he not been improperly sent to El Salvador.” The Supreme Court has said that Garcia was improperly sent to El Salvador. We know that Garcia is entitled to the equal protection of our laws – no matter the allegations and accusations against him, no matter how good or bad a person he may be. He is entitled to due process. And yet President Trump ignores the Court, making no effort to effectuate or facilitate Garcia’s return.

But Garcia was not the only person sent to El Salvador. Dozens have been sent, and there have been challenges to the actions of the Government in sending them as they did. And it’s this part of the matter that is most concerning.

In support of sending them to El Salvador, government court filings state,

“The lack of specific information about each individual actually highlights the risk they pose. . . it demonstrates that they are terrorists with regard to whom we lack a complete profile.”

Let me read that again,

“The lack of specific information about each individual actually highlights the risk they pose. . . it demonstrates that they are terrorists with regard to whom we lack a complete profile.”

I began my comments highlighting the role John Adams played in standing for what was then the notion of due process, and what became foundational in our Massachusetts and U.S. Constitutions. In his closing argument in the defense of the British soldiers, Adams said,

“Facts are stubborn things, and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.”

Now, 255 years later, when asked for facts, for proof to support sending people to El Salvador, our government argues that they lack “specific information” about those sent off to prison. Here in Somerville, they took Rumeysa Ozturk off the street and have refused to offer any facts in support of why.

The Government argues in the Garcia case that the lack of information, the lack of a complete profile, supports the conclusion that they are terrorists. Rather than offering facts as proof, they state they have no proof, and that the lack of proof is the justification for sending the men to a prison, likely for life.

For our government now, facts are not “stubborn things”, rather, they are irrelevant and

unnecessary, as are process and rights.

Make no mistake about it, our Constitution, the rule of law, is under attack.

We are here today, on the land of Hancock, just steps from where John Adams stood up and defended British soldiers who otherwise would not have been defended, where he argued that the rights to life and liberty belonged to all. Yet in our nation's capital, decisions continue to be made, with actions that follow, that deny life and liberty to many.

Adams argued that "The law, in all vicissitudes of government, fluctuations of the passions, or flights of enthusiasm, will preserve a steady undeviating course; it will not bend to the uncertain wishes, imaginations, and wanton tempers of men." And yet now we see attempts to bend the law upon the wishes, imaginations, and wanton tempers of the President.

We may not be able legislate in Washington, we may not be able to provide justice through the nation's courts, we may not be able to exercise or constrain the powers of the President and Commander in Chief, but in this chamber, in this building, upon this hill, in this City, in this Commonwealth, where the historic thoughts, words, and actions of so many women and men have changed the country and indeed the world, we have an obligation to those we represent and to generations to follow. We have an obligation to stand up and speak out. We have an obligation to honor and to defend our Constitution.

I am grateful to join my colleagues in doing so.

Remarks of Senator Patricia D. Jehlen.

Thanks to the Senate President for calling us together and for her powerful statement. Clearly, we are grateful for this opportunity to speak up.

Standing up together in every way we can is important. Even if it seems frustrating and futile, courage breeds courage. And it is important to show those who are captive, those who are in danger, those who live in fear, that other people care about them.

Rumeysa Ozturk is my constituent. She was kidnapped on a street in my city. Millions of people around the world have seen the video of her abduction, seen her image and know her story.

I didn't know her, but her Tufts colleagues that she was a "kind, gentle, service-minded person." They talk of her small daily acts of generosity and caring. She was a student of child development, Colleagues wrote: "*Rumeysa stands out as someone who reminds us daily of the importance of protecting children, cultivating joy, and connecting to our own deeper humanity. We are not the same without her steady, gentle presence*".

She is the very opposite of the violent offenders the president claims to want to deport. The only thing the administration has claimed against her is that she co-signed a letter in the Tufts Daily, along with 35 other students, in support of a vote by the Tufts Community Union Senate.

Rumeysa's kidnapping and imprisonment is truly frightening. And that is of course the point. To frighten students, immigrants, dissidents, universities, lawyers, and make us be quiet.

What gives me hope is the reaction to Rumeysa's story. At a rally that week, there were people who agreed with Rumeysa's opinions, and there were other people who strongly opposed them. But we joined in support of the rule of law and due process and free speech. The Tufts Democrats and the Tufts Republicans, who probably agree on little else, made a statement in support of her. The president's signature issue is deporting immigrants, and a majority of Americans now disapprove of what he's doing on immigration. That's even though $\frac{2}{3}$ of cable news viewers watch Fox News and get a less sympathetic view of Rumeysa and other immigrants and other students, and a more positive one of the president.

I believe this is because we have seen her face, watched her abduction, heard from her

Remarks of Senator
Patricia D. Jehlen.

friends and colleagues. But there are many many other people, including many in my district, who have been abducted without due process and often not even minimal justification. For those who were dissidents in authoritarian countries, for those who fled threats from gangs, deportation can be a death sentence.

Sinclair Lewis wrote a novel in 1935, *It Can't Happen Here*, about the rise of Hitler. But it can. It is happening..

There have been signs at demonstrations reminding us of the words of Pastor Martin Niemoller, a Protestant minister who first supported the Nazis, then turned against them and was imprisoned. He wrote, "First they came for the Communists, and I did not speak out--because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."

Our only hope of turning back this administration's drive to dictatorship back is to stand up in solidarity for each other.

It's very important that we speak out as we're doing today. It's important to help our local groups share information on Know Your Rights and to support neighbors who are threatened. But we as legislators also have the power to act, and our constituents are asking us to act, to pass the Dignity not Deportation bill, the Safe Communities Act, the Immigrant Legal Defense Act, the Location Shield Act. I hope we will act with urgency to protect all our residents who are endangered now. The administration is acting fast and we need to match their urgency.

Remarks of Senator Joan B. Lovely.

Thank you, Mr. President. I want to say that I am honored to be a member of this body. Massachusetts State Senate, I want to say thank you to all my colleagues for all of your comments. So far today I agree with all of them. I want to say especially a special thank you to our Senate President, who has led this conversation today who has been leading this moment for us to have an opportunity to speak to our constituents.

As has already been said, 250 years ago, this country, Massachusetts took the lead in standing up against injustice and tyranny, and now we find ourselves in the same spirit, taking a stand against injustice and tyranny. The rights to due process, fair treatment and the rule of law have been a sacred pillar of our democracy and an undeniable right for all people who live here and come to this great country.

Upholding this right has and remains a priority across our Commonwealth. But we've now see it that our federal government is eroding those rights and more, not just our immigrant communities. We have Americans who are being deported. Americans. Not just immigrants with or without documents. People who are undeniably American citizens are now being deported. I represent in my district two gateway communities Salem and Peabody who have large immigrant communities that date back centuries.

People who have immigrated to these communities, and so many communities across our commonwealth. All of these communities have contributed to our culture, boosted our economy boosted our communities to make them compassionate and welcoming places for all. My own ancestors hailed from Ireland, France, Germany, and Portugal. They all came here for the last 150 years to be part of this great country.

I'm so glad they did. So I want to just affirm to my constituents and to all of you today that I stand with our immigrant communities, pledge to uphold the rule of law and the right of all due process and fair treatment. And just in closing I am sad. I am upset and I am scared too. I think our country is incredibly vulnerable right now whether its economics, another

Remarks of Senator
Joan B. Lovely.

attack on our country it could happen. We don't have many friends across the world, across the globe because of the actions of our president but we must stand together here today and always for all of our residents that want to call Massachusetts home.

Thank you Mr. President.

Remarks of Senator Jacob R. Oliveira.

Thank you, Mr. President.

"He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone...

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people...

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us."

Mr. President, while these grievances were not written today, those are the words written by Thomas Jefferson 249 years ago in our nations' birth certificate, the Declaration of Independence, a document born of desperation, hope, and the courage to break from tyranny. Today, nearly two and a half centuries later, we find ourselves again at a crossroads where Jefferson's words ring loudly of an urgent truth.

Our nation stands on the brink of losing not just a political contest, but the very soul of our democracy. We face the encroaching threat of a leader who does not seek to serve but to rule, who yearns not to represent a free people but to dominate them. Jefferson warned that when a government becomes "destructive of these ends" — the ends of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness — it is the Right of the People to alter it.

And so, we are called, once again, to defend what generations before us fought to secure.

This is not the familiar and healthy push and pull of differing ideas within a shared commitment to democracy.

No. This is something darker.

We are confronted by a wannabe king. A would-be tyrant willing to cast aside the rule of law, dismantle our institutions, and claim power not by the consent but by coercion. We are called, in Jefferson's words, "to declare the causes which impel us to the separation" — not from our union or country, or one another, but from the forces of authoritarianism and oligarchs that now threaten to consume us from within.

The time has come to summon the spirit of 1776, not to replicate the revolution, but to preserve the freedom that the revolution secured.

And so, I rise today, Mr. President, to speak out against these injustices.

When, in the course of human events, a leader becomes the destroyer of the very institutions he was sworn to protect, when power is abused, when rights are trampled, when the pleas of a people are met with contempt, it becomes not merely the right, but the duty of free citizens to resist.

And so, Mr. President, in the spirit of those who once pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to oppose a King, I rise today to speak out against a President who has abandoned the oath every elected official takes to assume office.

He has unleashed federal agents into our cities, snatching individuals off the streets without a warrant, without cause, without due process.

Remarks of Senator
Jacob R. Oliveira.

For targeting immigrants not with justice but with terror, we must say — no more.

In Massachusetts, we have seen this firsthand. Neighbors disappeared under the shadow of unaccountable power — families shattered — communities living in fear.

He has turned his power against veterans, gutting vital services in the Department of Veterans Affairs under the false banner of "efficiency." For dismantling the very institutions meant to support those who risked everything for this country, we must say — no more.

In my hometown of Ludlow, at our own Veterans Center, I recently met with VSOs and Veterans already seeing the consequences: Closure of offices and services that Americans who served this nation with honor rely on. Now, their government meets them with indifference.

He has betrayed farmers, the backbone of our rural communities in Western Massachusetts, slashing programs essential for their survival. For creating \$7 million in unplanned debt across hundreds of local farms and farm-related businesses, for driving up the cost of food and pulling the rug from under Massachusetts families, we must say — no more.

For sacrificing the livelihoods of rural families at the altar of cruelty and corporate greed, we must say — no more.

For gutting the Natural Resources Conservation Service grants.
For decimating the Climate Smart Commodities Program

For attacking the engine of discovery and hope by strangling science and innovation.
For slashing funding to the National Institutes of Health, forcing layoffs and furloughs at one of our nation's premier research institutions — and the backbone of Commonwealths' innovation economy.

Two hundred researchers, scholars, and healers — gone. A \$30 million shortfall where last year there was \$193 million in vital NIH support — potential cures delayed. Hope for cures deferred. We must say — no more.

For sabotaging our planet's future, withdrawing critical environmental protections and striking at communities already suffering the effects of pollution and the climate crisis.
For terminating nearly \$1 million in EPA grant funding to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, denying children, seniors, and families in Hampden County the chance to breathe clean air, we must say — no more.

This attack is not about efficiency; it is cruelty, pure and simple.

For abandoning our children, by unlawfully dismantling the Department of Education, slashing \$106 million from K-12 education grants in Massachusetts, including \$47 million ripped from Springfield Schools alone that was already contracted out to upgrade HVAC systems in the dozens of schools, a city which earned the title "the Ashima capital of the US." to these cuts — we must say, no more. For stealing opportunity, equity, and hope from the next generation — for widening the gap between the very rich and the poor — we must say — no more.

He has refused to listen to petitions for redress, ignored oversight, spurned accountability, and scorned the rule of law. For making a mockery of our democratic institutions, we must say — no more.

This is not normal governance. This is not just the product of mere incompetence. This is a campaign of erosion, of sabotage, of deliberate demolition of the values and institutions that bind us together as a nation.

And it will not stop, Mr. President, honorable members.

Because the President of the United State and his administration is not merely targeting immigrants;

He is targeting veterans.

He is targeting farmers.

He is targeting scientists.

He is targeting children.

He is targeting this Commonwealth – the birthplace of our Democracy.

Because we strive to uphold the values that made this country great.

He is targeting the very spirit of the American experiment.

And so, Mr. President, to you and this honorable body, we must acknowledge:

This is not a series of disconnected policy failures. This is a strategy. A strategy to dismantle democracy, to sow fear, to consolidate power and wealth in the hands of a few, and to silence the rest.

First, they come for the immigrant — and then the veteran — and then the farmer — and then the researcher — and then the child — and then the people themselves.

It is no accident. It is no mistake. It is no coincidence.

It is the oldest story in the world: The story of a would-be King.

And so, we must answer.

For the immigrants detained and disappeared, we must fight. For the veterans abandoned and hungry, we must fight. For the farmers crushed by debt and despair, we must fight.

For the scientists silenced, we must fight. For the children robbed of their futures, we must fight.

For our air, our water, our lands — we must fight. For our laws, our liberty, and our Republic — we must fight.

We must not kneel to tyrants —

We must not yield to despair — we must summon our moral courage.

And so, Mr. President, colleagues: I join you today to condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the President and his Administration's assault on our democracy.

Congress must not stand by. The courts must not stand by. The people must not stand by.

We, the Massachusetts Senate must not stand by.

For, if we fail to act — if we normalize this cruelty — if we accept these abuses — we risk surrendering the very soul of our Commonwealth and our Nation.

But here in Massachusetts, we know how to fight.

In Massachusetts, we remember that democracy is not a gift from the powerful — it is a birthright of the people.

In Massachusetts, we remember that the arc of history only bends toward justice when we lean on it with insurmountable might.

And so, I stand with you, Mr. President.

For liberty. For dignity. For democracy. For each other.

I pledge, once again, like Thomas Jefferson before us, our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

And to every would-be King who dreams of power without principle, I say this to you and to the President and his administration:

You will not find subjects here. You will find citizens. You will find patriots. You will find Massachusetts.

Thank you.

Remarks of Senator Brendan P. Crighton.

First, I would like to say thank you to the Senate President, for her powerful remarks earlier today and for bringing us together. Thank you to all the members who spoke before me. I am reminded what a great honor and privilege it is to serve with all of you on a daily basis, but certainly when we're facing a crisis and we come together to speak powerfully and truthfully about what lies before us.

Remarks of Senator
Brendan P.
Crighton.

I am proud to be from the city of Lynn, where I have lived my whole life. A city of immigrants. Very proud of our diversity. I think back to a lesson in fourth grade at Thompson Elementary School and my teacher taught us the concept of the melting pot. In fourth grade, I had no idea what she was talking about, but she explained to us about diversity and how we look to our left and our right and there were people from different walks of life. That stuck with me, especially how she suggested that throughout our lives moving forward that would be a great benefit to us. And I was lucky throughout my time at Lynn Public Schools to have every single classroom, every single team I played on, and every extracurricular activity be surrounded by that diversity.

Today, in Lynn Public Schools, we have over 17,000 students. 43% are English language learners. Of that, 23% have only been in Massachusetts for one or two years. A great number of them do not have legal status or they are members of families that do not have legal status.

These students under this administration are living in fear every single day.

In January shortly after our president assumed office, one of these students, a high school junior, was detained by ICE. She was beginning to enter into a diversion program as a result of an incident in which she pushed her little brother in an argument, something very common in a household. She had applied for asylum, was entering into a diversion program, and she was shipped out of state to Maine. Without her mother, without her brother, without her family, friends, teachers. She was taken out of school and work -- she worked here legally. And with no prior convictions, she was sent to Maine. Thankfully, and with appreciation to local, county, state, and federal partners, we all came together and we were able to get her released from ICE but let's be honest, the damage is done.

The fear that exists throughout our school system and our community continues today. If it could happen to her, how it could not happen to so many constituents that I represent. When you talk to teachers and administrators, that fear is all too real today. And it is not just reflected in the anxiety they feel, it is reflected in the numbers -- with increased absences. Not to mention, the effects it is going to have on their social life, their behavioral health, the loss of learning and impact on careers. Many of the investments we all work together here for, are put on pause or perhaps removed all together.

I would ask the president, his administration, members of Congress to put yourself in the shoes of a parent dropping your kid off at school. And because of this threat of deportation, they are wondering whether they are going to be able to pick up their kid that afternoon. And furthermore, put yourselves in the shoes of the kids that are wondering whether they have a family to go home to. I know the Senate will continue to lead on this, and fight for every single one of our constituents regardless of where they are from and regardless of what their status is and I am proud to work with all of you on that. Thank you.

As previously stated, the above remarks were printed in the Journal of the Senate (see Senate Journal for May 1, 2025).

Ordered printed.

Order Adopted.

On motion of Ms. Kennedy,--

Ordered, That when the Senate adjourns today, it adjourn to meet again on Thursday next at eleven o'clock A.M.

Time of meeting.

On motion of Mr. Tarr, at two minutes before two o'clock P.M., the Senate adjourned to meet again on Thursday next at eleven o'clock A.M.