

# [***Senate Test Vote On Border Bill Appears To Fail; Border Patrol Chief On Senate Border Bill Impact; Lakewood Mayor: No Convo About Being Sanctuary; Denver Suburb Residents Fear Sanctuary City Status; Blinken Speaks From Israel Amid Hostage Deal Talks; Blinken: Isael Justified In Confronting Hamas; Blinken Takes Questions Amid Hostage Deal Talks; Blinken Takes Questions Amid Hostage Deal Talks; Israel Rejects Delusional Hamas Cease-Fire Plan; Americans Struggle With Staggering Levels Of Debt***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8W-R6J1-JCS1-6000-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News THE STORY WITH MARTHA MACCALLUM 3:00 PM EST

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**Body**

SANDRA SMITH, FOX NEWS HOST: Indeed. All right. Set your DVR and never miss AMERICA REPORTS. Thanks for joining us. I'm Sandra Smith.

JOHN ROBERTS, FOX NEWS HOST: Always remember to fasten your seatbelt when you're watching us because you never know which way it's going to go. I'm John Roberts. We'll see you again tomorrow. "THE STORY" with Martha starts right now. Buckle up for that.

MARTHA MACCALLUM, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Martha MacCallum, and this is THE STORY.

The border deal is about to implode essentially on Capitol Hill -- it went nowhere. More than a million migrants in the meantime have come across our border since just the first of October. Almost eight million since President Biden's inaugural. Those are all record-breaking numbers. The records have been broken and broken and broken again.

So, clearly there's a crisis, everyone acknowledges this, but Congress and the president are simply not acting to do anything to fix it or to reverse this situation at this point. But the huge numbers that we talk about all the time, they are numbers and they're important. They impact American cities, they impact the national security of our country, and the bottom line of all of that. No one knows any of this better than Border Patrol Chief Jason Owens.

And while this number may sound a whole lot smaller, it's one that he wants you to know something about. He says it's a huge concern. He just posted these photos, and he says that since October 1, Border Patrol has caught more than 160 coming in with gang affiliations.(INAUDIBLE), MS-13, all of them involve likely with murder, extortion, narcotics, weapons, human trafficking, prostitution.

So, on all of this and on the bill that has just been shot down and what he thinks about that, Chief Owens joins me exclusively now. Chief, very good to have you with us today. Thank you very much for being here.

JASON OWENS, BORDER PATROL CHIEF: Thank you, Martha. You have a lot of friends here in the Border Patrol that admire what you do.

MACCALLUM: Oh, I appreciate that. I'm very glad to hear that. And I thank you for speaking with our reporters from time to time and keeping all of us up to speed on what's going on down there. So, we've heard a lot of ***politics*** over this issue of this border deal. Putting all of that aside, if this had passed today, because I'm sure you have looked at this closely, would it have made the border safer than the status quo that we live with right now?

OWENS: Well, first of all, Martha, I want to thank Senators Lankford, Sinema, and Murphy for the bipartisan effort. We're charged with a very dangerous mission, and that mission is supposed to be to keep this country and its people safe from those who want to come in and do it harm. And we can't do that job without the support and the backing of our partners in Congress. And as long as there's no action coming out of Congress, we're languishing in the same situation.

So, I don't think there's anybody that says that a bill has to have everything that we need in order for us to accept it. That's why we have compromise. There are definitely aspects of that bill that I liked for the agency, and there's aspects of it that of course I didn't. That's always been the case.

MACCALLUM: You know, your predecessor testified this before Congress, and it was a pretty stunning moment. Watch this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. MARK GREEN (R-TN): Chief Ortiz, does DHS have operational control of our entire border?

RAUL ORTIZ, BORDER PATROL CHIEF: No, sir.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: "No, sir," you heard his answer. Would this bill have gotten any closer to having operational control of the southern border if Congress had passed it in this process that started today?

OWENS: Well, first off, I want to tell you, in the better part of 28 years, I had never seen a situation where I, as a law enforcement professional, would have said the border is secure. We need more people, we need more agents on the line. They need more force multipliers in the way of technology, equipment, infrastructure. It doesn't just help them do their job better, it helps keep them safe. There are aspects of this bill that would have added additional hundreds of Border Patrol agents to our rank and file that would have given us more technology, would have given us more equipment, infrastructure. Of course, I'm going to be supportive of that.

MACCALLUM: But do you think it would have helped you to regain operational control? Because what we're seeing now is, is a crisis mode that everyone is witnessing. So, you know, when you if you could talk to Congress right now about this what would you tell them that you, that you need, and would you tell them that you're disappointed today in this outcome?

OWENS: I am disappointed and I would tell them don't stop. Keep working together and come to a consensus that helps us keep this country safe. It's important to remember that the mission of the Border Patrol is not to process asylum seekers. We are dealing with this migrant influx that really should be applying for entry into the country through an established port of entry. And when they don't do that, what it does is, number one, it puts them in danger because it puts them in the hands of smugglers and cartels who extort from them, exploit them on a very dangerous, dangerous journey.

The other thing that it does is it pulls us off of task. While we're busy doing this, the cartels are taking full advantage of it somewhere else along the border to bring in who knows what and who knows who. These are the types of things like fentanyl, like other hard narcotics, hardened criminals that do represent a danger to our community. So, as long as we're stuck having to deal with a migrant influx, we cannot be out on patrol.

We're already behind the eight ball when it comes to the adversary having advantage along our borders because the area is simply so vast. That's why I say we need more technology, we need more infrastructure, we need more equipment. I worry at the end of the day not just about being able to keep the American people safe, but my brothers and sisters that are out there every day, they need those things, they depend on those things to make sure they get home safe at the end of every shift.

MACCALLUM: What's your estimate, because that sounds like you need more people, you need more resources in order to keep the country safe, which is what you just said. How many do you estimate are in the got away category because you don't have what you need at the border and didn't get any more support for it today in this fiscal year? Do you have a number on that?

OWENS: It would just be a guess because there's so much of the area that we don't have situational awareness. There's just so much of the border that we don't have control and we're not at right now. So, I know what we see, what we're able to actually capture, and it's in the hundreds of thousands. And those are the numbers that really, for us, keep us up at night, because if you know that all you need to do is turn yourself in to the Border Patrol and go through the process, what possible reason would you have for wanting to evade capture and put yourself in danger to cross through the desert or be in a stash house or lock yourself in the back of a tractor trailer?

Could it be that those are the folks that probably have criminal intent, that have bad intent, that represent a possible threat to the people of this country? That's the kind of thing that keeps us up at night, and that's why I say we cannot confuse the issue. The issue is the Border Patrol agents and the U.S. Border Patrol exists and is needed to keep the American people safe from things that would do it harm. Nobody is saying that immigration shouldn't take place, but it needs to take place in the right way for the reasons that I talked about. It puts them in danger and it takes us off of task.

MACCALLUM: We have breaking news that I have to get to, but would this, just if you can give me a brief answer if you possibly can, would this have dramatically cut down on the number of single adult males that we see crossing the border in enormous numbers and most of whom get released into the country? Would this have had a good impact in turning that situation around?

OWENS: If it allowed us to hold those people in custody until they were actually removed and it delivered a consequence, then yes, it absolutely would have.

MACCALLUM: Chief, thank you very much. There's a lot to talk to you about. I really appreciate you making time for us today. I hope you'll come back and join us again soon. It's a very important issue for Americans and our national security, as I know you know better than any one of us. So, thank you very much, sir, for all you do, and please send that message to everybody you're working with as well. We're grateful to them.

OWENS: I will.

MACCALLUM: All right. So, we were just discussing this and it is now official the Senate has blocked the border bill from being debated and it is likely done for that is a big disappointment as you just heard to the chief of our Border Patrol who desperately is looking for more resources to keep the American people safe. Republican Louisiana Senator John Kennedy was against the bill. He sits on the Appropriations Judiciary and Budget Committees and he joins us now.

So, Senator, I don't know if you got a chance to hear from Chief Owens who said that he was disappointed that this would have helped us to make the country safer, would have cut down on the number of single adult males entering the country that we've lost track of, not to mention these gang members as well. So, tell us what your take is this afternoon as this thing has imploded.

SEN. JOHN KENNEDY (R-LA): Well, for several days, Martha, the border bill has been dead. It's been, it's been as dead as Woodrow Wilson. And now, it's official. We just finished voting. There will be some who will want to continue to talk about this bill. It's their right, but I think they'll just be grooming a corpse. How we got here is no mystery. Some of my Democratic colleagues say Republicans welched on a deal.

There was no deal to welch on. As part of the supplemental bill, we asked to have some border provisions explored that might slow President Biden's open border down. Leader McConnell appointed James Lankford to do that. He did the best he could negotiating with people who support an open border. He brought the product back to us in the Republican conference in the Senate. And we said, James, we appreciate your hard work, but this is not sufficient, and that's what happened.

MACCALLUM: Yes, well you know the question is whether or not it would have made people incrementally safer because when you have a crisis that we cover here every day and we're talking about people on the terror watch list who are crossing you know likely today, yesterday, while this whole thing is being discussed people may be entering this country who are planning to do us harm. That's a, that's not a that's a pretty real assessment, I think it's a fair assessment. This is Kyrsten Sinema, who is obviously from Arizona, who was part of the three-person team, three senator team, who put this deal together. Here's what she had to say this morning when she spoke with Bill Hemmer and Dana Perino. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. KYRSTEN SINEMA (I-AZ): What our bill does do is close the border during times of high traffic. I do want to note, every single day this year, the border would have been closed had my bill become law every single day this year because the number of people coming is so high.

(END VIDEO CLIP) MACCALLUM: Obviously, she's very frustrated. She said that her you know in her home state people don't want it they don't care about ***politics*** they want to make at least -- and you just said senator that you were looking for some provisions that would improve, right? And when you go through this and I understand that people on both sides have very big you know differences over this but you don't think there were some provisions in there that were worth moving on?

KENNEDY: I can't predict the future. I have to wait for it like everybody else. But I don't see how anybody can look at this bill and confidently predict it would have been an improvement.

MACCALLUM: Well, the chief of the border patrol just said exactly that, don't you think that he probably knows better than anybody what would have helped his people out a little bit?

KENNEDY: And I have great respect for him, but I disagree with him. This bill would have required President Biden. It was given him enormous discretion. And I don't think he cares. And when somebody acts like they don't care, sometimes it's not an act, Martha. This president, for example, Kyrsten talked about in your clip there, she talked about the President's emergency powers. The President had emergency powers if he chose to use them.

MACCALLUM: All right. Senator, thank you very much. Obviously, a very hot topic, something that people are very concerned about when they see what's going on in their cities, when people are being arrested. Many people feel like this is something that we need to figure something out quickly, that it can't wait until the election necessarily. So, I thank you for giving us your thoughts on all of it as you watch this this afternoon, and we'll stay on it. We'll speak with you again soon. Thank you very much, sir.

So, clear to say that there are deep divides that are playing out across the country on this issue and when you get to the local level, residents and officials are grappling every day with the influx of migrants and the strain that it is putting on many of our cities.

So, in Colorado, last night, we found this meeting in Lakewood. Hundreds of people -- look at all these people in the hallways, they all wanted to be there to be part of this conversation. They wanted to make it clear to their leadership they do not have any intention of becoming a sanctuary city, which their concerns might happen. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: City Council is not discussing anything using the word sanctuary. They use words like good neighbor, welcoming, inclusive, supporting, sheltering. Technically true, Denver may not be asking us. We're asking them, can we help you?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: We're going to talk to the residents from there, coming up next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: So, some new developments today around the migrants suspected of beating NYPD officers in Times Square, in this horrific video.

So, a senior border official telling Fox that four of them believed to have fled New York are still at large.

There is a manhunt that is underway across multiple law enforcement agencies. And the release of the suspects in these beatings without bail prompted the GOP to call -- for calls to fire Manhattan D.A. Alvin Bragg.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

STATE SEN. ROBERT ORTT (R-NY): He is failing to execute the most basic functions of that job, which is to protect the people of Manhattan. In my view, he's almost a danger to the borough of Manhattan.

MACCALLUM (voice over): So, across the country, residents are expressing concern and anger in some cases about this growing migrant crisis. They are flooding townhall meetings because they're concerned about how it might impact their community. And one of those happened last night in Lakewood, Colorado.

Look how busy, look how crowded, I should say, this room is. These people turned out in force. This is a suburb of Denver. The residents gathered there to voice their opposition. They say they do not like the language that's being used around how they're going to help in this issue. They do not want to be a sanctuary city, just like Denver, which took in 40,000 migrants in the past year.

Lakewood officials insist Lakewood has no plans to become a sanctuary city. They are simply offering to help Denver with the influx, and be, "good neighbors".

It's not sitting to well with some of the Lakewood residents. Watch this.

MARY JANSSEN, FORMER COUNCIL MEMBER, LAKEWOOD, COLORADO: Why did our city manager go to the city of Denver, to see how they can -- how's Lakewood going to help the city of Denver with this migrant issue?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM (on camera): That Lakewood resident, Mary Janssen joins us now. She attended last night's meeting. She's a former Lakewood city council member. And she has lived there for close to 60 years. Mary, thank you very much for being here.

JANSEN: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

MACCALLUM: Absolutely. So, tell us what happened at this meeting. What -- why so many of the residents seem to sense that this is sliding in a direction that they're concerned about?

JANSSEN: Absolutely. So, we had a council meeting now. I wasn't at that council meeting. But I did watch it. And after that meeting, and our general reports, they came out with -- they voted -- the council voted to send the city manager to Denver to see how Lakewood could help them with the migrant issue.

It kind of left some open doors and we were -- what everyone's wondering, are we a sanctuary city? Or are we not? Are we going to be a sanctuary city? What does that entail? They weren't talking to any of the people.

I have heart talked to several people who have contacted their counsellors, and they're not getting straight answers.

MACCALLUM: OK.

JANSSEN: So, there is a group of people that got together and this viral meeting took place. And as you can see --

MACCALLUM: Mary, I'm sorry to jump in on you, and I do appreciate your time today. I hope -- I hope you'll come back. We're going to stay on this Lakewood story. But I have to break away right now, because we are hearing from the secretary of state.

My thanks to Mary Janssen, joining us from Lakewood. And that is the story will stay on.

Here is the Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the heels of discussions over a hostage deal talk. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ANTONY BLINKEN, UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE: -- lost someone that they love. And day after day, more people are killed.

On all of my previous visits here, and pretty much every day in between, we have pressed Israel in concrete ways to strengthen civilian protection to get more assistance to those who needed.

And over the past four months, Israel has taken important steps to do just that, starting the flow of aid, doubling it during the first pause for hostage releases, opening the north and south corridors in Gaza so that people could move out of immediate harm's way through these corridors with four hours pause every day, three hours' notice.

Opening Kerem Shalom, starting the flow of assistance from Jordan, establishing deconfliction mechanisms for humanitarian sites. As a result, today, more assistance than ever is moving into Gaza for more places than at any time since October 7th.

As the largest donor of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians, the United States has helped provide much of that assistance, including funding 90,000 metric tons of flour delivered from Ashdod port. That's enough to provide bread for 1.4 million people for the next five months.

A U.N. team began its mission to the north to assess conditions for the civilians who are still there, as well as what needs to be done to allow displaced Palestinians to return back home to the north.

And yet, as I said to the prime minister and to other Israeli officials today, the daily toll that its military operations continue to take on innocent civilians remains too high.

In our discussions today, I highlighted some key steps that Israel should take to ensure that more aid reaches more people in Gaza. Israel should open a res, so that assistance can flow to Northern Gaza, where, as I said, hundreds of thousands of people are struggling to survive under dire conditions.

It should expedite the flow of humanitarian assistance from Jordan. It should strengthen, deconfliction, and improve coordination with humanitarian providers. And Israel must ensure that the delivery of life saving assistance to Gaza is not blocked for any reason, by anyone.

We urge Israel to do more to help civilians knowing full well that it faces an enemy that would never hold itself to those standards, an enemy that cynically embeds itself among men, women, and children. And fires rockets from hospitals, from schools, from mosques from residential buildings.

An enemy whose leaders surround themselves with hostages, an enemy that is declared publicly its goal to kill as many innocent civilians as it can simply, because they are Jews and to wipe Israel off the map.

That's why we've made clear that Israel is fully justified in confronting Hamas and other terrorist organizations. And that's why the United States has done more than any other country to support Israel's right to ensure that October 7th never happens again.

Israelis were dehumanized in the most horrific way On October 7th. The hostages have been dehumanized everyday sense. But that cannot be a license to dehumanize others.

The overwhelming majority of people in Gaza had nothing to do with the attacks of October 7th. And the families in Gaza whose survival depends on deliveries of aid from Israel are just like our families. They're mothers and fathers, sons, and daughters, want to earn a decent living, send their kids to school, have a normal life. That's who they are. That's what they want. And we cannot -- we must not lose sight of that. We cannot, we must not lose sight of our common humanity.

We remain determined as well to pursue a diplomatic path to adjust in lasting peace and security for all in the region, and notably for Israel. And that diplomatic path continues to come into ever sharper focus as I traveled throughout the region, and talk to all of our friends and partners.

In Israel that's fully integrated into the region, with normal relations with key countries, including Saudi Arabia, with firm guarantees for its security, alongside a concrete, time bound irreversible path to a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel, with the necessary security assurances.

Over the course of this trip, we discussed both the substance and sequence of steps that all would need to take to make this path real. That includes steps by the Palestinian Authority to reform and revitalize itself. And I reaffirmed the imperative of those steps in my meeting today with President Abbas.

Chief among them, improving governance, increasing accountability to the Palestinian people, reforms that the Palestinian Authority is committed to make in a recently announced reform package, and that we urgent to implement swiftly.

Now, we can see so many of the actors in the region, lining up to move down the path that I just described. But some are not. Some are trying to sabotage that path. Iran and its proxies continue to escalate and expand the cycle of violence, that we all want a break.

We'll continue to defend our people, we'll continue to defend our interests in the face of such attacks, not to fuel escalation, but to prevent it.

Finally, in my discussions today with the prime minister and senior officials, I also raised our profound concerns about actions and rhetoric, including from government officials, that inflame tensions that undercut international support and place greater strains on Israel's security.

The people of Israel have sacrificed enormously to forge this nation and to defend it. They ultimately decide the right path to take, and whether they're ready to make difficult choices necessary to realize the vision, the long elusive prospect of true peace, and true security.

As a true friend of Israel, as the country that has always been first to its side, whether that was May 14th, 1948 or October 7th, 2023, we will always offer our best advice and the choices before this country, especially the ones that matter the most.

Thank you. Happy to take some questions.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The first question goes to Zolan Kanno-Youngs with the New York Times.

ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS, WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT, THE NEW YORK TIMES: Thank you, Mr. Secretary for the question. I just have a couple for you here.

I know that you said there is still room for agreement in terms of the negotiations over the release of hostages. But the prime minister, after you spoke with him, pretty bluntly dismissed Hamas's response, describing it even as ludicrous.

I just want to clarify, is this response or these negotiations DOA at this point? And what specifically did the prime minister object to in that response?

Also, the prime minister shortly, after you met with him, made clear that Israeli troops will be moving deeper into Rafah. Will the United States simply stand by as this action is pursued even with 1 million Palestinians, more than a million Palestinians being held -- are in Rafa seemingly with nowhere to go. And if I may, Congress is now moving ahead with a bill that would pair aid for Ukraine with aid for Israel. Would the administration endorse any potential package that once again bits on rough funding? Thank you.

ANTONY BLINKEN, US SECRETARY OF STATE: That's impressive. Now, I'm taking it that includes the questions of all of your colleagues as well, is that right?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I don't think so. Couldn't do that to them.

BLINKEN: All right. Starting with the first part. Look, as I said we've looked very carefully at what came back from Hamas and there are clearly non-starters in what it's put forward. But we also see space in what came back to pursue negotiations, to see if we can get to an agreement and that's what we intend to do. And I'm not going to speak for Israel or anyone else involved, but again we believe the space is there and we believe that we should pursue it.

With regard to Rafa. Look, as I said before, Israel has the responsibility, has the obligation to do everything possible to ensure that civilians are protected, and that they get the assistance they need in the course of this conflict. Any military campaign, military operation that Israel undertakes needs to put civilians first and foremost in mind, and I suggested again some ways to do that.

And that's especially true in the case of Rafa where there are somewhere between 1.2 and 1.4 million people, many of them displaced from other parts of Gaza. So we want to make sure, again that in anything that's done in any military operations, the situation for civilians is first and foremost in mind, and that the necessary steps are taken to make sure that they're protected and they have the assistance they need.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You suggested some ways to do that.

BLINKEN: Well, I just went through a number of things that we urge Israel to do now on the -- building on what it's already done in terms of both humanitarian assistance and civilian protection. And as I said, in the case of Rafa itself, that's extremely important because it has such a dense population, including many people who've been displaced from other parts of Gaza.

And on UNRWA, look, we were deeply concerned by the allegations that were made about the participation or involvement of some of its employees in October 7th. And it's imperative that, as the UN has said it's doing, that there be a thorough investigation, that there be clear accountability, and that there be clear measures put in place to make sure that this can't happen again, that personnel working for it were not in any way involved in terrorism or the events of October 7th.

We know that the work that UNRWA performs, the functions that it performs, have to be preserved because so many lives are depending on it. And so going forward, we're going to look to the actions that are taken. And as I said, it's imperative for functions be preserved.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It should then would potentially support --

(END LIVE COVERAGE)

MACCALLUM: All right. We're going to keep listening to this but we're going to bring in Nathan Sales, former Ambassador at Large and Coordinator for Counterterrorism under President Trump. Ambassador, good to have you back on the program.

You've been listening to this with us. Obviously, Antony Blinken has his word cut out for him in this situation, speaking with Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister of Israel. He also spoke with Mahmoud Abbas of the PLA. So let me just hear your thoughts, let everyone hear your thoughts on what is happening here, and whether or not Blinken's reaction to Netanyahu saying no deal is what you would suggest coming from the US government.

NATHAN SALES, FORMER US AMBASSADOR AT LARGE: Well, hey, Martha. Good to see you. I think, first of all, we all want this war to be over as soon as possible. We all want the hostages to come home safely and soundly, to be reunited with their families. But what I heard from the secretary was disappointing. What Israel needs right now is not a lecture. It doesn't need its best friend to wag a finger in its face. What it needs is US support.

Churchill said, give us the tools and we'll finish the job but we all should want Israel to finish this job quickly so that peace can be restored. The only way to restore peace in Gaza and across the region is for Hamas to be eliminated. That is Israel's war aim. And the Biden administration has said, we support Israel in its efforts to completely eradicate Hamas so that it can never threaten Israel again, and so that it can no longer misrule over Palestinian civilians as well.

What I'm starting to see is the Biden administration going wobbly, why is that? I mean, you have to wonder whether electoral ***politics*** are starting to enter into the calculation. Is this about Michigan and its 15 electoral votes as the Biden administration starts to worry about bleeding support on its left flank?

MACCALLUM: I think it's a very valid question as we get into this. And whether or not the administration is going wobbly, as you say, could easily be the result of pressures that he is seeing in these protests across the country. Not only that, what about what happened on the Hill? There was a fund Israel bill that was brought up by Speaker Johnson yesterday, broken apart from this border and Ukraine comprehensive bill that there know at one point some hope for. But the Israel aid bill was shot down on Capitol Hill yesterday, Nathan.

SALES: Right. Well, you know, the situation on Capitol Hill is fluid, changes minute by minute, second by second. Congress needs to do its job. Congress needs to provide funding for our friends who are facing existential threats, whether that's the Taiwanese who are looking at the people's liberation army potentially invading as soon as 2017, whether it's the Israelis who are facing genocidal terrorists backed by Iran as it races towards a nuclear program of its own that it will menace the Jewish state with, whether it's Ukraine facing an invasion from Russia.

Congress, please, do your job, fund our friends because it is in the interest of the United States for our enemies, whether it's Russia or China, or Iran, to not feel that they have the upper hand.

MACCALLUM: Yes, ignoring these things is a luxury that we probably can't afford. I'm going to play a moment for you from President Biden the other day because it's relevant to the conversation that we're having, during which he couldn't recall the name of the terrorist group that attacked Israel on October the 7th. Let's play this. I want to hear what you think.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES: There's some movement, there's been a response from the opposition but -- yes, I'm sorry, from Hamas.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Ambassador?

SALES: Well, it doesn't inspire confidence, does it, Martha? Look, the president of the United States has one job, and that is to protect US national security both here at home and to protect our interests abroad. And part of protecting our interests abroad means standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies. And Israel is one of our closest allies.

If we can't count on the President to even know the name of the enemy, we've got to wonder whether he's really up to the job of protecting America from our enemies and from the enemies that menace our friends as well.

MACCALLUM: Ambassador Nathan Sales, thank you very much. Always good to see you, sir. Thanks for stopping by.

SALES: Likewise.

MACCALLUM: You bet, all right. So there is a powerful warning on Capitol Hill today about US democracy, a House committee holding a hearing on "American confidence in Elections." One of the witnesses today was Mollie Hemingway, editor in chief of the Federalist and a Fox News contributor. Here's part of what Mollie testified today on Capitol Hill. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MOLLIE HEMINGWAY, EDITIOR-IN-CHIEF, THE FEDERALIST: Instead of having total security and a verifiable chain of custody for ballots being issued, cast and counted, we flood addresses across the country with tens of millions of unsupervised mail in ballots months ahead of elections, frequently to locations from which voters, if they're even alive, have long since moved. Instead of having election administration that is rigorously nonpartisan and impartial under the law, we have allowed the private takeover of government election offices, bipartisan oligarchs, and their armies of activists who use those offices and their authorities to tilt the election toward favored candidates. Instead of a vibrant public square where Americans can debate issues and express their strongly held views, we have an elaborate censorship industrial complex where the government works hand in hand with tech oligarchs to suppress and blacklist debate on all the important issues that contribute to election outcomes. This is something I know firsthand because our government worked with tech companies to censor me for my election reporting.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: So coming up tonight, Mollie Hemingway on Jesse Waters' "Primetime," 8:00 pm Eastern here on Fox. She is laying out her own research. She wrote a book on this and the custody of ballots, obviously very important to a fair and open election.

So take a look at this. Democrats' advantage over Republicans among black and Hispanic voters is shrinking all the time, and it is now at an all time low according to the folks at Gallup. Democrats still have the edge in party preference, that is no surprise, but it has dropped by double digits among both of these groups in the past three years to the lowest levels that Gallup has ever recorded in this particular polling.

Let's bring in Leo Terrell, civil rights attorney and Fox News contributor. Leo, good to have you with us today. We've seen a number of examples across the country of why this deterioration may be happening, and I want to get into some of those with you. But just your top line reaction to this continuing shift in the political demographic in this country.

LEO TERRELL, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Very simply -- thank you for having me, Martha. The Democrat playbook is outdated. The message is old. This country is not systemically racist. And so when Joe Biden goes into a black church every four years, that's not going to signal the black community to vote for the Democrats or go to the Hispanic community. It's the Democrat policies, Martha. It's the Democrats' policy on immigration, law and order, the economy, inflation, those things affect black Americans. And black Americans and Hispanics are saying those policies are hurting us.

And the Trump effect is in play. This decline is because many African American, Hispanics feel that they had a better standard of living during the Trump administration. And Trump, being a wealthy millionaire, is talking about those issues, talking about immigration, talking about gas prices.

One last point, you look at the effect of immigration on democratic cities, blacks and Hispanics. It is creating a tension in those communities and that's why you see this shift.

MACCALLUM: No doubt about it. I want to play this from Mayor Eric Adams because it seems, and we also have an example from Brandon Johnson if we get to it. The Chicago mayor, in sort of a similar vein, and it appears that there's an effort among some Democratic leaders to continue to remind black voters of where their alliance should be in their opinion. This is Eric Adams in New York a few days ago, January 31st, watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ERIC ADAMS, NEW YORK CITY MAYOR: Have you ever seen this much chocolate lead in the city of New York? That's why people are hated on me. How many of you go to church? Ma'am, this is a Matthew 21 and 12 moment. Jesus walked in the temple. He saw them doing wrong in the temple. He did what? He turned the table over. I went to city hall to turn the table over.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Leo, what do you think?

TERRELL: Martha, thank you for that question. You know who's hating on him? Blacks, whites, Hispanics, everyone, regardless of color. You know why, because the city's in turmoil. That's a perfect example of why blacks and Hispanics, and old people are rejecting Democrat policies.

Look at what's happening in New York, in Chicago. I want to be very clear. I've been a civil rights attorney for 30 years, there is no systemic racism in our government. You have black mayors, and he's sitting there telling you that the race card is still alive and well. That is a lie when it comes to democratic cities. You can say the same thing for Chicago, the same thing for Los Angeles. Minorities are everywhere in this country. By the way, we had a black president, I think, in 2008 for eight years.

MACCALLUM: You know, what's ironic to me in that sound bite, Leo, is that I think a lot of people would love for someone to come in and flip over the tables in Albany and other places. And the mayor said that's what he wanted to do. And I think that black New Yorkers, white New Yorkers, Hispanic New Yorkers would like to see a shake up for the better. So that, to me, is separate from this idea that, you know, which I think, you know, you have just stated, you think is disingenuous that he's being pushed back on or not able to do his job because he hired so many black people to be part of his leadership team.

TERRELL: And that's the game that the Democrats played, identity ***politics***. There is a move to try to get the governor to remove Alvin Bragg, they can't. You know why, Martha, because of his skin color.

Identity ***politics*** has boxed in the Democrats and it allows them to hold incompetent people, allow them to remain in office. Alvin Bragg is incompetence. His skin color keeps him in office.

MACCALLUM: I just want to play one last sound bite. This is President Biden in the last presidential election talking to someone who has become a very important person to speak to for people running for high office. Charlamagne tha God. And this is from the Breakfast Club way back then. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: If you have a problem figuring out whether you're for me or Trump, then you ain't black.

CHARLAMAGNE THA GOD, RADIO HOST: It don't have nothing to do with Trump. It has to do with the fact I want something for my community.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: A quick response to that if you would, Leo.

TERRELL: Very quickly. Fox has video, that statement is the reason why I left the Democrats and became a Republican, and voted for Trump. I said on "Sean Hannity show," that's the reason why I left. That statement is racist.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Leo, thank you. Always great to have you with us, sir. Thanks so much. We'll talk to you soon.

TERRELL: Thank you, Martha.

MACCALLUM: So here's the breaking news that I just mentioned. US forces now telling Fox that an American strike has killed at least one senior member of an Iran proxy group in Iraq. Chief national security correspondent Jennifer Griffin live at the Pentagon with the details on this. Hi, Jennifer.

JENNIFER GRIFFIN, FOX NEWS CHIEF NATIONAL SECURITY CORRESPONDENT: Hi, Martha. Well, the details are coming in. We have confirmed with two senior US defense officials that it was a US drone that took out a senior leader of the Kataib Hezbollah group in Eastern Baghdad. It was a hellfire missile that was fired on an SUV, we're told, where this leader was traveling in Eastern Baghdad.

There were several other people in the car, possibly members of Kataib Hezbollah. We're told this is a group that of course the US military has been tracking since the attack on the base that killed three Americans inside Jordan, Martha.

MACCALLUM: All right. We had been told, Jennifer, that there were going to be layers of these strikes that would be the retaliation for the loss of three US servicemembers. And that these individuals would not be off limits. There was a lot of discussion that maybe they had left the area, but it seems that this person was -- where he shouldn't be or where he should be, I guess, if you're looking at it from the US perspective in terms of this mission.

So, Jennifer, thank you very much. Let us know what more you learn. Thanks, Jennifer.

So Americans drowning in credit card debt like never before, and millennials are having an especially hard time keeping up with their payments. Some financial words of wisdom from Shark tank star Kevin O'Leary, Mr. Wonderful, coming up next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: OK. There is the scene in Costa Mesa, California. Nikki Haley campaigning there today. She is looking ahead to Super Tuesday next month after losing the Nevada primary. The winner "none of these candidates" that got checked off more than anyone else.

She was on with Charles Payne earlier on Fox Business. She said she didn't campaign or spend any money in Nevada, where the primary, she said, was just symbolic.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NIKKI HALEY (R), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: We didn't spend a day or a dollar there. We weren't even worried about it. It's why we haven't talked about it. Our focus is on South Carolina, going into Michigan, going into Super Tuesday. Those are the places that we're worried about. We're not focused on Nevada. We never were.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: So former President Trump was not on the Nevada primary ballot, he is competing in the caucuses tomorrow. That's the contest where the 26 delegates for the Republican Party are up for grabs after dispute between the state and Nevada's Republican Party.

So take a look at this. US credit card debt hitting a new all time high, $1.13 trillion in the last three months of 2023. That according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and younger adults are having the most trouble paying their bills. Let's bring in Kevin O'Leary, Chairman of O'Leary Ventures, Shark Tank investor and Mr. Wonderful. Kevin, great to see you. Thank you very much for being here today.

I mean, that's a pretty scary chart going back to 2018. Maybe we can pop that up again. But it pretty much takes off like a rocket in 2021 and hits levels that we've never seen before.

KEVIN O'LEARY, CHAIRMAN, O'LEARY VENTURES: This is the number one question I get on social media today about this situation. Remember 2021, height of a pandemic, most people stuck at home, started to use these credit cards to buy goods and services direct from manufacturers, and they bought a lot. Consumer market really exploded back then if you recall.

So the real issue here is at the same time this is occurring, the Fed all of a sudden did something historic, raised rates to an unprecedented level in terms of pace never seen before. Credit card debt was 18%, now up at 23%, 24%, 25% so you're servicing even small amounts and incredibly high interest rate payments. This is a big problem.

MACCALLUM: So I just want to go to this flashback. This is President Biden stunned back in the middle of last month at the price of a smoothie. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: By the way, anybody want a coffee? That's on me.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I'll take a smoothie.

Biden: You'll take a smoothie. Well they're $6 but I'll do it anyway.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Light moment, but everybody knows what that pinch is like.

O'LEARY: Yes. Well, food costs have gone up pre-pandemic from early 2020 till now, about 39%. At the same time, the average salary only increased 4%, so about 62,000 a year. So all of these inflation, pre-inflation costs have skyrocketed around housing, food, energy and people are getting squeezed. And where do you get relief? They put it on your credit card. It's a very bad outcome.

Now, the way to solve this, to give millennials some advice, is two simple hacks. Number one, you've got to cut your spending back by about 15% per year and take the difference, which is a small amount if you're making 62,000, still very effective, and put it against the credit card debt, do it on a monthly basis. And the other hack, and I want to be fully transparent here, I'm an investor in this one, is called the Bilt credit card, B-I-L-T, where you pay your rent on your credit card. This thing has exploded since that data came out, because the number one cost to millennials is their rent. They've never been able to pay it on a credit card before. And that lets you increase your credit rating, because you have to pay your rent, and you get affinity points with it.

For the first time ever, you can buy anything you want, plus your rent on your credit card. The valuation that company you covered it on Fox just last week, went from 30 million to 3.1 billion. It's the most successful credit card in America today.

MACCALLUM: So, you know, just so I'm clear, I mean, obviously, if you're putting on credit card, isn't that going to make your credit card debt a whole lot higher? Because it's a large bill, your entire rent.

O'LEARY: The whole idea is you have to pay your rent or you can end up on the street. So the idea is you take the Bilt card, pay your rent with it, and pay it off every month. That makes your credit rating go up, and at the same time you build up point after point, after point, after point that you never do before.

Now, if you're not planning on paying your rent, you're going to end up in a bad place anyways. It's the number one expense you must pay off every month, and you're doing it now anyways. If you haven't paid your rent in three months, you're not in your apartment anymore. That's what happens.

MACCALLUM: Good point. You say to cut your spending by 15%, where do you see the most waste? What should people look to first and say just cut that habit now?

O'LEARY: I'm getting really good at this. I make all of my students, I teach this a lot in all kinds of colleges. Two pieces of paper, let paper, 90 days worth of your income, including your side hustle and the money your grandmother gave you or whatever you're getting in, write paper, you don't need a computer for this, all your costs. And what you're going to find is that you're outspending yourself and it's ending up padding on your credit card.

So number one, stop buying all that crap you don't need. Look in your closet. You have too many sneakers, too many jeans, too many tops, too many bottoms. That's the first place. Clothing, such a waste. Most people just wear 20% of what they own. And secondly, you got to stop buying lunch at $18 when you know you can make a sandwich for two and. That $5 coffee, stop. You can make one for $0.15 cents.

MACCALLUM: Yes. No $6 smoothie, no $5 coffee, and bring your lunch is a great way to cut back. But don't make me cut back on clothing. That's a tough one for me. Thank you, Kevin.

O'LEARY: Take care.

MACCALLUM: You too. Great to see you.

So coming up now, a sneak peek at my Fox Nation Special, which is going to drop this week, "The Fall of the House of Murdaugh: The Jurors Speak" is this edition. Last week, a judge denied Alex Murdaugh's request for a whole new murder trial in the deaths of his wife, Maggie, and his son, Paul. His lawyers accused the county clerk of jury tampering. I sat down with some of those jurors and asked them about that claim.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Did you feel pressured to reach a verdict quickly?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I didn't.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

MACCALLUM: Not by Becky Hill?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: She made it clear. She said that the Judge Newman stated that we had until 10:00 to make a verdict. That was the time that we were given. But if we didn't, it was fine. She found a hotel. We would have to be sequestered, which made sense. We were in deliberations. We didn't know we would be deliberating that day, but it made sense. But there was no pressure whatsoever.

And the four lady -- I mean, she even told us when were in there alone and the door was locked, she told us we don't have to do this tonight. If you're too tired, you don't have to do this tonight. We don't have to do it. And even after we came to our verdict, she said if you don't feel comfortable with your decision, we don't have to go out there. We can stay here or we can come back in the morning until you are comfortable.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: These women were very interesting. They shared a lot of insight into the trial and what happened with me yesterday. So "The Fall of the House of Murdaugh: The Jurors Speak," that drops on Fox Nation on Friday. You can download that and watch it on Friday and this weekend.

So thanks for being here, everybody. That's THE STORY for today. As always, THE STORY goes on. So have a great evening. We'll see you back here tomorrow at 3:00. "YOUR WORLD" gets started right about now. A lot of green on Wall Street.

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