

voted to support this bill just yesterday. We will vote on final passage later today. And because this measure cannot be filibustered, we expect it to pass.

I ask my colleagues who voted against bipartisan commonsense clean water legislation yesterday to think differently today. Work with us to protect the middle class instead of defending “inexplicable, arbitrary” regulation that is probably illegal and almost certainly violates the Clean Water Act.

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, on another matter, Mr. President, we live in a time of diverse and challenging global threats. It is a time when we see ISIL consolidating its gains in both Iraq and Syria. It is a time when we see the forces of Assad marching alongside Iranian soldiers and Hezbollah militias. It is a time when we see Russian aircraft flying above them in support, and it is a time when commanders tell us that additional resources are required to ensure the safety and preparedness of our troops. I think it is time to finally support the men and women who volunteer to protect us. The last excuse not to do so—the setting of a top-line budget number—has been cleared away. We fixed that. There is no reason that our colleagues shouldn't join us in moving forward now.

These brave men and women aren't poker chips in some Washington political game. They are the sisters, fathers, daughters, and neighbors who voluntarily and selflessly put themselves in harm's way so that we might live free. These are the men and women we will salute this month on Veterans Day. It is not enough just to support those who defend us then; we need to support them right now.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2232

Mr. MCCONNELL. Finally, Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2232) to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CLEAN WATER REGULATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, here is just a brief word on the Republican attack on the Clean Water Act. The bottom line is that the administration's clean water regulation will protect 117 million people. The cries about this legislation fly in the face of facts. As I said, 117 million Americans are being protected.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday the Republican leader once again filed a motion to invoke cloture on the Department of Defense appropriations bill. This is another example of the Republican leader wasting the Senate's time on repeated cloture votes that he knows will fail. Republicans have tried this piecemeal approach already, and it didn't work. We came within hours of defaulting and not extending the full faith and credit of the United States and came within days of shutting down the government.

Even though two-thirds of Republicans in the House and Senate voted to close the government and default on our debt, we were able to craft a budget agreement that funds both the middle class and the Pentagon. Now it is time to move on and pass an omnibus appropriations bill that addresses both defense and the needs of the middle class in keeping with the budget agreement that passed last week.

There is no reason we can't get an omnibus bill to fund all the government by December 11, which is the deadline. If the Republicans balk, the government will close. Again, remember, two-thirds of the Republicans in Congress already voted no. They voted to default on the debt of this country and to close the government. That should give everyone pause.

THE KOCH BROTHERS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, over the last several months, the Koch brothers have been on a public relations campaign. This Koch propaganda campaign has accelerated over the past few weeks. Charles and David Koch have been going to great lengths to convince the American people that they are not just a couple of billionaires who are trying to dismantle Social Security and who closed the Export-Import Bank, putting 165,000 Americans out of work and costing the government billions of dollars. These two men fought a zoo in Ohio, and they fought a Republican mayor of Colorado Springs, CO, as he tried to fix the city's potholes. They stopped both from happening.

The Kochs want everyone to believe they are not the ones rigging the system to benefit themselves and their wealthy friends. The Koch brothers are spending their vast wealth holding newspaper and television interviews on their propaganda campaign. In spite of

all their efforts, this Koch media tour has failed to bury the one simple truth: The Koch brothers are trying to buy America.

During an interview yesterday, the scales fell away once again and revealed the Koch brothers' true intentions. In justifying his and his brother's efforts to inject hundreds of millions of dollars into conservative political campaigns, Charles Koch said: “I expect something in return.”

The Koch brothers are getting plenty in return. So far they have bought a Republican House, a Republican Senate, a government shutdown, an ousted Speaker of the House, a shuttered Export-Import Bank, and a Republican Presidential field where nearly every candidate kowtows to these billionaires. But that is not all. The Kochs have procured a media that is intimidated by their billions—too intimidated to hold them accountable.

Consider yesterday's interview on MSNBC's “Morning Joe” show. This is classic. Here are some of the questions that Joe and Mika asked the Koch brothers.

Joe Scarborough asked: “It's hard to find people in New York, liberals, we were talking about this before, liberals or conservative alike, who haven't been touched by your graciousness, whether it is towards the arts or cancer research. Do you think you got that instinct from your mom?”

Mika asked: “Sitting here in your childhood home”—they were doing this interview in Topeka, KS—“we have the Koch brothers. Which was the good brother?” That was another tough question.

Joe then asked: “You guys both play rugby together, right?”

Sometimes—most of the time—they weren't even questions; they were just compliments.

At one point, here is what he said: “You sound like my dad. That's very diplomatic. That's very good.”

Wow. Those were some really tough questions asked by the host of “Morning Joe.” That is tough journalism.

Those questions are so easy; they may even qualify them to moderate the next Republican Presidential debate.

It seems that some journalists are determined not to get on the wrong side of the Koch brothers and their billions. After all, we have seen how the Koch empire targets people, cities, and States that do anything that conflicts with the Koch brothers' radical agenda. When the media rolls over for these modern-day robber barons, as it is doing now, our country is in trouble.

As Charles Koch himself said, he and his brother are not spending this money for altruistic reasons; they are doing it for one reason and one reason only—for the profits of themselves and fellow billionaires who have rigged the system against the middle class. They said it themselves. They want something in return, and what they want is profit for their corporations. Their own publicist once explained why the Koch