

I am now. I have never been as concerned about this great country having the ability to stay united in the face of a true, unprecedented threat. Russia will be back, and many say Russia has never left. Enough with the partisan distractions. It is past time we faced this threat standing together. The American people deserve that much.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, here we are again. The clock is ticking. The current funding bill expires on Thursday, and we have to act to keep the lights on. That strikes me as a very modest goal because there is so much more we need to be doing. When our Democratic colleagues shut down the government last month, we knew that this was all we could get at the time, which is a short-term continuing resolution until February 8. Well, this is a miserable way to do business. Continuing resolutions are really an abdication of responsibility on behalf of this body and are not to the benefit of the American people.

It doesn't have to be this way. What we are waiting on is an agreement between the leaders of both the House and the Senate to come up with spending caps for the rest of 2018 and 2019. We could have that agreement today, but our colleagues across the aisle are dragging their feet, to put it mildly. For what? Well, it is the same reason that they shut down the government last month. It is over an unrelated immigration issue, which I will get to in a moment. They appear not to have learned any lesson from the shutdown, which clearly the American people did not want and did not agree with.

We have two distinct issues that need to be handled separately. Funding the government—particularly funding our military—shouldn't be held hostage to an immigration issue, especially when we continue to work together in good faith on border security and on the young adults who are affected by the deferred action on childhood arrivals, or DACA.

I say, let's drop DACA from the funding debate and submit the caps deal right now. As I have said before, short-term continuing resolutions are a terrible way to do business. Governing is not a merry-go-round. We shouldn't have to come back in March and have these same discussions over and over again.

This past February 2 happened to be my birthday, but it is also Groundhog

Day, and we seem to wake up every morning and go through the same motions over and over and over again and never reach a conclusion. This was brought home to me pretty dramatically today when the leadership from Texas for the community health centers told me that they can't plan. They have employees and healthcare providers who are worried about whether they will have a job because government will somehow fail in keeping its doors open and keep their programs funded. And to boot, patients are worried about whether they are going to have continued access to healthcare, the community health centers that serve vast swaths of this country.

Why are people put through all this anxiety—both in terms of planning and in terms of the staff and the patients who depend on these community health centers—just because we can't seem to get our act together here and agree to those spending caps because they are being held hostage to another unrelated issue, which the majority leader has committed to addressing in due course.

Well, our colleagues seem to be content to drive around in circles, and—not to mix metaphors—they are spinning their wheels in the process, and nothing actually gets done. But maybe that is part of the plan too. If you look at 2017, we have had a pretty impressive 2017 in terms of what this Congress has accomplished when it comes to overregulations, when it comes to confirming Federal judges, including the Justice on the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch. And then, of course, there is the big tax bill, which was really something that happens only every 30 years or so. It is very unusual. We are already beginning to see the beneficial results of that tax legislation, and people are learning more about it and will continue to learn more about it as they open their paycheck stubs and see how much more take-home pay they have. I am beginning to think that these short-term continuing resolutions and never reaching an agreement on spending caps are part of the plan to just keep us churning and to keep us not producing on behalf of the American people. I hope I am wrong, but it sure feels like that to me.

I hope our colleagues will change their tactics and learn from their mistakes. Shutdowns don't help anybody. They certainly don't help the party that is responsible for shutting down the government. So let's get this caps deal done in short order.

Here is another thing that has been held hostage to this unrelated immigration issue—disaster relief. It was last September when Hurricane Harvey hit the State of Texas. We had an unprecedented rain event where basically the hurricane parked itself over Houston, TX, and rained down 50 inches of rain in about 5 days, disrupting people's lives, destroying their homes. Some of the winds down along the coast blew businesses and homes away,

and people are working hard to recover from that.

The House passed an \$81 billion disaster relief bill—not just to help the victims of Hurricane Harvey but also the victims of Hurricane Maria in the Virgin Islands, in Florida, and in Puerto Rico as well. And then there are the wildfires and the mudslides out West. Eighty-one billion dollars was appropriated by the House of Representatives, and it has been sitting here since December with no action whatsoever. Why? Well, count that up as another hostage of this unrelated immigration issue or the desire to just force us to spin our wheels and not get things done. I don't understand it, and if I do understand it, I don't like it one bit.

The first rule of holes is, when you find yourself in a hole, quit digging. That is the only way to get a different outcome. But our Democratic colleagues have found themselves in a hole and insist on continuing to dig after the disastrous shutdown, leading us to basically driving in circles.

I would like to speak briefly about the ongoing border security and DACA negotiations. This is an issue that is very important to me, coming from a State with the largest, longest common border with Mexico, where we see firsthand the impact of illegal drugs, trafficking in human beings, and just the failure of the Federal Government to live up to its responsibility when it comes to securing our borders. We learned on 9/11/2001 how important it is to know who is coming into our country and why they are here, because not everybody who comes to the United States wants to do good by us. Some of them want to do us harm. And certainly that is true when it comes to trafficking in the poison that unfortunately comes across our borders and leaves so many lives in tatters as a result of overdoses and drug abuse.

I have talked to a number of my constituents in Texas, including Hispanic leaders, to try to bring them up to date on the discussions that occurred here because they care quite a lot about both of these issues—border security, as well as what we are going to do for these young adults whose only mistake was to come to this country with their parents when they were children.

As I have said before—and I will say it again—we don't hold children responsible for the mistakes their parents make. These young people deserve a clear path forward and some certainty in their lives. I think the vast majority of us would like to try to find some way to give it to them, but we are not going to do that unless we can get concrete progress on border security and other reasons why this problem was created in the first place.

It was good to get the perspective of a number of my constituents who happen to be leaders in the Hispanic community. Many of them live in border communities. All of them have families or friends who are immigrants. Of course, we are a nation of immigrants,

and we need to listen to what they have to say about what is going on. There was general agreement that when it comes to offering a path to citizenship, the President's proposal was surprisingly generous. Nobody expected the President to offer a pathway to citizenship for 1.8 million young adults. That was extraordinarily generous.

Right now, in the program that was created by President Obama, which will expire March 5, there are 690,000 DACA recipients. They are the people who signed up for this deferred action, not for a path to citizenship, not for legal status, but an agreement by the government that we are not going to try to deport them. They also get work permits during the pendency of their DACA status. This President has offered DACA recipients something President Obama never did—a pathway to citizenship for three times as many as are covered by the deferred action program.

The Hispanic leaders I spoke with also supported, in addition to that pillar of what the President proposed, additional border security measures. One spoke about the "collateral benefits" to border communities of new technology, personnel, and improved infrastructure. Jobs increase, restaurants and hotels benefit, communities are safer for the families and the children who live there.

They stress that when it comes to border security, we need to be thinking about it three-dimensionally. In other words, they said that we need to consider a system. I have heard the Secretary of Homeland Security refer to what the President has proposed as a wall system. It is not just a physical barrier; it is access roads, cameras, sensors, radars, aerostats, and other things to try to make sure our border is secure.

Ultimately, my conversation with these constituents was very constructive, but I had to be honest with them. I had to admit that I have been disappointed so far. I haven't heard much in the way of ideas from our Democratic colleagues, other than old proposals that will not become law. Even though they claim to support these young people, the DACA recipients, and even though they claim to support a pathway to citizenship for them, they have done nothing to respond to President Trump's very generous offer and the four pillars of his proposal. So far, they have indicated that they have little interest in negotiating.

The deadline set for those negotiations is February 8, just a couple of days from now. After that, we will be here on the Senate floor with an open and freewheeling debate and amendment process. But we want to achieve a solution that can become law, and so far, we haven't had a willing dance partner in our Democratic colleagues.

The President has made an extraordinary offer. I don't know whether it is because they don't want this President

to claim any credit for any accomplishment or whether they prefer to have a political issue that they want to take to the election in November or whether they are just willing to toy with the lives of these young people because they deem it politically expedient. Well, none of those are acceptable. And it is really puzzling. There is no reason why they shouldn't support closing loopholes for our illegal immigration problem and increasing security on the border.

I have heard many of our colleagues across the aisle say: Border security? No problem—until you start asking them to be specific about what that means, not only in terms of an authorization or plan, but what does that mean in terms of appropriations or money?

According to published reports, the Democratic leader, the Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER, offered the President \$25 billion toward border security—\$5 billion upfront and \$20 billion more in appropriations and authorization. Then, after they shut down the government, after the President made his proposal, he took that off the table. So far, we have heard nothing from our Democratic colleagues to respond to the President's generous, good-faith offer.

One thing we need to do for sure is to regain the public's confidence when it comes to immigration. We need to reclaim our legacy not only as a nation of immigrants, which we proudly are, but as a nation of laws. That is why people are so frustrated and emotional and angry about the status quo. That is one reason this President was elected. They thought he would bring an end to the lawlessness of our illegal immigration system. But in order to get this done, we have to be able to negotiate in good faith, and we have to be able to compromise, which leads me to wonder, again, whether our friends across the aisle want an issue they plan to take to the election in November or they actually want a solution.

Are they going to actually use these young DACA recipients as a means to accomplish their goal, which is to regain the majority in the House and the Senate after the November 2018 elections? I hope I am wrong, but I don't see any indication so far that I am.

As the President said in last week's State of the Union Message, the ultimate proposal should be one "where nobody gets everything they want, but where our country gets the critical reforms it needs." That is exactly right.

In my home State of Texas, nearly 124,000 DACA recipients are our neighbors. They are an important thread in the fabric of our communities. All of us feel sympathy for these young adults who are in limbo. I remain committed to finding a solution because, in our country, we don't penalize children for the mistakes their parents made. But as the President said last week, "Americans are dreamers, too," and part of their dream is to live in a coun-

try where the law is enforced and respected.

I support the President in his call for upholding the strong rule of law in this country, but the question for today is, Why hold everything else hostage for this unrelated immigration issue? And why, if our Democratic colleagues are willing to shut down the government over that unrelated immigration issue, aren't they willing to respond to the President's generous, good-faith offer to bring a solution to the problem? We need to know what their plans are. What is their proposal that can become law?

The clock is ticking. We know the ending date for this program is March 5. Ultimately, what we are dealing with is people's lives. What do our colleagues care most about? Do they care about political advantage or trying to preserve an issue that will be to their advantage in the upcoming election? Or do they actually care about these young DACA recipients, 690,000 of them, or the 1.8 million that President Trump has offered—an incredibly generous offer—as long as we can deal with these other issues like border security, chain migration, and the diversity lottery visa?

We are waiting for our Democratic colleagues to come to us with a good-faith proposal, but so far all we hear is crickets.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING CHRISTOPHER FOLEY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I wish to begin this afternoon by offering condolences to the family and friends of Christopher Foley of Louisa County, VA. Mr. Foley was killed last Wednesday when his truck collided with an Amtrak train carrying many of my fellow lawmakers to a conference in West Virginia. He was just 28 years old. He leaves behind his fiancée Adriana and Rylan, their 1-year-old son.

Our thoughts are with them especially, along with Christopher's family, his community, and his colleagues at Time Disposal. They and all those who were injured in the accident are in our prayers.

Our heartfelt thanks are with the first responders who rushed to the scene. It is too easy to take for granted