

If it comes to that, I look forward to it. I would like to see the Senate work its will, and I hope that we will come up with a positive and constructive compromise. We have only 3 days from today for that process to start, and I hope that we can make some progress. Bipartisan legislation to protect the Dreamers has been pending in Congress, and it has overwhelming support from the people we represent, including President Trump's own voters. It would pass on a strong bipartisan vote in both the House and the Senate if Republican leaders would bring it to a vote.

I look forward to that debate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I spoke yesterday about the deadline we have coming up in 2 days. The question is, Are we going to fund the Federal Government? Are we going to keep the lights on, the parks open, the military protecting us, the Border Patrol protecting our borders, or are we going to shut down the government again over an unrelated issue?

I listened to my friend, the Senator from Illinois, talk at some length about DACA. I do want to respond to that, but there is no reason we have to do DACA first, because we are engaged in good-faith negotiations, and, indeed, the majority leader has promised that he would take up a bill on the floor of the Senate in our failing to reach an agreement.

The fact is that our friends across the aisle have, basically, shut down the government and are now threatening to hold hostage a number of very important measures, which I will talk about momentarily, over this issue that is unrelated to the funding of the government or to these other matters.

So what have we had to do?

We have had to pass short-term continuing resolutions. We have had five of them since September alone. The impact of these continuing resolutions was brought home to me again yesterday.

Usually, I would think about our military and General Mattis, who has pleaded with us to help provide the additional resources that are necessary to make sure that our military is ready, is trained, has the equipment it needs in order to fight and win wars but, hopefully, to maintain our strength so that we will never have to fight a war. That is how Ronald Reagan viewed it. I agree with General Mattis: Peace through strength is the right formula.

Yet, when our adversaries look at us with our military—just a pale reflection of what it used to be in terms of readiness because of the lack of funding we have provided—that is a provocation or, at least, an invitation for others to step in and fill the void, and it leads to a more dangerous world.

As I said, the harm caused by these continuing resolutions was brought home to me again yesterday when I had a number of people with the Texas Association of Community Health Centers come visit. These community health centers are a vital link and safety net for many Texans and many Americans who don't otherwise have a place they can go for their medical care. They treat people based on a sliding scale, based on the ability to pay, so they are accessible to virtually everyone.

What my constituents with the Texas Association of Community Health Centers told me was because of the funding cliff with the continuing resolutions, they don't know how to plan. Their doctors, their medical assistants, and other support staff don't know if they are going to have a job after Thursday, February 8, when the current continuing resolution expires.

They don't know whether the patients they treat will actually have a place to go to get that treatment. This is a miserable way for Congress to do business, and it should not continue. We need to provide more certainty and predictability.

General Mattis himself said that this basically wastes money because we have to plan to shut down portions of our activities if, in fact, government does shut down. So then we have to restart it again—stop it, start it. It is a waste, it is inefficient, and it is unnecessary.

Our friends across the aisle need to release another hostage, too, in addition to the spending caps agreement and the funding needed for our military and the funding needed for community health centers and all the other important functions that are served by the Federal Government. They need to release the hostage of disaster relief.

In December, the House passed an \$81 billion relief package, but so far our Democratic colleagues have refused to allow us to bring that disaster relief bill up. Again, why? Because of DACA, this unrelated immigration issue that they think is more important than all the people who were hurt by Hurricane Maria, Hurricane Harvey, and the wildfires out West.

We do need to address DACA, and we will, but why hurt the victims of these natural disasters in the interim by holding this disaster relief hostage? It is time we stand up in a bipartisan fashion and show these folks in Texas, Florida, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and out West that we remember, and we are going to help them. Why should they have to wait any further? There is no good answer to that question, but I think it is important that somebody come out on the floor of the U.S. Senate and ask the question.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I said I wanted to talk about the issue our Democratic colleagues shut down the

government over last month, and that issue is immigration and the path forward on DACA. DACA, again, is Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals. This is something President Obama did unilaterally, circumventing Congress, assuring that in a new administration, it would be called into question, not only in the courts but also by the new administration.

President Trump, recognizing that the courts had effectively said what President Obama tried to do was illegal, basically continued it for a time to give Congress a chance to try to respond, and he has given us a deadline of March 5. I heard my friend from Illinois blame President Trump for trying to fix a problem that was caused by an overreach by the previous administration. Don't take my word for it, take the courts which struck down the DACA Program.

President Trump has continued it long enough to give Congress a chance to fix it. That is the appropriate response. It is not helpful just to engage in the blame game. We actually need to step up and not just give speeches on the floor of the Senate; we need to actually enter into a good-faith negotiation.

To date, President Trump has issued a reasonable framework that will not only give protection to those who were brought here illegally by their parents as children but also fixes other gaps in our broken immigration system—border security, the diversity lottery visa, and ensures that people who are waiting in line patiently can be unified with their family by narrowing the scope of family-based immigration in the future. That is prospective only. One proposal has been to plow those additional green cards into accelerating the passage of people who are patiently waiting in line—some as many as 10 and 20 years.

President Trump has done something President Obama never did. He has offered 1.8 million young adults who are currently DACA recipients and DACA-eligible an opportunity to get on a pathway to American citizenship. That is three times more than the young adults who were addressed by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program that President Obama did unilaterally. That is an incredibly generous offer.

What has the President requested in return or in addition? He said: Secondly, I want to secure our borders, and I want to address legal loopholes in the current law. That is important because we have to protect our citizens and regain the public trust. One of the very reasons this President was elected is because people are angry that the Federal Government has failed them when it comes to securing our borders and enforcing our laws. I believe the second pillar of what President Trump has talked about, border security, is really a system of physical infrastructure—fence, walls, barriers—but also technology and personnel; that those