

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, later today, the House is poised to send us a 2-week continuing resolution, which will give us time to hash out the remainder of the appropriations process this year. I expect it will pass this Chamber later this afternoon. President Trump and my Republican colleagues now have to decide what they want to do after those 2 weeks are up and, hopefully, even sooner.

As everybody knows, Democrats have offered to pass the bipartisan DHS appropriations bill agreed to 6 months ago, which includes \$1.6 billion for border security. There has been some confusion about that figure.

Let me be clear. The \$1.6 billion cannot be used to construct any part of President Trump's 30-foot-tall, concrete border wall. It can be used only for fencing, using technology currently deployed at the border, only where the experts say fencing is appropriate and makes sense as a security feature.

This is something Democrats have always been for: smart, effective, appropriate border security. This is so good that every Republican appropriator signed off on that bill a few months ago, including Senator MCCONNELL, Senator SHELBY, Senator RUBIO, and Senator GRAHAM. They were all for it.

This is a bipartisan compromise proposal. If they can't go for the proposal that they signed off on and negotiated because President Trump is pounding the table in an irrational way, there is a second option. Democrats have also offered to pass the six bipartisan appropriations bills and a continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security. This continuing resolution doesn't resolve this issue but continues to fund the Homeland Security Department. We think that continuing resolution should be for a year.

Both options would receive 60 votes in the Senate, would pass in the House, and would get us home in time for the Christmas holiday, which I know many people want to do. I have heard that from many of my Republican friends.

As I said, either option would keep the government funded over Christmas. We don't want to see the government shut down over Christmas, even though President Trump seems to brag that he wants one. The one and only way we approach a shutdown is if President Trump refuses both of our proposals and demands \$5 billion or more for a border wall.

The wall request is a nonstarter for many reasons. Here are three:

First, when President Trump proposed this as a candidate, he said: "I will have Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words." The idea that the American taxpayer now has to foot the bill doesn't make sense.

Second, there is no plan for the wall. They haven't said where they want to build it or how high it is. Let me make clear that I don't like any wall, but how can you spend \$5 billion when there is no plan? It shows that this is

sort of political fodder for President Trump. It appeals to his base, but he doesn't even care that much that his whole government, his whole administration has not submitted any specific plans.

Third, last year we put \$1.345 billion into Homeland Security for border security. Not a nickel of that has been spent on a wall. It couldn't be. The language didn't allow it. But virtually none of it has been spent at all. They still have that \$1.34 billion they haven't even spent the vast majority of, and already they are demanding \$5 billion more.

Some would say demanding \$1.6 billion more is too much, but the idea that they haven't spent last year's money and they are demanding such a huge amount this year makes no sense at all. To ask the American taxpayer to foot the bill for an unplanned, unnecessary, ineffective border wall is just preposterous.

We know why President Trump is doing this, as he does so many things. It is a throwaway idea to fire up his base. I am ashamed that my Republican colleagues, who know better, are going along.

If President Trump wants to throw a temper tantrum and shut down the government over Christmas over the wall, that is his decision, but there are two sensible options on the table to avoid one. We do not want to let a Trump temper tantrum govern our policies or cause the shutdown of the government, which everyone on both sides of the aisle knows is the wrong idea.

One final point: By letting the President's demands get in the way, my Republican colleagues are, in effect, ceding Congress's authority over the appropriations process to the President. Leader MCCONNELL has repeatedly said that he wants regular order on appropriations in the Senate. In fact, that has been one of the few bipartisan high moments that this Senate has had.

Last year, we passed a good appropriations process and came together on an omnibus. This year, we have funded close to three-quarters of the government already—bipartisan, passed by a large majority. That is how it should work. It should work the same way for the Department of Homeland Security. Regular order would dictate that the Senate consider the bipartisan DHS appropriations bill that has been passed out of committee and been agreed to by both parties here on the floor. In the meantime, the six other bipartisan appropriations bills that have also been agreed to by both parties are being held hostage over this unnecessarily, to any objective observer.

If my friend Leader MCCONNELL is so concerned about regular order, he would bring up the remaining appropriations bills, as agreed to, for a vote. He would tell President Trump that the bipartisan conference bill, the bipartisan compromise—or a CR—is the way to go to avoid a shutdown.

NOMINATION OF BERNARD L. MCNAMEE

Madam President, on another matter, yesterday, all 49 Democrats voted against considering the nomination of Bernard McNamee to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and that was for good reason. McNamee has spent the bulk of his career boosting fossil fuels and slandering renewable energy. His views are so anachronistic, regressive, and counterfactual that I am sure most of my Republican colleagues would not agree with him. He has lied about how renewable energies impact the electric grid. He has called support for clean energy "organized propaganda" and has pitched the debate between fossil fuels and renewables, in his words, as a "clash between liberty and tyranny." My Republican friends, these words sound absurd. You would think I was making them up because it would so vilify Mr. McNamee, but my Republican friends can see on video every one of these statements that he made.

At a time when our country is plagued by wildfires and flooding, at a time when more powerful storms and hurricanes buffet our coasts, at a time when average Americans are feeling the devastating effects of climate change right now, we should not elevate someone so biased in favor of the fossil fuels that caused these problems in the first place.

We have a final vote today. Every Democrat has voted no. We need one Republican to switch to defeat this awful nomination. I hope my colleagues will think about it.

Please, look up the record. Don't just listen to my speech. Just look at what this man has said, and I think a good number of you might want to vote no.

On the front page of the New York Times this morning, there was a report about how the emission of greenhouse gases has actually accelerated in the past few years. Climate change is going to be a defining issue of our generation and a defining issue in future elections.

The vote on McNamee clearly shows the difference between the two parties on the issue of climate change right now. The Democrats believe we need to address climate change with bold and substantial action. We cannot wait until a later day. We cannot keep approving folks like McNamee to influence energy policy. We need to act. Meanwhile, too many of our Republican colleagues pretend the issue doesn't even exist, and that is sad.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.