

Let me just walk my friends in the House through it. Democrats are not budging on the wall. We favor smart, effective border security, not a medieval wall.

A Trump shutdown will not convince a single Democrat to support bilking the American taxpayers for an ineffective, unnecessary, and exorbitantly expensive wall that President Trump promised Mexico would pay for.

I hear Mr. JORDAN and Mr. MEADOWS say: This was a campaign promise. They are only mentioning half of the campaign promise. The promise throughout the campaign was this: We will build a wall, and Mexico will pay for it.

Furthermore, there are not the votes in the Republican House for a wall. There are not the votes in the Senate for a wall—not now, not next week, not next month or beyond.

If Speaker RYAN refuses to put the CR on the floor or President Trump vetoes it, there will be a Trump shutdown, but there will be no wall. And if President Trump or House Republicans cause a shutdown over Christmas, on January 3, the new Democratic House will send the Senate a clean CR bill. Based on passage of the CR last night, it is clear—and to their credit—that Senate Republicans don't want a shutdown.

What is the endgame here? What is the endgame of those who are demanding the President not sign the CR—that the House not pass the CR? It seems, unfortunately, that the Trump temper tantrum is spreading like a contagion down Pennsylvania Avenue to the allies in the House.

Trump's allies in the House can pound their fists on the table all they want, but it is not going to get a wall. They can—having caught the Trump temper fever—jump up and down, yell and scream. It is not going to get a wall. And neither Mr. MEADOWS nor Mr. JORDAN have outlined any conceivable plan on how to achieve what they say they want to achieve.

I would say this to my less frenzied friends in the House. Go ask Mr. JORDAN and ask Mr. MEADOWS: What is your plan? What is your endgame? What is your path to getting the wall?

I suspect that anyone who asks them will find that they don't have one. They are just angry and mad, and so they pound their fists on the table. They have caught the Trump temper tantrum, but they have no conceivable plan, and so their anger will result in a Trump shutdown, but not a Trump wall. Frankly, their anger will result in further discrediting the President whom they support.

Amazingly, Representative MEADOWS said yesterday that the American people will support President Trump shutting down the government over the wall. I don't know what evidence he has for that or whom he speaks to, because every public poll that I have seen shows that the American people are not only strongly against a border

wall, but they are even more strongly against a shutdown to get the wall. Imagine how strongly they would feel as he ties those two things together.

When Mr. MEADOWS says the American people are for it, he must think the American people are only conservative Republicans. If he widened his horizons a bit, he would come to the understanding that shutting down the government over President Trump's wall is futile, self-defeating, and has minimal support among the American people. Even a quarter of President Trump's shrinking base does not support shutting down the government over the wall, and among the vast majority of other Americans who are not part of President Trump's base—and those are the majority of Americans—the strong majority are totally against it.

We need to get something done here to keep the government open over Christmas. We need to tell the hundreds of thousands—millions—of workers that they will get paid over Christmas. The House needs to come to the same sensible conclusion that the Senate came to—that we should not hold millions of innocent Americans hostage to demand something they will never get.

The Senate has produced a clean bill. There are no partisan demands, no poison pill riders. We could have demanded lots of things in the bill that we want. It is just a clean extension of funding. If House Republicans and President Trump refuse to pass it, then we will have a Trump shutdown over Christmas. The choice is theirs.

NOMINATION OF WILLIAM BARR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night we received some extraordinarily concerning news regarding the President's nominee for Attorney General, Mr. William Barr.

According to reports earlier this year, Mr. Barr sent the Justice Department an unsolicited memo criticizing what he believed to be an avenue of investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller. Mr. Barr's memo reveals that he is fatally conflicted from being able to oversee the special counsel's investigation and that he should not be nominated for Attorney General.

Mr. Barr believes Presidents, in general, and, more frighteningly, President Trump, who has shown less respect for rule of law than any President, are above the law—much like Justice Kavanaugh—because he has an almost imperial view of the Presidency—as almost a King, not an elected leader. That much comes across in the memo because it doesn't allow legal processes to work against the President, who might be breaking the law.

We will see what Mueller finds out if that is true, but we should let him go forward. The fact that Mr. Barr holds these deeply misguided views and chose to launch them in an unprovoked writ-

ten attack on the special counsel unquestionably disqualifies Mr. Barr from serving as Attorney General again.

Since Mr. Barr hasn't been formally nominated yet, the President must immediately reconsider and find another nominee who is free of conflicts and will carry out the duties of law impartially.

ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally this morning, on another Justice Department matter, the Justice Department seems that it is becoming more and more of a swamp—at least in its top leaders. This time it is Mr. Whitaker.

This morning, we learned that ethics officials at the Justice Department told Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker that he did not need to recuse himself from overseeing the special counsel's investigation. The decision by the Justice Department defies logic. Matthew Whitaker has publicly and forcefully advocated for defunding and imposing severe limits on the Mueller investigation, calling it a “mere witch hunt.” He also has troubling conflicts of interest, including his relationship with Sam Clovis, who is a grand jury witness in this investigation.

There is clear and obvious evidence of bias on the part of Matthew Whitaker against the special counsel's investigation. To allow him to retain oversight over that investigation without his recusal is incredibly misguided.

The Congress and the American people must be informed of any instance in which Mr. Whitaker has sought or is seeking to interfere with the Mueller investigation. If Mr. Whitaker has sought any limitation on witnesses, funding, subpoenas, or any other limitation, we must be informed of it right now.

We believe that Matthew Whitaker shouldn't be in the job in the first place. His appointment is potentially unconstitutional. His oversight of the Russia investigation is hopelessly biased.

It is clear that President Trump is trying in every way possible to appoint or to nominate people to lead the Justice Department who could well impede the special counsel's investigation.

I thank the Senator from Florida for patiently waiting.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Florida.

SYRIA

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, Syria has been a mess and a concern for quite a number of years. By putting in a small footprint now of a little over 2,000 special operations troops, the United States has been considerably successful when you think of what a chaotic place it was and still is and that it was especially inimical to the interests of the United States just a

few years ago. Remember the horrible images of U.S. citizens being executed by ISIS. Remember all of the trauma we have seen the Syrian Government perpetrate on its own people.

Remember the successful efforts of a combination of forces that ultimately took on ISIS, that removed it from its headquarters of its caliphate and caused it to disperse if it were not eliminated at the time. A lot of that was led with Kurdish fighters who were fighting alongside U.S. special operations advisers. Even though complicated because of the Russians' being there and the Turks' having interests and Assad's trying to hang on to power, the United States has been successful in not eliminating but in lessening the influence of ISIS.

Then came the shocker—the shocker of the President's announcing unilaterally that, all of a sudden, he was going to pull the special operations troops, as advisers, out of Syria. This would likely cause immediate instability. It would certainly allow for ISIS to reconstruct itself, and it would cause chaos with the Kurdish troops who fought alongside the Americans, with the Turkish Government's going after a number of them.

This is an ill-advised and probably a non-advised decision by the President, and it should be reversed. This Senator calls on all of the national defense, national security, and national intelligence professionals who are within the administration to get the President to reverse this unilateral decision that he has made. Otherwise, U.S. interests are going to be ill-served.

AN EARLY CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, my concluding remarks are about an early Christmas present that I received this past Monday at a staff going-away party that occurred in Florida, where all of our Florida staff came together to wish each other well. Little did I know that a special guest was going to appear. He was none other than one of the chefs of the catering company that was catering this holiday going-away party. Let me tell you the story of this 34-year-old chef and what happened 34 years ago.

At the time of the middle 1980s—1985 to be exact—this Senator was a young Congressman. A husband and wife, who were constituents of mine in East Central Florida, came to me in great distress because their infant boy had been born with a defective liver.

The advance of medicine at that particular time was that there was no known cure except to do a liver transplant. Thirty-four years ago, organ transplants were still in their infancy, and 34 years ago, there was no organ registry being maintained in order to try to find a family who had lost a loved one so that a loved one's organs could be harvested and then be available for those who were on a registry waiting for them. None of that existed 34 years ago.

Only since then have we seen this miraculous organization set up whereby people who need organ transplants can get on the list. Then, whenever an organ becomes available, no matter where it is in the country, that match—that organ—is immediately packed in ice and is flown to the receiving hospital where the organ transplant is going to occur. None of this existed. It was a catch-as-catch-can to find an organ to transplant. This was especially true with a liver transplant because a liver transplant, at the time, had to have the identical blood type, and it had to be the identical size of the recipient's liver.

Here was a few-months'-old child who was desperately clinging to life and needed a liver transplant to survive. At the time, we were in session. There was a particularly major bill that was up, and its passage in the House of Representatives was in the balance—with in just a handful of votes. The bill was proposed by President Reagan. I had already decided that I was going to vote for the bill, which was in favor of the President's position, when I saw an opportunity to maybe save this child's life. So I held out and declared my position as “undecided” in my knowing that the votes were coming down to just one or two at passage.

Actually, we must have been out for the weekend before this vote was to have occurred, because I received a phone call from President Reagan while I was at my home in Florida. The President greeted me and told me what he was asking me to do.

I said to him: Mr. President, I have already decided that I am going to vote for the bill, and I know that it is welcome news to you. I wish you would do something for me—possibly save a child's life.

I then told him the story of the need of a liver of a certain blood type and of a certain size for a transplant in a minor child. The President said he would do that.

Shortly thereafter, the Secretary of Health and Human Services called, who was a former colleague from the House—Secretary Margaret Heckler of Massachusetts. She said: At the President's request, I am going to have a press conference to put out this information that this child is in need of this specific type of transplant.

Margaret Heckler did that. A donor was found because of that press release in 1985 in California. They raced that harvested organ, by jet, to the hospital in Pittsburgh. Ryan Osterblom, with his parents, was then flown to the hospital. The successful transplant occurred 34 years ago.

Early last Monday, you can imagine the Christmas present I received when there at our going-away party for our staff, the chef of the catering company was none other than 34-year-old Ryan Osterblom. That was the best Christmas present I could have.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

TRIBUTE TO BILL NELSON

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I thank Senator NELSON for that touching story.

That would be a Christmas present for not only you but for anybody who has heard the circumstances.

I, too, remember having the privilege of being in public service with President Reagan. He had a human quality that was second to none.

I thank you, Bill, for your service—we used to be on Armed Services together, fighting the battles—but more especially for being a friend. You always had a smile on your face. I probably didn't when we got on the elevators together.

You would say: Pat, what is wrong?

I wouldn't want to go into anything, but I would think, why am I so glum if BILL NELSON is stuck on “happy” all the time?

It was the Florida sunshine, I guess.

I thank you for the privilege of being in public service with you, sir. Best wishes for your future, which I know will be very good and very bright, and thank you for that story, which is a great Christmas story. Repeat it often, sir. Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO ORRIN HATCH

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I want to join my colleagues who, over the past few weeks, have come to the floor to thank Senator ORRIN HATCH—the great Senator ORRIN HATCH—for his service to this institution. Senator SULLIVAN just informed me that the body here—the Senate—has, by unanimous consent, passed a bill to name a courthouse in Utah after ORRIN HATCH. He was sitting as the President pro tempore, and the surprised look on his face was a treasure for everybody who saw it.

ORRIN HATCH has consistently maintained a demeanor that represented the Senate well—and that is an understatement—over the course of his illustrious and record-setting 42-year career. As a matter of fact, I think the definition of “gentleman” in the new edition of Webster's dictionary simply lists two words: “ORRIN HATCH.”

Whether he agreed or disagreed with any policy positions or with any individual Senator, he always, always treated you with the greatest of respect. Perhaps that is part of the reason that Senator HATCH will go down as one of the most effective legislators in the history of the Senate. All you have to do is go in his office and see all of the awards, the recordings that illustrate his fantastic music career as a songwriter, and all of the bills. I think it is safe to say that no other living Senator has had more bills that he has sponsored and that have been enacted into law than ORRIN HATCH. We come here to make a difference. We do that through legislation, and that is an indication of the great legacy that this man has left this body.