

accomplishments on behalf of the American people. We passed landmark legislation to help heal the wounds of the opioid epidemic. We delivered measures to help lower prescription drug prices and expand access to safe treatments. We reached a major agreement to rebuild America's military and designed VA reforms that will help our Nation better keep its solemn promises to the brave men and women who have served. We brought a bipartisan scalpel to financial regulations so fewer of Main Street's local lenders will get trapped in the maze of Wall Street's rule book. We reasserted a commitment to regular order appropriations. We laid the groundwork for rebuilding American infrastructure. We delivered certainty and predictability to farming communities across our country.

So we know the Senate, with this Republican majority, is fertile soil for big bipartisan accomplishments. The question is, Will the newly Democratic House join in this good momentum or bring it to a standstill? It is a clear choice, and it will be clear to the American people watching all this at home: Good governance or political performance art? The public interest or political spite? Policymaking or Presidential harassment?

The first test is already upon us. Just yesterday, I was glad to join House and Senate leaders of both parties in a meeting with President Trump at the White House to discuss border security and outstanding appropriations.

This meeting included a briefing on the urgent crisis at our southern border. The facts on the ground are truly striking.

As the Border Patrol Chief testified before the Judiciary Committee a few weeks ago, the Border Patrol apprehended more than 800—800—gang members just last year, a 50-percent increase over the previous year. Methamphetamine seizures are up 75 percent since fiscal year 2015.

Importantly, we also know that in each of our four CBP sectors where physical barriers have been improved or expanded, illegal traffic has dropped by at least—now listen to this—90 percent in these areas where there are physical barriers, illegal traffic has dropped by 90 percent.

These are the facts on which the entire conversation must turn. Yet, as yesterday marked the 12th day of this ongoing partial government shutdown, our Democratic colleagues seemed less concerned with these facts than with their unreasonable political standoff with President Trump.

So for the benefit of all involved, let me restate the terms of engagement; in other words, where we are. We need a bicameral, bipartisan compromise solution. We need an arrangement that can check these three boxes: pass the House, achieve the support of at least 60 Senators, and get a Presidential signature. This is not complicated. That is how you make a law.

The legislation that House Democrats reportedly plan to vote on later

today is, in my view, not a serious attempt to check all three of those boxes. In fact, it ignores the bipartisan conference negotiations and progress made on these spending bills over the last month. So I would call it political theater, not productive lawmaking.

I have made it clear on several occasions—and let me say it again—the Senate will not take up any proposal that does not have a real chance of passing this Chamber and getting a Presidential signature. So let's not waste the time. Let's not get off on the wrong foot with House Democrats using their platform to produce political statements rather than serious solutions. Let's pick up where we left off and dedicate this 116th Congress to the spirit of bipartisan collaboration to create more victories for the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

WELCOMING MEMBERS OF THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first allow me to welcome all of the new Members who were just sworn in for the first time as U.S. Senators, as well as my friends who were reelected to this body. We are entrusted with an awesome responsibility to conduct the vital business of this country we all love. We come at it from many perspectives, backgrounds, and geographies, but the hope is that we can come together and get some good things done.

I hope, in this new year and throughout the new Congress, the Senate will prove worthy of the responsibility and faithfully discharge our duties to our States, our country, the Constitution, and, of course, the well-being of the American people.

Now, sadly, as I address you, this new Congress is under the shadow of a government shutdown. Only one person is to blame for this predicament—President Trump. Democrats made several offers to the President that would have kept the government open over the holiday break. We even agreed to Leader MCCONNELL's proposal to pass a clean continuing resolution to avoid a shutdown, and it passed the Senate unanimously; every single Democrat and every single Republican was for it. All indications were that President Trump would sign it, but then, hounded by the far right, particularly the radio and TV

commentators, President Trump threw a temper tantrum at the eleventh hour, and demanded more than \$5 billion for an ineffective border wall, knowing full well that it lacked the votes in the Senate.

After publicly rooting for a government shutdown for months, President Trump finally got his wish. Now, nine Cabinet Departments and dozens of other Agencies are shut down and hundreds of thousands of Federal workers are doing their jobs without pay. Food safety inspectors are running out of resources. Federal courts are running out of money. National Parks are suffering. In a few short months, the IRS will not be able to issue tax refunds that are vital to so many families.

Yesterday, the President invited congressional leaders to the White House. Speaker-designate PELOSI and I sought to have a sensible discussion about how to reopen the government. We proposed two bills that separate the wall fight from the government shutdown. Let me repeat that. The two bills we proposed separate the wall fight from the government shutdown. You don't have to have one, even if you can't resolve the other.

We proposed two bills: first, a six-bill minibus to provide appropriations for every Cabinet Department except Homeland Security and, second, a 30-day continuing resolution for Homeland Security.

The six bills are not Democratic bills, as I heard some of the rightwing commentators say. The six bills are the same bills that Republicans, including Leader MCCONNELL, supported in the Senate Appropriations Committee. The CR passed unanimously through the Senate last year. Four of the six bills came to the floor and passed the Senate 92 to 6, with the vast majority of Democrats and Republicans being for them.

These are not Democratic bills. They were crafted in a bipartisan way by a Republican-controlled Senate Appropriations Committee and a Republican-controlled Senate. If these bills pass, they would allow us to continue discussion on border security without leaving large portions of the government shut down.

We obviously disagree about the best way to secure the border. We believe the wall is wrong on many counts. The wall is ineffective—most experts agree with that—and the wall is expensive.

When the wall was promised by President Trump, he said it was a campaign pledge he must keep. That was not his campaign pledge. His campaign pledge was to build a wall and have Mexico pay for it, not American taxpayers. So it is not a campaign pledge.

The President has no plan to deal with eminent domain. There are hundreds of landowners on the southern border who will go to court and fight every attempt by the Federal Government to expropriate their land. That will take years.

By the way, the Trump administration has not even spent the border security funding allocated by Congress last year.

The wall is wrong. It is ineffective; it is expensive; Mexico will not pay for it; there is no plan to deal with eminent domain; and they haven't even spent the border security funding allocated last year.

One more point for so many Americans: We do not want the wall to be a symbol of America. We much prefer the Statue of Liberty be that symbol. The symbolism is bad for the country, for our economy, for our security, and for our ability to get along in the world.

Democrats certainly support strong, effective border security: fencing, drones, technology, roads, what the experts say will actually work—not a wall. We totally disagree on that. But even with that disagreement, I repeat, there is no reason to keep unrelated parts of the government shut down because of those disagreements.

If Leader MCCONNELL, tonight, would put the bill that is passing the House on the floor, it would pass. After all, it was crafted by Republicans, especially those on the Appropriations Committee. So they are not opposed to it.

Yesterday at our meeting, I asked the President on multiple occasions to give me one good reason he should keep large portions of the government shut down while we have a separate debate about the border. He couldn't name one. He kept coming back and talking about the border. I said: No, Mr. President, these six bills have nothing to do with the border. Why can't we pass them? Why must we hold millions of Americans who depend on the services of these Agencies that are closed—hundreds of thousands of workers who get paid by these Agencies—why must we hold them hostage? Why must a temper tantrum determine how we vote and what happens in this government? Everyone can shut down the government on anything—any leader, any President. It is not the way to do things.

The President couldn't name a single reason that made any sense about why he should keep the other Agencies closed—not Homeland Security, but the others, and that is the best indication of why there is a shutdown. President Trump is holding the government hostage over his wall, using the well-being of millions of Americans as hostage in a futile attempt to get what he wants: a concrete border wall.

Where do we go from here? Well, we have a new Congress and several new Senators were just sworn in. The House of Representatives, of course, will change control, and Democrats will see a healthy majority. The new House majority is poised tonight to pass the two bills we offered the President. Leader MCCONNELL ought to take it up here on the floor of the Senate.

Let me be clear about a few points. The six-bill minibus is completely silent on the issue of border security. It would solely fund the eight Cabinet De-

partments not named Homeland Security at levels agreed to by both parties and signed off on by the overwhelming majority of Republicans on both the Appropriations Committee and in the Senate. There is absolutely nothing in those six bills that my Republican friends oppose. Let me repeat: There is nothing in those six bills that Senate Republicans oppose. All but six voted for the four of them that came to the floor, and every single Republican on the Appropriations Committee, including Leader MCCONNELL, voted for them in the Appropriations Committee.

When Leader MCCONNELL calls this some Democratic proposal, he is absolutely wrong. Leader MCCONNELL voted for it; Leader MCCONNELL supported it on both the floor and in the Appropriations Committee. It is not a Democratic proposal. In fact, the House Democrats went out of their way to pass a proposal that Republicans supported, and Senators GRAHAM, MORAN, LANKFORD, and MURKOWSKI voted for those bills as chair of their Appropriations Committees. They put them together.

Even if there are disagreements about border security, why not pass the six noncontroversial bipartisan bills? That is the question I would ask every one of my Republican colleagues. That is the question the American people are asking every one of my Republican colleagues. Above all, they are asking that of President Trump. What is the rationale for keeping eight Cabinet Departments shuttered for an unrelated dispute over the wall? There is none.

We can continue to debate the best way to secure our border. We have disagreements on those, but let us reopen these Cabinet Departments and ensure hundreds of thousands of Federal workers receive their paychecks and, even more importantly, that these Departments get back to work for the American people.

As I mentioned, the House will also pass a 30-day continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security. Again, there is nothing in that bill that Senate Republicans don't support. The Senate passed it unanimously before Christmas break. The only thing that has changed between now and then is that we will have a House Speaker who will pass this bill, as well, and once the House passes these two bills, Leader MCCONNELL should put them on the floor where I believe they will receive strong bipartisan majorities. It is going to be very hard for a lot of Republicans to vote no on the same bills they supported just a few months ago.

The leader says that he is waiting for White House approval. Unfortunately, the White House is all over the map. We don't know where the White House stands on any of these things. Yesterday, President Trump publicly rejected an offer made to Democrats a week ago by his own Vice President. There is no telling where the President will come down on any given day. Surely, Leader

MCCONNELL knows—after passing a CR through this Chamber, thinking it had the President's support—that if we rely on the President alone, we can be shut down for a long time. At this point, we need to take the lead here in Congress in the hope that we can show President Trump the sweet light of reason.

We have given our Republican colleagues a way out of the shutdown based on Republican-approved proposals. All Leader MCCONNELL needs to do to reopen the government is to bring to the floor the legislation that he and nearly every other Republican Senator already support.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to talk about what is happening in Congress. We are in the 13th day of the Trump shutdown—13 days that 9 of 15 Federal Departments and dozens of Agencies have shut their doors; 13 days in which hundreds of thousands of Americans have been furloughed or are working without pay; 13 days that Americans have been denied government services on which they rely and for which they pay taxes.

The President is holding Federal Government funding hostage in an attempt to force American taxpayers to pay for an ineffective and expensive wall on the southern border that he promised over and over again Mexico would pay for. Everybody knows that is not true. Mexico will not pay for President Trump's wall. Unfortunately, the American people are paying the price of the Trump shutdown, and, frankly, he does not seem to care. Let me give some examples.

Since the shutdown began, our national parks—the treasure of this country—have been left largely un supervised. The welcome centers are closed. Park Rangers have been furloughed. There are few emergency or law enforcement personnel left to police the parks or rescue injured guests. That affects visitor safety, it reduces public access, and it threatens national and cultural resources in national parks in every part of our country. We are already receiving reports of damage to sensitive lands and national treasures—campgrounds littered with trash, overflowing toilets, locked restrooms. Even where parks remain open, campgrounds and other sites are beginning to close because of the obvious health and safety reasons.

Aside from government, businesses and gateway communities surrounding