

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S SE-
CURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST
ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I now suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair previously laid before the Senate the certificate of election from the State of Florida. The certificate was in the form suggested by the Senate and was printed in the RECORD.

(The certificate of election was printed in the RECORD of January 3, 2019.)

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF
OFFICE

The VICE PRESIDENT. If the Senator-elect will now present himself at the desk, the Chair will administer the oath of office.

The Senator-elect, Rick Scott, escorted by Mr. RUBIO, Mr. LeMieux, Mr. Martinez, and Mr. McGillicuddy III, advanced to the desk of the Vice President; the oath prescribed by law was administered to him by the Vice President; and he thereupon subscribed to the oath in the Official Oath Book.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Congratulations, Senator.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S SE-
CURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST
ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed
(Continued)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

S. 1

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, a few moments ago we welcomed our new colleague, my colleague for the State of Florida, former Governor and now U.S. Senator RICK SCOTT, who will do a phenomenal job here on behalf of the State of Florida. I welcome him to the U.S. Senate, the world's greatest deliberative body—and, on occasion, perhaps the strangest as well.

In about 1 hour 15 minutes, the Senate is going to take up S. 1, which is a combination of four separate bills that enjoy widespread support in this Chamber from colleagues on both sides of the aisle, all of them sponsored and cosponsored by both sides of the aisle, and apparently we will fail to get a significant number of votes to get on this bill, nonetheless.

So it is perhaps one the few places on Earth where people vote against things they are for because of reasons unrelated to the issue at hand. I don't want to dig too deep into that. That will be a topic for conversation later on, and maybe I will be wrong. Maybe they will change their minds in the next 1 hour 15 minutes, and we will have the votes we need, but I don't think it makes a lot of sense to say: I am upset about the government shutdown—by the way, the Senate voted unanimously to fund the government by a voice vote. We didn't even have a rollcall vote. So this Chamber has already enacted in that regard. At this point, it is incumbent on the leaders of the Democratic Party in the Senate, combined with the White House, to come up with a deal to reopen the government. This government shutdown is not good for anybody. I have never seen anybody win one of these.

That said, I don't know why we would shut down the Senate, too, given the issues we face.

About 3 weeks ago, the President announced that the United States was withdrawing from our engagement in Syria. I—and I think the majority of the people in the Senate—believed that decision was a mistake and is a mistake.

While I was certainly encouraged by some of the comments by the head of the National Security Council, Ambassador John Bolton, on the pace and scale and scope of the withdrawal, nonetheless, there have been conflicting statements since then which put this all in question.

At the time he made this decision, we walked through all of the reasons why this was a mistake—not because we want to be in war in Syria forever. That is false. Of course, it has to come to an end, but it needs to come to an end in a way that is in the interest of the United States of America. It is not in the interest of the United States of

America to see ISIS reemerge the way they did after 2011, when the United States left Iraq.

When the United States left and pulled back its presence in Iraq, it allowed ISIS to reconstitute itself and reemerge. They were called something different then, but they were basically a spinoff of al-Qaida. They started out as an insurgency and grew very rapidly. They are larger today and they are more powerful today than when they reconstituted themselves almost a decade ago. I have no doubt that if this moves forward, ISIS will reconstitute itself, maybe not as a caliphate but as something equally dangerous, and that is an insurgency with the capability not just to create havoc, mayhem, murder, and destruction in Syria and potentially once again in Iraq but also to externally plot and attack us here on Homeland.

This raises all other types of possibilities, like the Iraqi troops along with irregular forces sponsored by Iran—the Shia militia that have been on the ground in Iraq—coming across the border and into Syria. We all have read and heard about the Turkish troops that want to come into the Kurdish areas.

If Assad is sitting there now with the United States pulling out and all of this is going on, he figures that at this point what does he need a political solution for, what does he need the U.N. or anybody for? The saddest part is that this diminishes the chances that Assad will ever have to face accountability for the crimes committed by his regime against innocent civilians—children, women, and others—not just for the gassing and use of chemical weapons but for widespread torture and murder. We will discuss that more as the week goes on.

We are also concerned about Iran's growing influence with the United States leaving, especially in southeast Iraq and on the border of Jordan and Israel, with Hezbollah and other Iranian proxies and Iran itself, or the IRGC and General Soleimani, who is a maven of murder in that area, basically doing whatever they want. They have more freedom of movement, and there is the direct threat that it poses to both Israel and to Jordan.

By the way, when the Turks come in or potentially Iraqi troops come in—when ISIS is reconstituted and starts killing people again—you are going to have new refugee flows. Maybe it will be mostly Kurds this time, maybe folks from the Syrian defense forces who had fought alongside us for a while and their families. Where will all of these new refugees go? Potentially, some will wind up in Jordan, further destabilizing or testing that country's ability to deal with all of this.

On that last point, both the Kurds and the Syrian defense forces have in excess of 700 ISIS fighters in custody, in prison. Are they going to let them all go? Because without us there supporting them, I don't know how they

are going to hold them, and none of the countries they came from want them back. So you can potentially face hundreds of ISIS fighters being released overnight. These are all the consequences—and more.

What are we going to do if in a few days, a few weeks, or months from now ISIS decides to deploy chemical weapons against the Kurds or others in these areas? That is the parade of horrors, and the possibilities are extraordinary. We could go on and on for a while.

That is why, among other reasons, it was a mistake, and when we came out and said it was a mistake, a lot of people said: What are you going to do about it? Don't just talk; act.

It is difficult in an issue like this. Congress can stop wars. Congress can defund them and deauthorize actions, but Congress cannot force the Commander in Chief to stay in a military engagement. We cannot force the President to deploy troops or keep them somewhere. We can keep him from doing it, but we can't force him to do it. Our options in this field are limited.

We wanted to do something. We felt so strongly about this. The response is S. 1, which is the item before us here today. S. 1, as I said, combines these four bills that enjoy widespread bipartisan support. You would think that in the midst of everything else that is going on, this would be a really good way to start the new Congress, in foreign policy, in an area that traditionally has not been partisan—or shouldn't have been—by combining these four bills into S. 1, which is what is before us today.

I want to briefly outline the four provisions combined in this bill. Two of them deal directly with our ally in Israel. First, it makes very clear that "it shall be the policy of the United States to provide assistance to the Government of Israel in order to support funding for cooperative programs to develop, produce, and procure missile, rocket, projectile, and other defense capabilities to help Israel meet its security needs and to help develop and enhance United States defense capabilities."

That last line is important because much of the technology that is being innovated and developed by Israel to defend Israel can also be used by the United States to protect us from rocket attacks there or when we are deployed abroad. The reason why this is so critical is that Hezbollah has a large presence in Syria and has their base of operations in Lebanon. Today, Hezbollah is better funded, better equipped, and has more armaments than at any time in its history.

We all recall the Hezbollah-Israel war from about over a decade and a half ago. The next Israel-Hezbollah war will be far deadlier and costly because Hezbollah no longer simply depends on Iran to provide them the weapons. They make them themselves.

Hezbollah no longer has a few rockets. It has enough to potentially overwhelm defenses. That means you could have the best missile defense system in the world, but if you fire enough of them, eventually some of them will get through, and when they get through in a small country like Israel—which at its narrowest point is only 9 miles wide—and it hits a population center and kills thousands of people, then, you know we are facing a catastrophe. Israel will respond to that sort of attack with overwhelming force. This could spiral quickly out of control.

How could we wind up at that point? We could wind up at that point because now that the United States is leaving Syria, the Israelis are going to say: We are not going to allow Iran and Hezbollah to build up its presence. We are going to step up our military attacks inside of Syria.

It is possible, when they step it up, that it is likely that Iran and Hezbollah will respond by hitting back. Then, Israel will hit back even harder. At that point of escalation, you could easily see the missiles start coming out of Lebanon into Israel, and Israel responding with overwhelming force, and then we have a much broader conflict, with thousands—if not hundreds of thousands—of people whose lives are on the line.

So making it clear to Hezbollah or to any enemy of Israel that the United States stands ready to equip them in the case of such a contingency is one of the best things we can do to prevent it from happening. If Israel's enemies believe there is any doubt that the United States will step forward and help Israel resupply in case of such conflict, you have increased the probability that they will miscalculate and take such action.

But if they know that we are committed to rearming Israel as often and as much as possible and necessary in order to help them defend themselves, then, the chances of them attacking are diminished. That is why this bill authorizes U.S. security assistance in foreign military financing to Israel at an amount no less than \$3.3 billion a year for the next 10 years.

By the way, this, in essence, is authorizing a memoranda of understanding signed between the Obama administration and Israel. We are authorizing that and putting it into law. We are also authorizing the President to transfer precision-guided munitions to reserve stocks as needed for legitimate self-defense by Israel. The world now knows—and Israel's enemies now know—that the United States has put aside reserve precision-guided munitions that are there if Israel needs them for us to quickly transport them to them in case they come under attack and run low on the munitions they need to defend themselves. That is the first thing this bill does.

Another thing it does, by the way, is the Combating BDS Act of 2019. For those not familiar with BDS, it is boy-

cott, divestment, and sanctions. It is, in essence, by and large, to punish Israel by convincing companies—international companies and others—to boycott doing business with Israel or Israeli entities, to divest of investments in Israel or Israeli entities, and convincing governments to sanction Israel.

This provision of the law does not outlaw boycott, divestments, and sanctions. If a United States company caves to this pressure and decides it is going to boycott or divest from Israel, they have the legal right to do so. This doesn't outlaw it. However, it does say if a State or local government decides that it is not going to do business or if the government is not going to issue contracts for goods or services with any company that is boycotting or divesting from Israel, they have a right to do that.

I have heard the argument that this is about free speech. First of all, it is not about free speech. It is about foreign policy. We will talk about that more as the week goes on, but there are court cases out there that talk about how this is not an effort to influence a domestic political debate or to speak or take action in the form of speech that influences a domestic political debate. This is about influencing the behavior of a foreign government's foreign policy. The courts give broad discretion to Congress and the President in the setting of our foreign policy.

Putting that aside for a moment, as I told already you, this doesn't in any way prevent anyone from participating in boycotting or divesting from Israel. All it says is that if you do, your clients, in the form of State or local governments, can boycott or divest from you in return. Free speech is a two-way street.

Beyond that, it makes it very clear in the law that nothing in this law should be construed to violate anyone's First Amendment rights.

These are the two provisions that help Israel and to prevent the sort of economic warfare that is being driven against them and to make clear to their adversaries that the United States stands ready to resupply and strengthen Israel's ability to defend itself—not just helping Israel defend itself if it comes under attack but, frankly, in the hopes of deterring an attack against Israel. We do that by authorizing and putting into law the memorandum of understanding that was signed by the Obama administration in September of 2016.

In addition, the third thing the bill does is to deal with Jordan. Jordan is a U.S. ally. It is, by the way, a nation that, along with Egypt, has been a linchpin of Israel's security in the region, and it is also a nation that has faced an onslaught of refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria. They face the threat from ISIS, as well. In S. 1, we reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act, which passed

in 2015. It is an act that, among other things, includes Jordan on the list of countries that are eligible for certain streamlined defense sales, because Jordan itself is facing many of the same challenges, particularly because of our pullout from Syria.

If you think the pullout from Syria—especially from southeastern Syria—is a good thing for Jordan, you are wrong. Once the United States leaves that area, the Iranian influence will grow, and potentially, the ISIS influence will grow. It will become harder—not easier—on Jordan. This is the least we can do to strengthen an important ally in this region.

The last piece is one sponsored by the soon-to-be chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator RISCH—the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act. It does three principle things. It requires the Treasury to determine whether the Central Bank of Syria is a financial institution that launders money for the regime. I am not sure it will take them long to conclude that they are, but that opens the door for the second thing it does, and that is new sanctions on anyone who does business with or provides financing to the Syrian regime.

It also, by the way, requires the administration to brief us here in Congress as part of our oversight role on what our strategy is to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian products and humanitarian assistance inside Syria.

Hopefully, we will be on this bill, but as the week goes on, I sadly will have to come to the floor and point out the horrifying atrocities that have been committed and that, I believe 50 and 100 years from now, people will look back at as one of the most horrifying things that have happened in this century. The people who have done this should be held to account.

This law puts in place not just requiring the administration to tell us what they plan to do in the short term to help people to the extent possible, but it also puts in place the ability to hold those who have done this responsible and accountable for what they did and what they continue to do.

I sincerely hope that we can get on this because the American people in the face of all this noise that is out there are in desperate need of reassurance that our Republic still works and that, at a minimum, we can still agree on what we agree on and we don't use the pretext of a shutdown to shut down the Senate.

As I remind everyone again—and I know we have some new Members—this body unanimously passed a bill to fund the government. I have my views on this shutdown, and I don't understand the objection. It is \$5 billion for spending on border security. By the way, it is not \$5 billion on a wall. It is \$5 billion to fund the top 10 priorities of the border security plan, and included in those top 10 are those of strengthening existing walls and barriers and building some new ones, but it includes far more

than just a wall. I remind many of my colleagues who were here in 2013 that when we sponsored the Senate bill on immigration, we authorized four times as much in that bill for border security. Of course, the politics have changed, and so people's positions on the issue of border security have changed.

That said, I am not in favor of government shutdowns. I don't think they make sense. The people have nothing to do with this. They are not responsible for this. Border agents, TSA employees, and Federal employees from these Agencies all across the country are missing paydays now. Their mortgage companies and their credit card companies don't care that there is a shutdown. They want to get paid or they will ruin your credit. I hope we can find a resolution for them—but also for the country—without our abandoning the reality that we need to deal with border security.

Here is what I know, though. I don't believe shutting down the Senate and not allowing us to move forward on something as important as a Syria policy is the way to resolve the shutdown issue. You don't solve a shutdown with a shutdown. Shutting down the Senate and saying we are not doing anything here until we resolve this issue is not a constructive approach, and it is certainly not the way to start this new Congress.

At a time when, I think, the Senate serves as important a role as it has in two decades, this country needs a Senate that is capable of functioning and agreeing on the things we agree on—on passing bills that have broad support and not allowing them to fall victim to debates that are unrelated to the issues at hand. I remind all of my colleagues who, just 2 or 3 weeks ago, joined me and others in criticizing the decision to draw down from Syria; that there isn't a lot we can do in Congress to force the President to stay there, but there are some things we can do to reassure our allies in the region that at least in the U.S. Senate they have our support—that Israel and Jordan and the innocents who have been tortured and killed in Syria have our support. We have a bill before the Senate, S.1, that does that, and I don't know why we are not looking forward to at least debating it.

The vote we are taking in about 60 minutes or 59 minutes from now is not a vote to pass it. It is just a vote to begin debate on it. That is all it is. It is a vote to begin debate on it. To not even allow debate to begin on something we basically largely agree on may make a lot of sense in the hallways here, but it doesn't make a lot of sense to the men and women back home who are already watching the government shutdown with disdain and who then, on top of it, see that not even the Senate can function in the midst of all of this.

I hope, whether it is today or later this week, my colleagues across the

aisle will reconsider their objection to even beginning debate so we can get on this and get to work on behalf of the men and women of this country for whom we work and represent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from New Mexico.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I rise to call on the President to stop holding the government hostage and trying to force taxpayers to pay for his border wall—a wall that would be ineffective and wasteful and that is rejected by the American people.

President Trump said he is “proud”—that is his word that he used—to shut down the government. He is proud to force hundreds of thousands of people across this country to miss their hard-earned paychecks. He is proud to shutter critical services. He is proud to try and extort the American people into paying for a wall they don't support. This Trump shutdown is nothing to be proud of. It is a national disgrace, and it is time to end this recklessness.

I join with my Democratic colleagues today in calling on the Republican leaders to do their jobs and reopen the government right now. The American people don't support Trump's border wall, and they don't support this Trump shutdown. The funding bills that are being held up and used by the President as a bargaining chip have broad bipartisan support. The Democrats in both Chambers want to pass these appropriations bills now. Yet, as the Democrats stand ready to reopen the government, President Trump plans to address the Nation tonight to tell us again why he is proud to keep the government shut down.

We will likely hear more bizarre talk tonight about what we need at the border from a President who doesn't know the first thing about the border. Once again, we will likely hear blatant lies about immigrants, about our border, and about our border communities. The American people are tired of this President's assault on the truth. They are tired of having their lives and livelihoods caught up in this President's inability to rise to the office he holds. No address from the Oval Office will change that.

We need the Republican leadership in this Chamber to muster the political will to stand up to the President and get Federal employees back to work and critical services restored. We are now on day 18 of this shutdown—the second longest period that the government has been shuttered since 1980. We have already begun to see real-life consequences for families all across the Nation, and my home State of New Mexico is one of the States that is being hit the hardest by the President's temper tantrum, by his act of political extortion.

In New Mexico, roughly 5,800 Federal workers are either furloughed or are working without pay. These aren't just

numbers, these are real people. They are real people who are wondering how they will make their mortgages or rent payments or will feed their families. A Federal employee in Albuquerque wrote to my office to tell me how this shutdown is affecting her and her family.

She wrote to me to “go on the record that I am not one of the Federal employees the President is touting . . . as wanting to be out of work, without a paycheck, until he gets his wall.”

She had an important message for the Republican leadership of the Senate:

The Senate does not work for the President—it is supposed to represent the citizens of the United States . . . Federal employees do not want to stay out of work; we want to go back to work and get paid.

She ended:

This is not our fight—just his.

Economic anxiety is pervasive in all corners of the State. In fact, New Mexico was recently ranked as the most vulnerable to the impacts of the shutdown because of our significant Federal workforce and the importance of the Federal Government to our economy. As the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, I am acutely aware of how the lapse in appropriations is affecting the Agencies that are funded in our bill and the services they provide. These include the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Indian Health Service.

As the ranking member of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, I am especially cognizant of how this shutdown is hurting Native communities. For Tribes across Indian Country, the shutdown’s consequences are particularly dire after their going more than 2 weeks without Federal funds. Simply put, Tribes report that Federal programs that are critical to health and public safety are grinding to a halt and that lives are in danger.

In New Mexico, the shutdown has left the Mescalero Apache Tribe’s reservation—larger in size than the entire city of Houston, TX—with only one on-duty police officer, which would be unacceptable even under normal circumstances. Yet, due to a huge winter storm that left my State under heavy snowfall and subfreezing temperatures, that lone officer is responsible for not only responding to domestic violence and child welfare but also to snow-related accidents and emergencies across 720 square miles—all because fur-loughed road crews aren’t clearing the snow and ice from the reservation’s roads. One elder already died because he was unable to make it to dialysis. Sadly, Mescalero’s experiences are not uncommon.

The Yurok Tribe of California will soon have to close its courts, curtailing the Tribe’s efforts to rein in the opioid epidemic. Urban Indian Health Programs in Baltimore and Boston are days away from closing completely,

leaving Native families in these cities without support. The Yankton Sioux Tribe in South Dakota was just informed that its Indian Health Service unit must begin reducing services.

The 276 Tribes that depend on the USDA’s Food Distribution Programs on Indian reservations—a program that feeds nearly 100,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives—are also faced with reliving the 2013 shutdown crisis, when food rotted in locked warehouses while hungry families gathered outside—all because the President and some extreme Members of his party refuse to do their jobs and keep the government open.

It is disgraceful, and it is dangerous. Every day that the President continues to treat Tribal health and public safety programs like hostages for political gain, it endangers families across Indian Country. The United States has trust and treaty obligations that Tribes obtained in exchange for ceding millions of acres of land. The consequences of the President’s outright disregard for treaty obligations are real. The consequences of the Senate majority leader’s inaction are real. The consequences of the Republicans’ unwillingness to stand up for Tribes in their States—to stand up for basic humanity and common sense—are also real.

We are talking about people’s lives and the fundamental obligation of our Nation to honor its commitment to Native Americans. It is really that simple. We all know how pressing these problems are. The impacts of the Trump shutdown are far and wide. There are thousands of stories across the Nation. Let me tell you another from my home State of New Mexico.

A local Santa Fe small business—a construction company, Sarcon Construction Corporation—is ready to begin an \$8.4 million project to build two new hangars at the Santa Fe Municipal Airport. This 32,000-square-foot project will generate \$650,000 in local tax revenue and will employ 75 to 100 people. Many of those people are literally unemployed now while waiting for this project to begin. This project is a big deal for my home city of Santa Fe.

Do you know why the project is stalled? Sarcon can’t get the necessary approval from the Federal Aviation Administration because of the Trump shutdown, as the FAA personnel who are responsible for its approval are fur-loughed.

This shutdown has real consequences for real people, especially for people like those unemployed New Mexicans who are ready and eager to work but who are unable to because of our President’s tantrum. The President says he can “relate” to Federal workers who can’t pay bills during the shutdown, but in the next breath, he blithely assumes they will “make adjustments” and be fine.

As he has demonstrated time and again, this President cannot and does

not relate to the struggles of everyday Americans who are hurt by his policies. He cannot and does not relate to Federal employees who live paycheck to paycheck or to Santa Fe construction workers who wait anxiously to get back to work. He has shown us time and again that his policies and behavior are heartless and that he is unfit for the office he holds. I will say it again. The President told the American people on camera that he is “proud to shut down the government.” The responsibility falls squarely on him and now on his Republican collaborators in the Senate.

The impacts reach every corner of our Nation. His shutdown has already had real impacts on our Nation’s public lands, including our most iconic national parks.

Many national parks, such as Banderliel National Monument and Valles Caldera National Preserve in New Mexico, remain closed. Restrooms have been closed for 2 weeks, trash has accumulated, and roads have not been plowed. For 2 weeks, we have heard horror stories of poor sanitation and public safety issues at national parks because of the shutdown, including overflowing toilets, vandalism, and other resource damage. In Big Bend National Park, because of the lack of emergency services, Good Samaritans had to rescue a hiker who fell and broke his leg while hiking on Christmas Eve.

In fact, the effects have been so devastating that, in a legally questionable move, this administration just made the unprecedented decision to dip into the park’s entrance fees to fund basic services at a handful of parks across the country. These are fees that Congress authorizes the Park Service to collect to pay for deferred maintenance projects and other critical needs, not to take the place of appropriated funds. We still don’t know which parks will be affected by the administration’s decision, but I fully expect this bandaid approach to fall far short of protecting our treasured national resources or restoring services to the public in a meaningful way. It is merely a cynical attempt to get the problems caused by the President’s shutdown off the front page of the newspaper.

If we want to reopen the parks, there is a simple solution: Pass the Interior appropriations bill without delay, and we can reopen the entire National Park System. In the meantime, reopening some park sites but not others will not help many gateway communities that depend on parks and public lands to provide needed revenue and that are facing economic crisis as this shutdown wears on.

The National Parks Conservation Association estimates that in January, visitors spent an average of \$20 million per day in nearby communities. That is real and vital revenue. In New Mexico alone, national parks generated more than 1,700 jobs in 2017 and created more than \$140 million in economic output

for my State. I can tell you that New Mexico can't afford for these sites to be closed.

It is not just the parks that are at risk. Fire prevention programs funded by the U.S. Forest Service are being deferred during the shutdown, despite a recordbreaking fire season. Environmental protection programs are suffering. EPA has halted most activities related to hazardous waste cleanups under its national Superfund Program. Enforcement activities against polluters have ground to a halt, as have Federal permitting efforts. States aren't receiving funds to operate their regulatory programs.

Even our Nation's cherished national museums are shuttered. On January 2, the Smithsonian ran out of funds and closed its doors, preventing more than 110,000 visitors a day from accessing its prized collections. Its next-door neighbor, the National Gallery of Art, is also closed, leaving school groups, families, and everyday citizens out in the cold.

Again, there is a simple solution to stop this damage. All we have to do is pass an appropriations bill and reopen the government.

I want to end where I began. The President has nothing to be "proud" of here. President Trump needs to stop holding Federal programs hostage to his demands for a wasteful, ineffective, and destructive wall and end this shutdown now. We can do it easily. The Senate can immediately take up and pass H.R. 21—the appropriations bill passed by the House last week. This should cause no controversy. These are bills drafted by Republicans with broad bipartisan support. In fact, the Interior bill is the exact same legislation that was passed by this Chamber by a vote of 92 to 6 last August—a margin that would override a veto of the bill, I might add.

I call on Leader MCCONNELL and Members of his party to let us get to work. We need to do what is right and immediately take up and pass the House bill today. There is no reason this shutdown must go on one day longer. The lives and livelihoods of everyday Americans hang in the balance.

As a final comment, I will say that I so much appreciate working with Senator LEAHY, who is vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee and who I know feels, sees, and hears from all of his Appropriations members how concerning this situation is.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Appropriations Committee has worked extremely hard to get these bills through. We passed them almost unanimously. Every single bill to keep this government open has been passed by this Senate or the Senate Appropriations Committee and will be passed again if Republicans allow it to come to a vote. They passed almost unanimously out of committee. Senator SHELBY and I worked very, very hard to

have bipartisan bills, and we did. I think the appropriations bills have had more bipartisan votes than they have had in over 20 years.

Now, where are we? We are on the 18th day of the Trump shutdown. For more than 2 weeks now, the President has withheld the paychecks of more than 800,000 Americans. He has held them hostage in order to extort Congress into funding his border wall—a wall for which he gave his word to the American taxpayers over and over again that Mexico would pay for, not the American taxpayers. Now he says: I want the American taxpayers to pay for it.

For more than 2 weeks, the President has withheld vital government services from the American people in order to gain leverage to fulfill a divisive campaign promise and rally his base. He has totally ignored that we had passed the bills that would reopen the government. Shamefully, he cares more about this cynical bumper sticker symbol of his Presidency than he does about the millions of Americans impacted by his shutdown or the hardships to come if the Trump shutdown continues. He wants rhetoric, not reality. I want reality.

I ask, what will the President say to the 800,000 Federal workers who will not get a paycheck this Friday because of this political stunt? What will he say to the men and women who have mortgages, families to feed, and bills to pay? What will he say to those forced to deplete their hard-earned savings or retirement funds or to those who have no safety net at all?

I will give an example. Just yesterday, a man called my office. He has a job with the Internal Revenue Service in Vermont. He has been furloughed. He will not receive a paycheck this week. He fears he will not be able to pay his bills past mid-January if he does not get paid. He has already turned off the cable and most of his family's cell services to save money. He is concerned about feeding his family, and his wife has serious medical issues that require attention. Incidentally, I was looking at the weather report for parts of Vermont. Tomorrow, it will be 5 degrees below zero. He also has to heat his home in that weather. So he was upset, he was worried, and he was looking for help.

Does the President even care about these people? The President claims he can relate to them, but he dismisses their fears, glibly saying they will "make adjustments." Make adjustments for their child's medical bills? Make adjustments for their mortgage payments? Make adjustments for heating their homes when it is 5 degrees below zero? He even absurdly claims they support his silly wall. Really? Really? Come on. There are 800,000 Federal employees who are affected by the Trump Shutdown. Let somebody poll them and find out how many support what many in Vermont have called a "dumb wall." I have never heard any-

thing more tone-deaf from a President of the United States of America.

Perhaps for a man who was made a millionaire by his father at the age of 8, the idea of living paycheck to paycheck is a foreign concept, but it is not to the millions of Americans—both Republicans and Democrats alike—across this country who struggle to make ends meet. They should not be bargaining chips in the President's game. This is not a game for them, and the President should not treat it as such.

In fact, in addition to all of the Federal employees who are wondering when they will get their next paycheck, vital services on which many Americans rely and have paid taxes to support have come to a grinding halt. Remember that. Americans have paid taxes for these services, and they have come to a grinding halt.

Farmers can't get loans from the U.S. Department of Agriculture—USDA—to get them through the next planting season because no one is in the office to process the applications. We passed a 5-year farm bill. I am proud of the bipartisan bill that Senator ROBERTS and Senator STABENOW led through the Senate. I was one of the conferees on that farm bill, and it was bipartisan. It is complicated, and there are new rules in it, but the USDA cannot implement the new farm bill because all of the staff have been furloughed. How about all of the midwestern farmers who don't know what the rules are going to be before they start planting? They have to make that decision now. They paid their taxes to have the Department of Agriculture to help them, but it is closed now.

Our national parks—the prize of this country since the time of Teddy Roosevelt—are being vandalized and littered with trash and human waste. Since the Trump shutdown began, seven people have died in national parks. The parks were left unsupervised and unstaffed.

Homebuyers are finding out that their Federal Housing Administration loan applications are on hold.

Food safety inspections are slowing. How many people are going to die of food poisoning?

The Small Business Administration has stopped issuing new business loans, and our Federal courts are running out of money.

This is the United States of America. We are an embarrassment to the rest of the world because of this. The President should be embarrassed because he is the one who has asked for the Trump Shutdown.

Everyone agrees that we need to secure our borders, but there are smart ways to do it. A wall is not one of them. It is a 5th-century solution to a 21st-century problem. In 2015, the President's own acting Chief of Staff said that the idea of a wall was "absurd and almost childish." He said that a "fence doesn't stop anybody who really wants to get across . . . you go under,

you go around, you go through it.” It may be one of the few times Mick Mulvaney and I are in agreement.

To do what the President wants to do would require seizing land from ranchers and farmers. Some of these ranchers and farmers have had that land in their families for years. They are proud, hard-working, taxpaying Americans, and we say that we are going to come in with a wall through their land. It would require building walls through wildlife refuges and nature preserves. It would forever scar the landscape and ecosystem of the southwest border in ways we cannot anticipate. After all of that and billions of wasted taxpayer dollars, what would we have accomplished?

Tonight, the President will assert that the security of our Nation is in crisis. He will assert that criminals and drugs are pouring across the border. But his claims are not grounded in fact. That is typical of the claims he makes. The disinformation coming from the White House has been staggering.

In his zeal to feign a national emergency at the border, the President has employed nothing short of a propaganda campaign like we have seen in dictatorships of the past.

The reality is that between the year 2000 and 2018, apprehensions at the border have dropped. How much? They have dropped by 75 percent. The reality is that apprehensions at the southwest border have dropped to similar levels we had in the 1970s. It has dropped.

The reality is, many southern border communities have violent crime rates that are lower than the national American average. The reality, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, is that the vast majority of drugs apprehended at the border are seized at ports of entry so a wall between such ports would be entirely useless at stopping drugs.

The demographic that is increasing in number are families—women and children—seeking asylum. Many are not even trying to sneak past the Border Patrol; they present themselves to Border Patrol agents when they cross. They are not here to perpetuate violence; they are fleeing violence, they are fleeing murder, they are fleeing rape, they are fleeing crime from their countries. Wasting billions of American taxpayer dollars to build a wall will not stop them from coming. We need comprehensive immigration reform—like the bipartisan bill the Senate passed in 2013—and smart foreign policy to address these issues, not fearmongering, not distortions, not lies, and certainly not thousands of miles of concrete or steel.

The Constitution vests the power of the purse to Congress. It is our job to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. A border wall doesn't meet that threshold. Even if it did, the President has never provided us with a detailed plan for how he would spend the money, and he has been all over the map about how

much he is demanding. The only thing he has said is: We are going to have a wall, and Mexico will pay for it. Fine, let Mexico pay for it. For someone who spent years as the host of a reality TV show, reality has never been his strong suit.

We are not in the business of providing blank checks to satisfy Presidential whims. The President's own budget request to Congress was \$1.6 billion for the wall, and he has never submitted an addendum. No matter how much he or others talk about it, he never has. Instead, he makes demands by tweets and through the press. I have lost track of all the times his demands for the wall have changed, but I still go back to the original request. The only request in his budget was \$1.6 billion.

This weekend, Democrats asked the Vice President for more details on their border wall request. The administration sent Chairman SHELBY and me a letter asking for \$7 billion in border security investments that the President is demanding as part of this negotiation, including \$5.7 billion for the wall. This letter came out of nowhere 3 months into the fiscal year and 18 days into the shutdown, and it did not come from the President, it came from the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I think I may have that letter. They are asking for \$5.6 billion more for the Department of Homeland Security than they proposed in their original budget request, including an additional \$4.1 billion for the wall. This came up this weekend, but the letter included no budget justification, no details, and no suggestions for how to pay for it. The letter has a lot of cliches but does not say where the money comes from or what it is going to do. That is not the way we operate. It should not be the way we operate.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET,

Washington, DC, January 6, 2019.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,

Vice Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: The President continues to stress the need to pass legislation that will both reopen the Federal Government and address the security and humanitarian crisis at our Nation's Southwest border. The Administration has previously transmitted budget proposals that would support his ongoing commitment to dramatically reduce the entry of illegal immigrants, criminals, and drugs; keep out terrorists, public safety threats, and those otherwise inadmissible under U.S. law; and ensure that those who do enter without legal permission can be promptly and safely returned home.

Appropriations bills for fiscal year (FY) 2019 that have already been considered by the current and previous Congresses are inadequate to fully address these critical issues. Any agreement for the current year should satisfy the following priorities:

Border Wall, Customs and Border Protection (CBP): The President requests \$5.7 billion for construction of a steel barrier for the Southwest border. Central to any strategy to achieve operational control along the southern border is physical infrastructure to provide requisite impedance and denial. In short, a physical barrier—wall—creates an enduring capability that helps field personnel stop, slow down and/or contain illegal entries. In concert with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CBP has increased its capacity to execute these funds. The Administration's full request would fund construction of a total of approximately 234 miles of new physical barrier and fully fund the top 10 priorities in CBP's Border Security Improvement Plan. This would require an increase of \$4.1 billion over the FY 2019 funding level in the Senate version of the bill.

Immigration Judge Teams—Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR): The President requests at least \$563 million for 75 additional Immigration Judges and support staff to reduce the backlog of pending immigration cases. The Administration appreciates that the Senate's FY 2019 bill provides this level of funding, and looks forward to working with the Congress on further increases in this area to facilitate an expansion of in-country processing of asylum claims.

Law Enforcement Personnel, Border Patrol Agent Hiring, CBP: The President requests \$211 million to hire 750 additional Border Patrol Agents in support of his promise to keep our borders safe and secure. While the Senate's FY 2019 bill supports some Border Patrol Agent hiring, fulfilling this request requires an increase of \$100 million over the FY 2019 funding level in the Senate version of the bill.

Law Enforcement Personnel, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE): The President requests \$571 million for 2,000 additional law enforcement personnel, as well as support staff, who enforce our U.S. immigration laws and help address gang violence, smuggling and trafficking, and the spread of drugs in our communities. This would require an increase of \$571 million over the FY 2019 funding level in the Senate version of the bill.

Detention Beds, ICE: The President requests \$4.2 billion to support 52,000 detention beds. Given that in recent months, the number of people attempting to cross the border illegally has risen to 2,000 per day, providing additional resources for detention and transportation is essential. This would require an increase of \$798 million over the FY 2019 funding level in the Senate version of the bill.

Humanitarian Needs: The President requests an additional \$800 million to address urgent humanitarian needs. This includes additional funding for enhanced medical support, transportation, consumable supplies appropriate for the population, and additional temporary facilities for processing and short-term custody of this vulnerable population, which are necessary to ensure the well-being of those taken into custody.

Counter-narcotics/weapons Technology: Beyond these specific budgetary requests, the Administration looks forward to working with Congress to provide resources in other areas to address the unprecedented challenges we face along the Southwest border. Specifically, \$675 million would provide Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology at inbound lanes at U.S. Southwest Border Land Ports of Entry (LPOE) would allow CBP to deter and detect more contraband, including narcotics, weapons, and other materials that pose nuclear and radiological threats. This would require an increase of \$631 million over the FY 2019 funding level in the Senate version of the bill.

In addition, to address the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied alien children (UACs), Democrats have proposed in-country asylum processing for Central American Minors. This would require a statutory change, along with reallocation of State Department funds to establish in-country processing capacities at Northern Triangle consulates and embassies. Furthermore, for the new procedure to achieve the desired humanitarian result, a further corresponding statutory change would be required to ensure that those who circumvent the process and come to the United States without authorization can be promptly returned home. Without the latter change, in-country processing will not reduce the unauthorized flow or successfully mitigate the humanitarian crisis.”

These upfront investments in physical barriers and technology, as well as legislation to close loopholes in our immigration system, will reduce illegal immigration, the flow of illicit drugs entering our country and reduce the long term costs for border and immigration enforcement activities.

The Administration looks forward to advancing these critical priorities as part of legislation to reopen the Government.

Sincerely,

RUSSELL T. VUGHT,
Acting Director.

Mr. LEAHY. The President may not care about the impact the shutdown is having on millions of Americans, but the U.S. Senate—a body that should be the conscience of the Nation—should care. Stoking fear through misinformation in order to promote a political agenda is simply wrong. We could and should reopen the government this week.

Last week, the House passed a bipartisan, six-bill minibus to reopen most of the government and a continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security. To show how bipartisan it is, the six appropriations bills the House passed originated in the Republican-controlled Senate last Congress and had bipartisan support, including by Senator SHELBY as chairman and by myself as vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

I worked hard with Senator SHELBY—and I admire his efforts—to produce these bills last summer and fall, and all of them received nearly unanimous support when they were considered on the floor of the Senate or in the Appropriations Committee. Senator MCCONNELL should bring them to the floor of the U.S. Senate today and put them up for a vote. We have already shown virtually every Republican and every Democrat in this body will vote for them.

Bring them up. Let’s vote for them. End this nonsense. End it. The leader owes that to the American people. We owe that to the American people. Let us be the conscience of the Nation, not an institution that is simply a foil for the latest tweet or posting. We can do it. We have passed these bills before. Bring them up. Bring them up. Bring them up, and pass them again. Republicans and Democrats have voted for them in the past. The Republican chairman and I strongly support them. Bring them up. Bring them up. Bring them up and pass them and open the

government and let 800,000 Americans stop their suffering.

I yield the floor.

I see the Senator seeking recognition, so I withhold my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

CONGRATULATING THE CLEMSON TIGERS

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I will be quick. I know we have a lot to do before we vote, but if you are from South Carolina, you have a lot to be happy about today. If you watched the football game last night, I thought you saw a real display of college football.

I am a South Carolina graduate. I went to the University of South Carolina. I have lived near Clemson most of my life, and I am here to congratulate the Clemson Tigers because after last night, the Clemson Tigers have become the gold standard for college football, both on and off the field.

What I like most about Clemson is, they believe you can’t win on the field if you lose off the field, and it starts at the top. Coach Swinney is the very definition of “all in”—with his family, his faith, his coaches and staff and his dedication and loyalty to his current and former players. He is one of the most beloved men I have ever met in the coaching profession. His players understand that he cares about them, and when he pushes them, it is only because he wants them to be the best they can be and the best the team can be.

Clemson University is not a football school, for those who are wondering. It is one of the top-tiered, academically challenging public universities in the entire country—and it is not bragging if it is true—which happens to have a great football team and a great coach.

To those who don’t want to see Clemson versus Alabama part 5, I can understand that. I have some advice for you. Get better and beat one of them. Don’t complain. These are the two best teams in the Nation.

To my friends from Alabama, your program is going to go down as one of the most historic programs in the history of college football, but last night, the best team in the Nation was the Clemson Tigers. They won decisively. They won with class. The 2018 season will be remembered as long as there is a Clemson University.

I live 5 miles from the stadium. I grew up in the shadow of Clemson University. I got an honorary degree from Clemson. That is about the only way I would have ever gotten a degree. I am very proud of what Clemson University has accomplished on and off the field. TIM and I will be introducing a resolution recognizing this great accomplishment by the Clemson Tigers.

I just want to end with this. In these troubled times, when there is a lot going on in the world, and there is a lot of bad news, this is a chance to celebrate something very positive. America is a football country, and college football is one of our most beloved sports. Last night, you saw two quality

teams. I can say, without a doubt, if you are going to follow college football, get to know the Clemson Tigers because you are going to see them again. Go Tigers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

S. 1

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, to my colleague from South Carolina, Senator GRAHAM, we will challenge the Clemson Tigers to the NCAA skiing championship anytime.

I rise to speak about the bill we are working on today, S. 1, Strengthening America’s Security in the Middle East Act.

I am proud to be a sponsor of this legislation, along with Senator RUBIO and Senator RISCH. I commend Chairman RISCH for working with the majority leader in attempting to move this important legislation and effort without delay.

I think it is important to recognize that this bill combines four non-controversial pieces of legislation from the 115th Congress that are intended to support our strong allies, Israel and Jordan, and to impose sanctions against the gross human rights abuses of the Assad regime in Syria.

We have no stronger ally in the Middle East than the State of Israel. Israel has proven itself to be a resilient beacon of democratic values, despite facing existential threats daily since its founding in 1948.

Our two nations have worked closely to fight terrorism, to stop the spread of radical Islamist extremism, and to prevent nuclear and chemical weapons proliferation by rogue regimes, such as Syria and Iran. The legislation before us today simply reaffirms our strong support for Israel, including \$3.3 billion per year in annual U.S. security assistance, consistent with the 10-year U.S.-Israel memorandum of understanding, which was signed in 2016 by President Obama.

In the 115th Congress, 72 Senators—72 Senators, Republicans and Democrats—cosponsored this legislation. It passed in the Senate unanimously on August 1, 2018. There is no reason why my colleagues across the aisle should not support this legislation today—no reason—in order to show our strong bipartisan support to our friend and ally, Israel, at a time of great need.

This package also includes provisions supporting State governments that have taken action against the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic movement known as Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions, or BDS. To date, 26 States—including my home State of Colorado—have adopted laws or executive orders against BDS. This legislation before us today simply endorses those decisions and clarifies that these measures adopted or enforced by a State or local government are not preempted by any Federal law if they comply with the requirements in the legislation.

This anti-BDS legislation had 48 bipartisan cosponsors in the 115th Congress. There is no reason it should not be passed with bipartisan support today.

BDS is a vile movement—a vile movement—and should be vociferously opposed by Republicans, Democrats, and everyone alike. This is why, on December 20, I led a letter, with 14 of my Senate colleagues, to the majority leader and the minority leader to take immediate action against BDS.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, December 20, 2018.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Majority Leader,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHARLES SCHUMER,
Senate Minority Leader,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR LEADERS MCCONNELL AND SCHUMER: We write today to bring to your attention a disturbing development concerning the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic movement known as Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS). Regrettably, in recent days, future members of the U.S. House of Representatives have publicly expressed support for this extreme movement.

We urge you to issue a joint statement publicly condemning BDS and to prioritize legislative efforts in the next session of Congress to counter this destructive trend. We note there were bipartisan legislative efforts, including the Combating BDS Act (S. 170) and the Israel Anti-Boycott Act (S. 720), which were introduced in the 115th Congress.

Israel is our country's most steadfast ally in a highly volatile region of the world. The State of Israel has proven itself to be a resilient beacon of democratic values, despite facing existential threats daily since its founding in 1948. Working closely together, our two countries have worked to fight terrorism, to stop the spread of radical Islamist ideologies, and to prevent nuclear and chemical weapons proliferation by rogue regimes, such as Syria and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As then-President Barack Obama stated in his speech in Jerusalem on March 21, 2013: "Israel has established a thriving democracy with a spirited civil society, proud political parties, a tireless free press, and a lively public debate—lively may even be an understatement. And Israel has achieved this even as it has overcome relentless threats to its security—through the courage of the Israel Defense Forces, and a citizenry that is resilient in the face of terror."

Simply put, the BDS movement seeks to de-legitimize the State of Israel and its people. Senator Schumer, as you so eloquently stated on March 6, 2018: "We must continue to stand firm against the profoundly biased campaign to delegitimize the State of Israel through [BDS] . . . While Iran publicly executes its citizens, Turkey jails its journalists, scores of Arab nations punish homosexuality with imprisonment and torture, why does BDS single Israel out alone for condemnation?"

It is disheartening to see future members of Congress take a position on BDS that is not only highly biased, but contrary to fundamental facts and detrimental to U.S. national security interests. We therefore respectfully urge you to immediately condemn

these comments and to show bipartisan support for our ally Israel.

Sincerely,

Cory Gardner, Lindsey Graham, Marco Rubio, Chuck Grassley, Ted Cruz, Susan M. Collins, Jon Kyl, John Hoeven, Steve Daines, John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Roger Wicker, James E. Risch, David Perdue, Tim Scott.

Mr. GARDNER. In that letter, we asked for immediate bipartisan response against BDS, including moving today's legislation forward. In that letter, we quote the minority leader, Senator SCHUMER, when he spoke at the annual American-Israel Public Affairs Committee conference just this past March. Less than a year ago, here is what Senator SCHUMER told the audience at AIPAC on March 5, 2018:

[W]e must continue to stand firm against the profoundly biased campaign to delegitimize the State of Israel through [boycotts, divestment, and sanctions].

While Iran publicly executes its citizens, Turkey jails its journalists, scores of Arab nations punish homosexuality with imprisonment and torture, why does BDS single Israel out alone for condemnation?

When there is such a double standard, when the world treats everybody one way and the Jew or the Jewish State another way, there's only one word for it: anti-Semitism. Let us call out the BDS movement for what it is. Let us delegitimize the delegitimizers by letting the world know when there is a double standard. Whether they know it or not, they are actively participating in an anti-Semitic movement.

Those are the words of the Democratic minority leader in March of 2018. I completely agree with Senator SCHUMER. Yet today I understand that he and Members of his caucus plan to vote against the motion to proceed on bipartisan legislation that would condemn BDS. It is regrettable. It is unfortunate. It is horrible.

It is also part of a new and disturbing trend that we see from some of our colleagues in the Democratic caucus. As we noted in our letter, several Members of the House of Representatives have now publicly endorsed BDS and have not been condemned by Senator SCHUMER and other Democratic leaders. We saw the manifestation of this dangerous trend 2 days ago, when a Democratic Representative issued a statement alleging that the Senators who introduced the bill before us today, myself included, forget what country they represent. This is a reprehensible charge of dual loyalty utterly unbecoming of a sitting Member of Congress, and we all need to come together to condemn such vile insinuations.

I am glad to see that respected, non-partisan organizations, like the American Jewish Committee, AJC, have now issued strong statements rebuking this Democratic Member of Congress.

The AJC statement reads in part:

AJC is outraged at the tweet posted by [the Representative] that U.S. senators who had introduced Israel-related legislation "forgot what country they represent."

That assertion, which completely avoids legitimate debate about the content of the

bill itself, insinuates that a number of respected, long-serving senators are somehow more loyal to Israel than they are to the United States.

The charge evokes classical anti-Semitic tropes about dual loyalty—in this case applied to some lawmakers who are not even Jewish—that have no place in our political discourse.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the statement from AJC dated January 7, 2019.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

AJC OUTRAGED BY REP. TLAIB'S TWEET

(Jan. 7, 2019)

NEW YORK.—AJC is outraged at the tweet posted by Representative Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) claiming that U.S. senators who had introduced Israel-related legislation "forgot what country they represent." That assertion, which completely avoids legitimate debate about the content of the bill itself, insinuates that a number of respected, long-serving senators are somehow more loyal to Israel than they are to the United States.

The charge evokes classical anti-Semitic tropes about dual loyalty—in this case applied to some lawmakers who are not even Jewish—that have no place in our political discourse. Ironically, it was Representative Tlaib who took the unusual step of wrapping herself in a foreign flag upon winning election to Congress, and who said she would serve as "a voice for" another nation in the House of Representatives.

Her ad hominem attack on congressional colleagues joins a growing list of troubling statements by the newly elected member, including her rejection of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

AJC calls on Rep. Tlaib to apologize for her offensive remarks.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I believe this body can do different, so I ask my colleagues to put politics aside and vote yes on the motion to proceed to this legislation that will help enhance our national security and will take strong action against a reprehensible and racist movement known as BDS.

I know there are some who believe we should shut down the Senate because of the current funding situation in the Federal Government, but let me remind Members of this Chamber that in 2013, under Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid, what was voted on during the shutdown in 2013—here it is—a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to take actions to implement the agreement between the United States of America and the United Mexican States concerning transboundary hydrocarbon reservoirs in the Gulf of Mexico. Somehow, in 2013, it was OK to find time for that measure.

While complaining about finding time for other measures right now, during the shutdown in 2013, they found time to address the Security Clearance Oversight and Reform Enhancement Act. They found time for the Small Airplane Revitalization Act. They found time to ensure that any new or revised requirement providing for the screening, testing, or treatment of individuals operating commercial motor

vehicles for sleep disorders is adopted pursuant to a rulemaking proceeding and for other purposes. Now they don't want to bring up anti-BDS legislation because we shouldn't be talking about anything else, but in 2013, they had time to vote on and to consider things like extending the period during which Iraqis who are employed by the U.S. Government in Iraq may be granted special immigrant status and temporarily increasing the fee or surcharge for processing machine-readable non-immigrant visas.

I am not downplaying the importance of these bills. I am saying that there seems to be a significant double standard and a significant partisan double standard because what is being complained about today is the same thing that was fine in 2013—had time to vote on a couple of district judges as well, but now there is no time for that.

People are saying we shouldn't vote on this legislation until the government is funded. I have said it very clearly—we need to fund the government. What also needs to be very clear is how people will vote on this legislation, to not hide behind the shutdown how they would vote on anti-BDS legislation.

We have heard the rhetoric. We have heard the very real comments from not fictitious Members of Congress but from actual Members of Congress who support an anti-Semitic movement. We can condemn it today with a simple vote to proceed. If people don't want to take too much time to debate it, I think everybody knows that it is right to support an anti-BDS position. They know it is right to oppose Assad and his chemical attacks and the other torturous actions he has taken against his own people. It is a pretty simple vote on this motion to proceed—vote yes; support the underlying legislation. Bipartisan Members, Republicans and Democrats, just last year supported this legislation, voted for this legislation, and I hope they will not let partisan politics get in the way of doing what is right.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, we are now in day 18 of an unnecessary and shameful government shutdown. I am proud to be joined on the floor by my colleague and partner, the senior Senator from Maryland, BEN CARDIN, Senator TIM KAINE and Senator WARNER from Virginia, and many of my colleagues, to say loud and clear that the first order of business in this Senate should be to reopen the Federal Government because every day that goes by, more and more Americans are losing access to important government services, 800,000 hard-working Federal employees are going without pay and facing mounting monthly bills, 400,000-plus are working without pay to help protect our country, and over 300,000 are forcibly furloughed. Small businesses that do contract work for the

government are getting clobbered, as are the employees who work for them.

We have it within our power to vote tonight to end this shutdown by voting on the two bills that passed the House of Representatives last Thursday. They made it their first order of business, and so should we. I have copies of those bills.

I have a copy of H.J. Res. 1 right here in my hand. It would reopen the Homeland Security Department at current levels until February 8, allowing us an opportunity to discuss with the President the best and most effective approach to border security. It is identical to what this Senate passed on a bipartisan basis just before Christmas.

The second bill that passed the House—and I have that right here at my desk as well—would reopen the other eight Departments of the Federal Government for the remainder of the fiscal year and, importantly, at levels that were supported in this Senate on a bipartisan basis either through votes on this Senate floor or in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Both of these bills—H.J. Res. 1 and H.R. 21—are on the Senate calendar. We could bring them up, and we could vote tonight to end the government shutdown. Then we could have a discussion with the President on the best way to secure our borders. Let's stop holding the entire Nation and 800,000 hard-working Federal employees hostage in a disagreement they have nothing to do with.

President Trump did say that he was going to be proud to shut down the government, and he did it. Every day that goes by in this Senate without a vote on the House bills to reopen the government makes this Senate more and more complicit in the shutdown. No Senator—no Senator—should be contracting out their constitutional responsibilities and their votes to the President of the United States. Let's not be an accomplice to this shutdown. Let's bring up the vote, bring up the bill, vote on it now—no business-as-usual tonight—and let's, first of all, do the people's business and reopen the government. Let's do it now.

I am proud to now give time to Senator CARDIN, my friend, the senior Senator from Maryland.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to support what Senator VAN HOLLEN has said. I am here with Senators WARNER and KAINE. We have the honor of representing Maryland and Virginia in the Senate, where there are so many Federal workers.

I want to underscore one point Senator VAN HOLLEN made about the two bills that are on our calendar that passed the House. These are not Democratic bills; these are bipartisan bills. These are bills that passed this body just a few weeks ago by unanimous votes to keep government open as we continue to negotiate on border security. They deal with appropriations

bills that passed our Appropriations Committees—in one case unanimously, and in one case, all but one Senator voted for it. So these are bipartisan bills that have been sent over to us from the House that have already cleared this body once. Now we can pass them, keep government open for most of the agencies, and in the case of Homeland Security, a continuing resolution.

This shutdown caused by President Trump is a disaster. It is hurting people. In this morning's Sun paper, there was an article about an important economic development project in Baltimore City on the east side that cannot move forward because HUD can't process the paperwork so it can go forward. We are getting hurt every day.

Senator VAN HOLLEN mentioned the 800,000 Federal workers. About half are being asked to show up and work every day without a paycheck. The others are being locked out and are being furloughed without pay. People are getting hurt.

The taxpayers of this country expect to be able to get government services from their agencies, and they can't get those services. They are being hurt.

Contractors are being hurt, small businesses are being hurt, and our economy is being hurt.

It makes no sense whatsoever. The first order of business should be to take up these two bills. Let's put aside what is currently pending. Let's bring up these two bills. We can return to that calendar immediately thereafter. We can do that, but let's make sure we get these bills passed so we can open government now. The Senate should not be complicitous in the shutdown that President Trump has caused. Let's act in good faith. Let's open up government. Let's negotiate border security. If we can't get that done quickly, we could at least have a continuing resolution and continue our debate on border security, but don't hold the American people hostage. That is exactly what the President of the United States is trying to do.

Mr. President, I yield the floor to Senator WARNER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator KAINE and I each be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes prior to the scheduled vote.

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

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I want to join my colleagues from Maryland and my friend, the Senator from Virginia, as well, to speak out on this manufactured crisis.

This President is holding 800,000 Federal workers hostage, folks who are going to work, some of them without pay, and others who are furloughed. As has been mentioned, this is not just affecting Federal workers. Senator KAINE and I have been talked to by a number of contractors, small business owners.

A couple of them are closing their doors this week because they have now gone for weeks without being paid. You can't put a business back together after you have closed its doors. So there are 800,000 Federal employees, there are contractors, but there is a whole slew of other folks who are already immediately affected.

The complete lack of thought this administration had in this shutdown—they tried to say: We are not going to make it seem like a shutdown. We are going to leave the parks open. Now we see destruction going on in our parks. We see in our State that Shenandoah National Park has trash overflowing. We have the battlefields where people have engaged in inappropriate activities. We have seen as well a whole slew of businesses that depend upon a high volume of tourist travel during the holidays—none of that took place.

I also wonder whether Donald Trump, who says this is about security—well, if it is about security, we ought to make sure our Coast Guard is paid. We ought to make sure our TSA agents are paid. We are seeing dramatic numbers of folks calling in sick, dramatically reducing the ability to maintain security at our airports, where, frankly, most of our vulnerability on the border actually takes place. That is going to get exponentially worse after Friday when these employees go without a paycheck.

The fact is, these workers don't work for Donald Trump; they work for America. Echoing what my colleague said, our first order of business ought to be making sure we get this government reopened.

The final point I want to make is this: The heartlessness of this President in his comments about our Federal workers that somehow they can manage through without a paycheck, that somehow they can negotiate with their landlord if they can't pay their rent—rather than Donald Trump putting on a political show tonight on TV and a political trip to the border tomorrow, I invite the President to come anywhere in Virginia, Maryland, or the District and sit down with Federal employees and explain this crisis and why they are not getting paid.

So my hope is that, echoing what our Senators from Maryland have said, the Senate shouldn't be complicit in this. We need to reopen the government. If we want to negotiate additional border security, I am all for it, but not holding hostage, literally, our Federal employees and countless others.

I yield to the Senator from Virginia.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senator RISCH be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, tonight following this vote, Senator SHAHEEN

and I have organized a group of more than 15 Democrats who will take the floor to talk about the effect of the government shutdown in each of our States. We will talk about the effect on workers, on families, and on citizens needing services. I don't want to repeat what I will say in about an hour, but I want to address the issue of the vote that is now coming before us.

The vote is a vote to proceed to a number of issues that are important to the security of other nations. I am the cosponsor of one of bills that is before us—a U.S.-Israel security assistance bill—and strongly, strongly support it, but as passionate as I have been for the security of the nation of Israel, I am every bit as passionate about the security of the United States, and I think the first business of this Senate should be to reopen the Government of the United States.

I think to take any other action or to focus on any other issue when we have bipartisan bills pending in the Senate that have been supported by our Republican colleagues that would reopen government—to skip by those bills and push them aside for another 18 days or longer—makes absolutely no sense.

So I will be opposing the motion that is on the floor this evening because the first business of this body should be to reopen government.

I think of the question that Abraham Lincoln raised at Gettysburg. He talked about this Nation dedicated to the proposition that all are created equal and the question about whether any nation dedicated to that proposition can long endure. I don't think President Lincoln, the founder of the modern Republican Party, would have supported a government shutdown for a year, for a week, for a day, or for a minute. This issue that is on the table before us is about the endurance of the United States Government and giving people confidence in us that we support the government's operation.

We should not take up other items until we take up the bipartisan proposal before this body and make sure that the government of the United States is funded and that people are protected.

I yield the floor.

S. 1

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President and fellow Senators, I rise today to present S. 1, the Strengthening America's Security in the Middle East Act of 2019.

It is really a compilation of three bills, addressing three different issues in the Middle East. It is left over from the last Congress, the 115th.

It is fitting that the first piece of legislation on the Senate floor in the 116th Congress is made up of bills that have previously enjoyed the support of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. This is a bipartisan piece of legislation—all three of them that are put together in this bill—with many Senators from both sides of the aisle hav-

ing contributed to the construction of this bill.

We need to get this important work done now, not in a month or two. It is leftover business, as I said, and it is about as unanimous as anything around here gets.

Now, I understand that there is friction around here at the moment, as my good friend from Virginia just talked about. But, look, we are the U.S. Senate. We can walk and we can chew gum at the same time.

These issues that are in this bill desperately need our attention, and it is disheartening to see that there is going to be a vote against this simply because the parties want to focus on just one issue. That isn't the issue in front of us. If it were, of course, we could vote that way.

I don't think there is anybody on this floor that wants to see the government shut down. There are a lot of us that would like to see a smaller government, a less intrusive government, and a less regulatory government, but we were elected to govern. We were not elected to not govern, and it is important that we do resolve that.

But in the meantime, we have these important matters left over from the last Congress, and I hope we can move to them and get them done.

Israel and Jordan have been steadfast allies and friends of the United States. This legislation reaffirms our strong friendship with these countries and extends critical aid to these two allies. Israel and Jordan deserve the support and cooperation that this legislation would extend. We should not let them down.

Also included in this legislation is the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, which very nearly passed in the full Senate by unanimous consent in the closing hours and minutes of the last Congress. There was only 1 objection to it, but 99 Senators agreed to this act.

The Caesar bill declares that it is U.S. policy to use all diplomatic and economic means to compel the government of Bashar al-Assad to stop the slaughter of the Syrian people and to work toward a democratic government.

Sanctions are an important tool of U.S. foreign policy. Carefully designed sanctions allow the United States to create the conditions to influence decision-making and serve U.S. national security interests without having to implement additional military measures and put U.S. troops in harm's way. The sanctions method has been particularly effective in some very important situations.

The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act includes strong financial sanctions to target those individuals responsible in the Assad regime for the terrible loss of life and destruction in Syria. Further, it extends sanctions to those who would support the Syrian regime's actions in the war in Syria, such as Iran and Russia.

In order for us to bring a permanent defeat of ISIS, which necessitates getting Iran out of Syria, we should encourage politically negotiated solutions that will bring major change to the current Syrian regime structure.

With nearly 500,000 killed in Syria, this legislation is deserved, and it is long overdue. We must exert maximum pressure in coordination with our allies and friends to bring the Syrian dictator, Assad, and his Iranian friends and their allies to account.

It is my hope that the Senate can move to this bill and take up this important legislation with its three-pronged approach that supports our important allies. Let's not let these allies down.

Again, I come back to I understand that there is some friction here on other issues that we should be addressing, but right now the vote is this: Do you or do you not support the allies and the civilian population of Syria, who are being slaughtered in the fashion that they have?

My fellow Senators, I urge an affirmative vote on this good piece of legislation.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 1, S. 1, a bill to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, John Barrasso, Cory Gardner, John Hoeven, Mike Rounds, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Tom Cotton, John Boozman, John Cornyn, John Thune, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Bill Cassidy, Shelley Moore Capito.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1, an act to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted: yeas 56, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 1 Leg.]

YEAS—56

Alexander	Gardner	Perdue
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Burr	Inhofe	Rubio
Capito	Isakson	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Jones	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Stinema
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Manchin	Thune
Cruz	McSally	Tillis
Daines	Menendez	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Harris	Rosen
Bennet	Hassan	Sanders
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schatz
Booker	Hirono	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	McConnell	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 44.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk on the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 1, S.1, a bill to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Rick Scott, Mitt Romney, Cory Gardner, Marco Rubio, John Thune, Chuck Grassley, Todd Young, John Barrasso, Deb Fischer, Lindsey Graham, Johnny Isakson, James E. Risch, John Boozman.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

The Senator from Louisiana.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF THE I-75 COLLISION NEAR GAINESVILLE, FL

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise to speak in memory of five children from Louisiana, my home State, who were tragically killed in an awful car wreck last Thursday in Florida—Jeremiah Warren, 14; Joel Cloud, 14; Cara Descant, 13; Brianna Descant, 10; and Cierra Bordelon, 9 years old—all from Marksville, LA, a small town of less than 6,000 people.

All of the children were members of the Avoyelles House of Mercy Church family. They were traveling together in a van with four other children and three women from the House of Mercy Church while on their way to Disney World. A tractor-trailer that was traveling in the opposite direction hit a car that crossed the highway, hit their van and another 18-wheeler, and created a ball of fire. The drivers in the two tractor-trailers died as well—Steve Holland of Florida and Douglas Bolkema of New Mexico. We include them in our prayers.

Losing five children is such a devastating tragedy for the Marksville community. One can hardly imagine the grief and shock that grips everyone who knew them—their neighbors, friends, family, and fellow church members.

Pastor Eric Descant said: “I cried so much this morning that my tears felt like lava running out of a volcano.” His granddaughters Brianna and Cara died in the crash. His wife, Karen, is still hospitalized.

During a Monday night vigil at Marksville High’s stadium, Pastor Descant spoke to the crowd over the PA system by phone from Florida. He said: “I never knew a heart could break so much and still work.”

He also delivered an important reminder that even in the midst of such immense heartache and loss, “God will get the glory out of it.”

He added: Don’t stop. Keep praying.

I know so many around Louisiana and the country are doing just that.

We are also praying for the full recovery of those who were injured and who are still hospitalized: Karen Descant, Robyn Rattay, Amy Joffrion and her 14-year-old son Noah, Ali Laborde and her 11-year-old daughter Chelsea, and two other children, 9-year-old Trinity Woodward and 9-year-old Chance Bernard.

We are sincerely grateful to the people in Florida who assisted the victims and their families—the first responders, law enforcement, everyone at Health Shands Hospital, North Florida Regional Medical Center, and the Pentecostals of Gainesville.

To those around the country who have heard about this tragedy and have donated money through GoFundMe, thank you for your generosity, support, and prayers.

To my fellow Louisianans, I remind you of what Scripture says in Psalm 34: “The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and saves the crushed in spirit.”