

Mr. Barr is extremely smart and eminently qualified. He would be a judicious, thoughtful, and independent Attorney General, whose allegiance would be to, as he said, “the rule of law, the Constitution, and the American people.” I hope the Senate will quickly confirm him in a bipartisan fashion.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, the final order of business this week is funding the government. I am very pleased and encouraged that Chairman SHELBY and his counterparts have reached an agreement “in principle” to fully fund the government and fund important border security measures.

No one wants another government shutdown. I am very glad Democrats abandoned their efforts to force a cap on the number of individuals that Immigration and Customs Enforcement could detain in the interior of the country. If Democrats’ enforcement cap had been adopted, Immigration and Customs Enforcement would have been forced to release criminals already in detention onto our Nation’s streets. I am pleased that Democrats decided to separate themselves from the radical anti-border-security wing of their party. Instead, the deal will now give Immigration and Customs Enforcement the flexibility it needs to address surges of illegal immigration at our southern border.

I am also very glad Democrats moved from their insistence on zero funding for physical barriers at the border. Barriers are an essential element of border security, and I am pleased this compromise will allow 55 new miles of physical barriers in the Rio Grande Valley’s sector, which is a high-priority area for the Border Patrol. That is double the number of new miles provided in fiscal year 2018 and nearly three times as many as would have been available under a continuing resolution.

I thank Chairman SHELBY and Members of both parties who have been working on a funding and border security deal, as well as the staffers who have worked nights and weekends, to help develop this agreement. I look forward to reviewing the final language and voting on a final funding and border security package later this week.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I appreciate the bipartisan conversation that is going on with the chair, and I hope more of that will go on. That really is a little bit of why I rise today, because I hope and pray that if there—while we have many legitimate policy dif-

ferences in this body, one thing we ought to have absolute, complete agreement on is that the United States of America cannot afford another government shutdown.

The last shutdown, which President Trump was so proud to initiate, cost our economy—and this is the lowest estimate we could find so we don’t look like we are overstating—an estimated \$6 billion.

The truth is, that number hardly reflects the human cost of this self-inflicted disaster our country was led into. A recent survey found that 62 percent of Federal workers depleted most or all of their emergency savings, 42 percent of Federal workers took on debt to pay bills or other expenses, and 25 percent tapped their retirement accounts. If you tap your IRA, you pay tax penalties, and you get none of that reimbursed.

Listen to this: 25 percent of our Federal workers who were the victims of this shutdown—25 percent of our Federal workers, during this shutdown, had to visit a food bank. If you work for the United States of America, the greatest Nation in the world, and you are asked to show up to work without pay, you should not have to visit a food bank.

I spent most of my career in the private sector, and I am proud of those activities, but I know very few folks who work for any of my companies who would have continued to show up day in and day out to do their jobs if they were going for 35 days without pay—and 35 days without pay where, frankly, you had some Members of the so-called board, the Congress, who showed no appreciation at all for their suffering and many who said they didn’t mind if that shutdown continued indefinitely.

Those fellow Americans are Federal workers, contractors, private businesses that support Federal installations or the campground outside the Shenandoah National Park or the restaurant outside Petersburg National Battlefield—not just Federal employees, folks in the private sector as well endured tremendous hardship because the President decided to use their livelihoods as a bargaining chip. That can’t happen again.

While I want to always try to be optimistic and appreciate the bipartisan agreement that has been reached by the budget negotiators, unfortunately, we find ourselves in the same spot right now—potentially just days away from another Trump shutdown.

The President said he is not happy, but he won’t say whether he will sign the bipartisan deal that came from the conference committee. Let’s be clear. The uncertainty itself is having a negative impact on the operation of the Federal Government and costing taxpayer dollars each and every day that this cloud hangs over the government. Agencies are already interrupting investigations and canceling trainings and meetings. They are being forced to

act as if the government will once again be shut down at the end of this week. This is just plain mismanagement of government by the Trump administration. It is another example of the disrespect this White House has shown to our Federal workforce.

In Virginia, over the past few weeks, Senator KAINE and I have spent a lot of time listening to Federal workers. We heard from Federal workers who had to pull their kids out of daycare and send them away to relatives because they couldn’t meet those daycare expenses if they weren’t getting paid and folks who missed student loan payments or literally had to choose between their medications and paying rent. Now, these workers have started to receive some of their backpay, and many of them have not received all of their backpay from the shutdown.

The truth is, those Federal workers who drew down their savings or incurred a tax penalty from taking money from their IRA or who took an advance on their credit card are not made whole by receiving backpay because they have incurred penalties that will never be made up, beyond the psychic damage that is taking place with their families.

But even if we accept that most of the Federal workers will ultimately get their backpay, that is not the case for thousands of Federal contractors in Virginia and around the country. Quite honestly, the nightmare is not over.

The President’s decision to finally reopen the government didn’t magically undo 35 days of missed pay. Unfortunately, no one from the White House could be bothered to meet with any of these folks, whether it be Federal workers or contractors who were hurt by this government shutdown. If they had, they would know how much pain this President’s shutdown continues to inflict on Federal contractors, particularly low- and middle-income workers. I spent the last couple of months, the last month and a half listening to these folks describe the anxiety of not knowing when their next paycheck will come or if it will come at all.

Sometimes when we think about Federal contractors, we think about high-priced folks, many of whom do a good job working for our government, many in my State. Sometimes that is the image of a Federal contractor. I wonder if most of the Members of this body realize that the people who clean the toilets at the Smithsonian or serve the food at the cafeteria in the Smithsonian are Federal contractors, and for the 35 days of the government shutdown—they have no recourse at this moment in time. They are struggling as we speak, and they will continue to struggle if Congress doesn’t take advantage of this opportunity—if we get this deal signed by Friday and keep the government open—to make good on our commitment to those contractors as well. If we end up with the alternative and the government shuts down again, these folks’ lives—at least their economic lives—will be in jeopardy.