

Republican leader that Senate Democrats are ready to pass the bipartisan disaster relief package that has already been agreed to and written.

We should leave out extraneous issues. There are many. Everyone wants to put in their own thing. Leave them for another day.

Democrats are willing to work hard to expedite consideration of that agreement. We are ready to work with our Republican colleagues to pass it as quickly as possible.

I understand that there is some discussion going on in the House, but if we can't come to an agreement this morning on the extraneous issues that the House is discussing, we should set those issues to the side. We should pass the disaster agreement as is and return to those unrelated issues at a later date. The people of the Midwest, of the South, of the West, and of the Territories have waited long enough. They have waited long enough.

There are millions of Americans still recovering from having their homes destroyed, their crops devastated, their property burnt. They have waited for relief for too long already. They are clamoring for it. They have said to Congress: Put aside your differences and get something done. The plan that I outlined will do just that—put aside the differences and get something done.

Whether it is the President or Members of the House or Senate—Democrat or Republican—who want to add extraneous issues, step aside at least for this time. Let's get it done. Let's not delay any longer.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on infrastructure, yesterday, as everyone knows, Speaker PELOSI and I met with the President and a group of other Senators and Congress Members to discuss the prospects for a bipartisan infrastructure bill.

We went to the meeting with high hopes. The President, 3 weeks earlier, had said he would be willing to do a \$2 trillion infrastructure bill and tell us how we would pay for it. Unfortunately, it was a very short meeting. The President walked out after a few minutes with the paltry excuse that he would not work to get things done for Americans unless Congress abdicated its constitutional duty to provide oversight of the executive branch.

His motives were transparent. He knows darn well that these investigations should and will go forward. He had nothing to say on infrastructure. It was typical of the President. He boasts that he wants to do something and then has no followthrough. This administration has become an erratic, helter-skelter, get-nothing-done administration. Even on infrastructure, where there is usually bipartisan agreement, he couldn't even come to the table and talk. He had to throw a temper tantrum and walk out.

Presidents throughout our history have worked with the other party

while being investigated. They know—every President knows—it is a fact that Congress will do oversight. Some of it will not be pleasant for any President. President Obama didn't like oversight; President Bush didn't like oversight; President Clinton didn't like oversight; President H.W. Bush didn't like oversight; President Reagan didn't like oversight. But none of them, Democrat or Republican, said: I am going to stop the government from functioning. I am going to refuse to help hundreds of millions of Americans who need help in one way or another because I don't like Congress fulfilling its constitutional responsibility.

The bottom line is simple. The President was merely looking for any excuse, however inelegant, however transparent, to wriggle out of working with Democrats on a much needed infrastructure bill.

Nothing about yesterday's meeting at the White House changes the fact that we have serious infrastructure demands in our country. Nothing about yesterday's meeting changes the fact that a substantial investment in infrastructure can boost our economy, put millions of Americans to work, create green jobs and green energy sources, and meet the ever-growing demands of the new 21st century.

We came to the meeting with the President with serious intentions to work with him on a large bipartisan bill. He had asked the night before in his letter where we wanted to put the money. I brought to him a 35-page proposal with ideas on how to craft one. We talked about what needs to be done: repairing and rebuilding our old roads and bridges, water and sewer, building a power grid so that we can bring clean energy from the parts of the country blessed with wind and sun to other parts of the country in need of energy, dealing with infrastructure in a way that creates broadband for all of the rural and inner city homes that don't have it, creating green jobs, encouraging electric and other kinds of vehicles that will reduce the output of carbon into the air, and creating much more energy-efficient homes and schools.

There are many demands. It was a comprehensive proposal. The President might not agree with all of it, but we were there, prepared to roll up our sleeves, work, and come up with a plan.

Unfortunately, the President had no plan. Despite his promise 3 weeks earlier that he would have a plan, he had none. Two nights before, he had said: Well, let's not discuss infrastructure until we discuss USMCA and NAFTA. Then, that morning, he didn't even take a seat. He stood up, obviously agitated, and said that the investigations were wrong and stalked out.

We left the meeting disappointed in both the President's decision and demeanor. But America can be assured that Democrats will try to find ways to move the ball forward on this important issue of roads, bridges, broadband,

and power—with or without the President.

Democrats believe in infrastructure, plain and simple. We believe that our infrastructure is an urgent priority of the country and this Congress. We believe we need to rebuild existing infrastructure—the roads, bridges, ports, and sewers. We need to build the infrastructure of tomorrow, such as wind, solar, a new power grid, and broadband for rural and inner city America.

We believe our next investment in infrastructure must be substantial. We believe we can pay for it without asking the middle class to shoulder the burden.

We believe a new 21st century infrastructure program is one of the very best ways to create millions of long-term, good-paying jobs, to boost our economy, and to help combat climate change.

So I say to my Republican colleagues in the Senate: Despite the President's unwillingness to work on anything that benefits the American people, according to him, let's move forward on an infrastructure bill. Let's put together a large, strong, well-funded, and clean infrastructure bill.

Members of both sides should want the opportunity to work on something that will benefit every constituency in every State in America. Members should want to tell the American people that they are working to bring jobs to their States, broadband to rural and underserved urban communities, to work together to improve the economy and the environment with a clean, green infrastructure bill. There is no reason why the Senate should not pursue a bipartisan infrastructure bill.

Congress has taken the lead before. Congress can take the lead again, no matter what the President does. Just because President Trump doesn't want to lead doesn't mean that our work on infrastructure is over—not by a long shot.

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. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HEALTHCARE

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, if you have a leak in your sink or a dripping pipe in the bathroom, you generally fix it yourself or call a plumber to fix the problem. You don't look at your otherwise functioning house and decide to raze it to the ground because of the plumbing issue. But that is basically what Democrats want to do with our healthcare system.

Our healthcare system certainly isn't perfect, but our system also has plenty of positive things going for it: high-