

in my State of Kentucky about the importance of creating more certainty by getting these treaties approved, and I expect my colleagues have heard similar things from employers in their States as well. So these measures should be taken up and ratified without delay.

On behalf of American workers and entrepreneurs, I hope each of our colleagues will join me in voting yes this week.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, over the weekend, President Trump launched a series of insults at Democratic congresswomen, suggesting they “go back” to the countries they came from, despite the fact that three of the four were born in the United States and that citizenship in America, by birth or naturalization, is inherently equal and has been for centuries.

These lawmakers are women of color. Telling them to “go back” to their countries is one of the oldest and crudest tropes to malign nonwhite Americans. The President’s comments drip with racism.

We don’t know why the President woke up on Saturday and made these comments—perhaps to distract from his administration’s barbaric immigration policy, which rips children away from their parents, even little children; perhaps to distract from the humanitarian crisis he has exacerbated at our border and perhaps to detract from his planned but not really executed deportation raids, which many in his own bureaucracy do not want to carry out and feel are difficult to carry out in a fair way because they can’t be done fairly. Perhaps it is even to distract from his administration’s attempt to dismantle our healthcare system through the courts. Maybe the President just feels comfortable stoking racial divisions in this country. Maybe that is his milieu. After all, this is part of a pattern of behavior that began with the birther treatment of President Obama and his characterization of Mexicans in his announcement speech, continued with his attack on an American-born judge of Mexican descent, his proposed Muslim ban, his response to Charlottesville, and includes comments about Caribbean and African nations that cannot be repeated here on the floor of the Senate.

Whatever the reason, whatever the motivation, the President’s comments demand condemnation from all corners of the political spectrum—all corners. It has become frightfully common for many of my Republican colleagues to let these moments sail by without saying even a word.

Republican leadership especially rarely criticizes the President directly, even in a situation like this that so clearly merits it. I am left to wonder if the silence of many Republicans in the wake of President Trump’s xenophobic tweets is out of embarrassment or agreement—embarrassment or agreement. Both are inexcusable.

Some of my Republican colleagues are hoping that the President realizes the error of his ways and disavows or deletes his tweets from yesterday. But the President just walked out of the White House a few hours ago and doubled down on his racist comments.

My Republican friends, he is not backing off. Where are you when something this serious, this bigoted, this un-American, happens? If you are saying to yourselves “Well, he got us our big tax cut; well, he’s taking regulations off big corporations; well, he pulled out of the Paris Accords, so we have to go along with this racism,” you are making a deal with the devil. It is so wrong, so wrong.

The President of the United States is supposed to bring this country together. It is clear this President will not, doesn’t want to, and revels in dividing us. No American President has done this. No American President has resorted to open and bold-faced bigotry so often. His goal—President Trump’s goal—sadly is not to unite but to divide. That is how he has climbed the ladder politically, and it is just awful.

It is incumbent on all of us, Democrat and Republican, to call him out when he does this and remind the President and the country what America truly stands for. Anything short of that is insufficient and is un-American.

It could be argued that Republicans who fail to do so because of shame, because they are afraid of offending the President’s supporters, because they are afraid of the President, or worse, because they agree with the President—those who fail to condemn the President are fellow travelers on the President’s racist road, whatever their motivation.

Speaker PELOSI has said that the House will introduce a resolution denouncing the President’s comments. Our intention is to do the same in the Senate. We will see how many Republicans will sign on.

9/11 VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on another matter, last Friday, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, I am happy to say that the House reauthorized the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund and made it virtually permanent.

I want to thank all of my colleagues in the House. Above all, I want to com-

mend the first responders for their advocacy and support of this legislation. The first responders are the heroes of this story. They are the Washingtons and the Madisons and the Monroes of the 21st century, the great Americans—each in their own modest way. Not only did they rush to the towers on that fateful day, risking their lives to save others, but then, when the illnesses started coming upon them, even though many of them were sick, they came to Washington and fought tirelessly for their brothers and sisters who might get sick in the future. Zadroga and Feal, Pfeiffer and Alvarez—these are the names of American heroes. They represent the greatness of America. We should honor them now by passing the House bill to reauthorize the Victim Compensation Fund as soon as possible—no more delays, no strings attached, no waiting for some other must-pass vehicle to attach it to. The bill passed the House with such overwhelmingly bipartisan support that it deserves a clean vote in the Senate.

I say to my friend, Republican Leader MCCONNELL: If it is good enough for Leader MCCARTHY and Whip SCALISE, who voted for it, surely it is good enough for the Republican leader in the Senate.

Only 12 voted against it. So many very conservative Republicans—many tea party Republicans—voted for the bill in the House. That bill is the bill that should be brought to the floor, brought here quickly. It will pass overwhelmingly and could be on the President’s desk, certainly in the next week.

If Leader MCCONNELL would put this bill on the floor this week, it would pass this week. It would go to the President’s desk this week. It would be signed into law this week, and we could put this issue to rest this week, once and for all.

We can’t put the illnesses to rest. Those first responders, many of whom have gotten ill, too many of whom have passed away, and many more of whom have these illnesses in their bodies but they don’t even know it yet—they could then do their job of helping heal their fellow first responders and helping heal themselves and looking after their families. They wouldn’t have to keep coming here.

We need to move this bill quickly. I urge Leader MCCONNELL, once again, to put the bill on the floor, honor those brave first responders who are no different from our soldiers and our Armed Forces who rushed to danger and risked their lives for us and our freedom. Put it on the floor, and we can get this done. We can get it done this week.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Peter Joseph Phipps, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

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

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

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I stand here this afternoon in a state of disbelief. Last Wednesday, my colleagues and I in the Congress were briefed on the state of election security in America.

I am prohibited from talking about the details of that classified briefing, but the message from my Republican colleagues after that elections security meeting was very clear: Nothing to see here. One Senator said it is clear the Federal Government is doing “everything you can do.” The top Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee said: “I wouldn’t say we’ve got a need for more election security legislation.” A Member of the House Republican leadership said: “The agencies have the tools they need, and I am confident they are addressing the threats.”

It is case closed for those Republicans—mission accomplished. My Republican colleagues were just so satisfied that the foundation of our democracy is in good hands. Election security is not a problem for those colleagues I just quoted.

It was to my enormous shock this weekend when I picked up my phone, and I read the following headline: “Old Software makes new electoral systems ripe for hacking.”

Over the weekend, I said: Gosh, that just can’t possibly be right. After all, my Republican colleagues said after the classified briefing that election security issues were in good shape. I just kept reading, and as it turns out, according to an exhaustive analysis by the Associated Press, the vast majority of 10,000 election jurisdictions nationwide use election management systems that run on old software that is soon going to be out of date and ripe for exploitation by hackers.

According to the Associated Press, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Florida, Iowa, Indiana, Arizona, and North Carolina, among others, are all at risk. Even the State of Georgia, which just passed legislation to buy new voting machines, is on track to buy equipment that suffers from this significant cyber security weakness. Worse, two of the three largest voting machine companies, ES&S and Hart, don’t make election systems that are free from this vulnerability. Many election officials will be buying election systems that will be out of date the moment they start using it.

I am reading this story, and I am thinking to myself: Maybe—just maybe—this Trump administration hasn’t solved the election security issue.

Now, colleagues, I am being a little bit disingenuous here. I have actually known about this problem for some time. In fact, I wrote to the Election Assistance Commission about it because, of course, our elections weren’t secure last week, and they sure as heck aren’t secure this week. Anybody who says otherwise is either selling you a voting machine or simply has a malicious intent toward our elections.

Russia attacked our democracy on every front in 2016, including voter registration databases and election software vendors. I am a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and I can’t talk about classified matters, but it is public record that there were attacks on our election infrastructure in 2018.

Our colleague Senator RUBIO of Florida even said that hackers were “in a position” to alter voter rolls in 2016. In April, the FBI Director said that 2018 was, “just kind of a dress rehearsal for the big show in 2020.”

I will say, as I have been saying at home at townhall meetings across my home State, that in 2020 I believe the hostile foreign actors are going to make 2016 look like small potatoes, and I am not just talking about the Russians here.

What the Associated Press revealed this weekend should be chilling for anybody fighting to protect our elections from foreign interference, but it is certainly not the first indication Americans have gotten that our elections are vulnerable.

Last year, the journalist, Kim Zetter, and the New York Times reported that ES&S had installed remote access software and wireless modems in election equipment for years. I believe that is about the worst thing you can do in terms of election security in America, short of putting American ballot boxes on a Moscow street.

Special Counsel Robert Mueller revealed in his report that an election software vendor was actually hacked by Russia in the summer of 2016. The public still doesn’t know enough about what happened there or what the government did to investigate. This is another area where I am seeking to ex-

vate the facts. My colleagues, particularly my colleague from Minnesota, Senator KLOBUCHAR, and my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator REED, are doing the same.

VR Systems, the company Mr. Mueller was referring to, sold e-pollbooks to a county in North Carolina. I am talking now about the systems that workers used to check voters in at a precinct. It happened that several of the VR Systems e-pollbooks used by Durham County in North Carolina malfunctioned on election day in 2016. The problem was so bad that one precinct had to shut down completely for several hours.

Last month, I asked the FBI what happened; is anybody investigating? It sure looks like no Federal Agency has been out there looking at these malfunctioning e-pollbooks. It wasn’t until last month that the Department of Homeland Security announced it would finally perform a forensic examination of the Durham County machines. That is not good enough. It is critical to secure our political parties, our campaigns, and the votes of Americans.

In 2015 and 2016, Russia hacked two Democratic campaign committees. Russian hackers also stole emails from John Podesta, Secretary Clinton’s campaign manager. The Russian Government then leaked Democratic emails to influence the Presidential and, reportedly, House races in six States.

As I have emphasized at every part of my investigation, every part of my efforts, this is not a problem reserved for one political party. The National Republican Party committees have also all been hacked in the past, as well as the campaigns of Senator GRAHAM and our late colleague John McCain.

Political campaigns don’t have the expertise or resources to protect themselves from foreign government hackers. They ought to be in a position to get assistance, and if Congress doesn’t act, they are going to get hacked again in 2020.

That is why I introduced legislation earlier this year, the Federal Campaign Cybersecurity Assistance Act, to secure campaigns and State parties. This would apply to both Democrats and Republicans. The bill turns the party committees, like the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee, into an “IT department” for their campaigns, State parties, and candidates. The parties will be able to give campaigns professionally managed, secured laptops, cell phones, and emails, which are much harder to hack. I think it is in the interest of our country, voters, Democrats, and Republicans to pass that bill.

I am going to close my remarks where I began, this extraordinary information that was compiled by the Associated Press that demonstrates that out-of-date software is going to be