

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2019

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 3877, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3877) to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, to establish a congressional budget for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, to temporarily suspend the debt limit, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

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 Calendar No. 165, H.R. 3877, a bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, to establish a congressional budget for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, to temporarily suspend the debt limit, and for other purposes.

Lamar Alexander, Thom Tillis, Martha McSally, John Cornyn, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Susan M. Collins, Tom Cotton, Roy Blunt, Roger F. Wicker, Bill Cassidy, John Thune, Richard Burr, John Barrasso, Rob Portman, Lisa Murkowski, Mitch McConnell.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will move to consider the measure on the floor, probably pass it, and then leave town. There will be efforts to describe what we have done as a reason for satisfaction and pride. There have been accomplishments, but on one critical issue—really a range of issues—involving our national security, we have only abject failure to show for the months we have been here.

I am proud to come to the floor of the Senate today to advocate for that cause—election security—with colleagues like Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota and Senator MARK WARNER of Virginia, who have been tireless champions, articulate, and eloquent advocates for this cause.

Election security is national security. The testimony from Robert Mueller, whatever you think about his verdict on the President, clearly called for action.

Robert Mueller is a modern-day Paul Revere, sounding the alarm about the

Russians and many other nations—as he put it—who are mounting a renewed attack on this country.

In the next election, this attack will make 2016 look like child's play, a dress rehearsal, because the tools and techniques they will bring to bear in attacking our democracy are so much more sophisticated. Already, in 2016, Robert Mueller called that attack sweeping and systematic. It was the reason he first spoke about it in his statement and in May closed that statement with a severe and dire warning about the ongoing interference in our democracy.

Those many other nations already include Iran, which just last week the Washington Post reported to be mounting its own disinformation campaign using social media and misinformation—disinformation—to distract, divide, and sow discord here and in other democracies around the world.

There is nothing unknown to many of us about the Russians' intent and the designs of these other nations. It is hiding in plain sight.

From all of the classified briefings that we have received over these months, the Russians know what they are doing, we know what the Russians are doing, and we know what we are failing to do. The ones in the dark are the American people, and that is why Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator WARNER, and I are on the floor today—to make sure that when we leave today, it is not the end of this topic. It is the beginning of a drumbeat, a cry of outrage, and unhappiness around the Nation.

There are a number of measures that we have championed that involve more funding for the States to do election security, paper ballots by the States to provide backups, auditing standards, and cyber security criteria. These measures are a matter of common sense. That word “common sense” is overused these days, especially in a city where it is on display so infrequently, but common sense is the reason we are here.

I want to talk specifically about the Duty to Report Act. It is based on a very simple idea: If you see something, say something. The Duty to Report Act would require all campaigns, all candidates, and family members to immediately report to the FBI and the Federal Election Commission any offers of foreign assistance. It would codify in the law what is already a matter of moral duty, patriotic duty, and common sense. It is already illegal to accept foreign assistance during a campaign. It is already illegal to solicit foreign assistance during a campaign. All this bill would do is require individuals and campaigns and family members to report those illegal foreign assistance efforts to the FBI.

When Robert Mueller came before Congress, he outlined the most serious attack on our democracy by a foreign power in our history. It includes 140 contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian agents—Russian covert

and overt efforts to influence the outcome of our election by helping one candidate and hurting another. But the Russians and those many other nations that will engage in similar attacks on our democracy have no particular partisan preference. They are doing what is in their interest to disrupt our democracy, and the victim in one election may be the one preferred in the next. So we have a common cause here.

Indeed, Robert Mueller testified:

Over the course of my career, I've seen a number of challenges to our democracy. The Russian government's efforts to interfere in our election is among the most serious.

This deserves the attention of every American. We have an obligation, above all, as Members of this body, where there has been so much history of bipartisan action, to come together in this cause.

Christopher Wray, the Director of the FBI, recently came before the Senate Judiciary Committee, and he warned that the Russians are still actively trying to interfere in our elections. Again and again, our intelligence community has warned severely, repeatedly, powerfully about this threat.

Yet when asked whether he would accept foreign help in 2020, the President of the United States said: “I'd take it.” It is much like his son Donald Junior said during this last campaign in response to an offer of assistance from the Russians: “I love it.”

When Robert Mueller was asked about this point during his testimony, he said: “I hope this is not the new normal. But I fear it is.”

That is the reason we need this measure. That is the reason we need the measures that my colleagues, Senator KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota and Senator WARNER of Virginia, have helped to lead, and that is why I have been proud to join them in this effort.

To my Republican colleagues in the leadership, I say: Lead or get out of the way. To the President of the United States: Lead or get out of the way. Our national security is too important to make a partisan issue. We ought to join together, as we did after 9/11, to prevent more disaster and to join in this common cause.

This legislation is a matter of moral duty, patriotic duty, and common sense. With the 2020 election literally on the horizon before us, we must act now. Time is not on our side. It is only on our adversary's side.

As much as we take pride in the National Defense Authorization Act, the threat to our national security is not only from the planes and the submarines and the aircraft carriers. It is also from the cyber attacks and the social media campaigns to disrupt and destroy our democracy.

I am proud to be joined today by a great colleague who has been a wonderful champion on this issue, Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR from Minnesota.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Minnesota.