

we are already—at step No. 1 in the appropriations process—and the spirit of bipartisanship that is necessary for this work might be melting away.

I just warn my Republican colleagues that this is not a way to produce a budget. This is the same path they tried to go down last year. They shut down the government and then had to walk it back. We all know what a partisan process looks like. President Trump caused the longest government shutdown in American history by demanding funding for a border wall and then by shutting down the government when Congress didn't give it to him. Let's not go down that exact path again 9 months later.

There is still time to get the process back on track. The Republican majority should sit down with the Democrats on the committee and, in good faith, come up with the 302(b) allocations and come up with the order by which we bring bills to the floor. Then we can get this done. We don't have to go back to a CR. Certainly, our side wants to avoid a Republican shutdown, and we hope our Republican colleagues will have the good sense not to let President Trump lead them into that cul-de-sac once again. So let's sit down and make this work. That is what we want to do, not unilaterally declare something and say, "Take it or leave it," but work together so both sides have to give.

#### BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, on gun safety, in response to the scenes of senseless violence in America throughout the month of August, Leader MCCONNELL promised that the issue of gun safety would be "front and center" when Congress returned. The Democrats are eager to debate this issue, and we believe we have a great place to start—with the bipartisan, House-passed bill on universal background checks.

Leader MCCONNELL has also suggested that President Trump will determine if and what the Senate will vote on, so we need to know what the President might support. Throughout the month of August, frankly, the President was all over the map, saying he wanted strong background check legislation one day and then saying, the next day, we don't need it at all. It makes no sense. The President doesn't seem to know what he wants.

My Republican colleagues met with the President yesterday and ostensibly discussed the issue of gun safety. I asked them: Where is the President on this issue? Will he support universal background checks?

We are eager to move forward with this debate. We want to vote on the H.R. 8 bill—a simple bill of universal background checks. It does not impede on the rights of any legitimate gun owner. It only gets in the way of felons and spousal abusers and those adjudicated mentally ill from getting guns,

and no one thinks they should get them.

The President needs to make his position clear and soon. If he continues to refuse to state his position or if he keeps flipping around, the Senate should proceed to debate this on its own. In any case, you can be sure the Democrats will not let the issue of gun safety fall by the wayside.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stephen Akard, of Indiana, to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, with the rank of Ambassador.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

#### TORNADO IN SIOUX FALLS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as I begin this morning, I need to mention the tornado that tore through my hometown of Sioux Falls last night. Thankfully, there appear to have been no fatalities, but there has been a lot of structural damage. I am grateful to all of the emergency responders, the electric crews, and all of those who worked through the night to keep the residents safe. My thoughts are with Sioux Falls today and with all of those who are dealing with the tornado's aftermath.

I had the opportunity this morning to speak with Mayor Paul TenHaken, of Sioux Falls, who, as you would expect, was up throughout the night with his team. I just expressed our support to him, to his team, and to our community as they begin the process of the cleanup and recovery from what was a very damaging storm.

I also talked with my wife and older daughter, who lives in Sioux Falls, both of whom were in their basements last night as, I think, most residents were. I am glad to hear that people took the necessary steps to keep themselves and their families safe.

As I have reported, so far—knock on wood—we are not aware of injuries that have been associated with this. Yet I will continue to monitor the situation, and my staff and I are available to help with whatever will be needed as a result of this storm.

#### REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH

Mr. President, it is difficult to believe it has been 18 years since the September 11 attacks. That bright September morning is seared in our minds as if it were yesterday—the shock, the horror, the sense of unreality in the days that followed, the grief and loss but also the resolve and the unity of purpose.

As always, where there is great evil, good rises up in response—that of the courageous passengers on Flight 93 who laid down their lives to protect their fellow Americans; Vietnam veteran and Morgan Stanley security chief Rick Rescorla, who successfully evacuated more than 2,000 of his firm's employees from the World Trade Center and died returning to help evacuate others; Jason Thomas and Dave Karnes, two former marines who dropped everything and sped to the Towers and saved the lives of the two Port Authority officers they found who had been trapped in the rubble; National Guard pilots Heather Penney and Marc Sasseville, who scrambled their F-16s—weaponless—to meet the threat that was headed toward DC and who were prepared to sacrifice their lives by ramming their aircraft into Flight 93 before it could hit the Capitol or the White House; and the hundreds of first responders who ran toward the Towers, toward the inferno, and headed up the steps while civilians ran down.

Then there were the countless ordinary Americans who were far away from New York and Washington who flooded blood banks and overwhelmed organizations like the Red Cross with their donations; who stormed Heaven with prayers for the missing and the injured and the suffering; and who proudly flew their flags and reached out to their neighbors.

In the weeks and months and years to come, there was a 9/11 generation of soldiers—those who signed up in the wake of September 11 to fight back against the terrorists and those who were already serving. They deployed around the globe to fight terror and to defend freedom, and thousands of them laid down their lives. Eighteen years on, we remember the horror of that September day, but we are also lifted up by the memory of the heroes who came out of it.

For those of us who serve in Congress, the anniversary of September 11 is also a reminder of the obligation we have to provide for our Nation's defense and to ensure that we are prepared to meet and defeat any threat. In the Senate, I am proud that both parties have worked together over the past couple of years to rebuild our Nation's military after years of its being underfunded and the strains of the War on Terror.

September 11 is also a reminder of our obligation to care for those who stand between us and danger—our soldiers, our veterans, our first responders, and our law enforcement officers. They take on a heavy burden so the