

I have great respect for our Democratic friends, but I think this episode has to go down as a new high-water mark for the policy consequences of what some people call “Trump derangement syndrome.”

We are at a point where 42 Senate Democrats would decline to fund the U.S. Armed Forces essentially just to spite the occupant of the White House. If you ask me, that is one heck of a price to pay to put on a show for “the resistance.”

But yesterday’s vote is now a matter of record. It is in the past. I really am hopeful that we can get back on track with the kind of appropriations process my Democratic colleagues have already pledged they would support. They had already pledged to support it.

When the good work that takes place in committees is allowed to proceed without this top-down partisan maneuvering, it tends to yield pretty good results. I think we were all pleased with the bipartisan funding bill that Chairman SHELBY and Senator LEAHY produced together last year. I understand this morning’s appropriations markup is expected to be bipartisan as well.

For example, I am proud the Financial Services and General Government bill would include a bipartisan amendment providing another \$250 million for the administration and security of elections, to help States improve their defenses and shore up their voting systems.

I am proud to have helped develop this amendment and to cosponsor it in committee. That would bring our total allocation for election security to more than \$600 million since fiscal 2008.

It is a crucial issue. The Trump administration has made enormous strides to help States secure their elections without giving Washington new power to push the States around. That is how we continue the progress we saw in 2018, and that is exactly what we are doing.

This is exactly the kind of positive outcome that is possible when we stop posturing for the press and let Chairman SHELBY and Senator LEAHY conduct a bipartisan committee process.

As time grows shorter before the end of September, I hope the critical defense funding that Democrats blocked yesterday will soon earn the same kind of productive treatment, because I don’t think the American people will have much patience with the notion that Democrats’ first responsibility is irritating the White House and funding the Department of Defense coming second.

I hope we can reboot this process and move forward for the sake of our Senate process, for the sake of stable funding for our government, and for the sake of our Nation’s security.

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 Brian McGuire, of New York, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE JUDICIARY

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, last week, the Senate confirmed President Trump’s 150th judge. That is a significant milestone and one that has been harder to achieve than it normally would be thanks to the Democrats’ determination to delay judicial confirmations. Again and again, the Democrats have used the time-consuming cloture vote process to delay the confirmations of President Trump’s nominees—even of nominees they ultimately chose to vote for.

By this point in President Obama’s first term, the Republicans had required cloture votes on just three of President Obama’s judicial nominees—three. Compare that to today. As of September 12, the Democrats had required cloture votes on a staggering 71.7 percent of President Trump’s picks for the bench—71 percent. Basically, for more than two out of every three judges, the Democrats have required cloture votes. That simply means they have filibustered that particular nominee. The way you end the filibuster is by invoking cloture.

When the Republicans were in the minority when President Obama was in the White House, at this point in President Obama’s first term, the Democratic majority had invoked cloture just three times for three judges whom the Republicans had tried to block. As I said, right now, at the same point in President Trump’s first term, we are talking about almost 72 percent of all of the nominations combined having been filibustered. If you think about that and if you add it up totally, cumulatively, it is about 100 now compared to 3 during President Obama’s first term at the same time in office.

As I have said, many of these were nominees the Democrats ultimately

went on to vote to confirm. In other words, it was not that President Trump nominated scores of extreme nominees whom the Democrats felt they couldn’t support. Again and again, the Democrats have delayed a nominee, then turned around and voted in favor of him or her.

In one particularly memorable example, in January of 2018, the Democrats forced the Senate to spend more than a week considering four district court judges even though not one single Democrat voted against their confirmations—not one single Democrat. These judges could have been confirmed in a matter of minutes by voice votes. Instead, the Democrats forced the Senate to spend more than a week on their considerations—time that could have been spent on genuinely controversial nominees or on some of the many important issues that face our country.

So far this September, the Senate has confirmed six district court judges. The Democrats forced cloture votes on four of them despite the fact that all four were eventually confirmed by huge bipartisan margins. In fact, one was confirmed by a unanimous vote of 94 to 0.

If the Democrats had had a serious reason for their obstruction of the President’s judicial nominees, they would not have been repeatedly turning around and voting for them. Their obstruction isn’t based on principle; it is based on partisanship. They don’t like this President, so they are obstructing his nominees even when they agree they are well qualified for their positions. As a result, we are forced to spend hours upon hours of Senate floor time on uncontroversial nominations—time we could be using for other priorities.

Democratic delays are also not helping the judicial vacancy rate, which is still high despite the Republicans’ efforts to get judges confirmed. High numbers of vacancies result in there being long waits to get cases heard, which serves nobody.

While Democratic obstruction is bad enough, unfortunately, we have a lot more to worry about. In recent months, the Democrats have moved beyond obstruction and into directly threatening the independence of the judiciary. Court-packing—an idea that pretty much everybody thought had been consigned to the dustbin of history almost a century ago—is enjoying a revival among members of the Democratic Party.

For anyone who needs a refresher on this concept, the theory of court-packing is quite simple. If the Supreme Court is not deciding cases to your liking, add more judges to the Court until you start getting the decisions you want. It is not hard to see why this is a terrible idea, but that hasn’t stopped it from gaining traction in the Democratic Party. In fact, five prominent Democrats—including a Democratic Presidential candidate and the second-

ranking Democrat in the Senate—recently filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court that threatened the Court if it failed to rule according to the Democrats' preference.

They wrote:

The Supreme Court is not well, and the people know it. Perhaps the Court can heal itself before the public demands it be restructured in order to reduce the influence of politics.

Translation: If you don't rule the way we want you to, you will not like the consequences.

Threatening members of the judiciary is within the domain of dictators and despots, not Members of the U.S. Congress, and it is deeply disturbing that prominent Democrats apparently now see nothing wrong with trying to intimidate the Supreme Court.

Unfortunately, it is becoming apparent that there are few lengths to which the Democrats will not go in their increasingly desperate partisanship. Just this week, we saw the Democrats leap on the opportunity to drag Justice Kavanaugh's name through the mud again based on yet another vague and unsubstantiated rumor.

More than one Democratic Presidential candidate instantly cried that he should be impeached. What was the basis for such a drastic suggestion? It was a New York Times article that was, as the leader pointed out, so short on reporting that it ran on the opinion page of the New York Times instead of in the news section, not to mention that after running this piece, the Times had to quickly issue a correction and note a glaring omission in the original story. What was the omission? It was the fact that the supposed victim of Justice Kavanaugh's supposed behavior declined to be interviewed and that her friends said she had no memory of the alleged incident.

It is not hard to see what is behind the Democrats' relentless campaign to smear Justice Kavanaugh's name. They are furious that it was a Republican and not a Democratic President who had the opportunity to choose a Justice to replace a perceived swing vote on the Supreme Court, and they are afraid that Justice Kavanaugh will not issue the rulings they want.

Here we get to the heart of the problem with the Democrats' increasingly unhinged leftism and attacks on the judiciary. The Democrats aren't looking for judges or a judiciary that will rule according to the law; they are looking for a judiciary that will rule in accordance with the Democrats' preferred policies whether they have anything to do with the law or not, and that is a very dangerous goal.

Sure, it might seem nice when an activist judge who shares your political opinions reaches outside the meaning of the statute and rules for your preferred outcome. Yet what happens when that same judge reaches beyond the law to your detriment? What protection do you have if the judge and not the law becomes the highest au-

thority? The only way to ensure the protection of individuals' rights is to ensure the rule of law, and that means having judges who will make decisions according to the law, not according to their personal preferences or the principles of a particular political party's.

In the wake of the Democrats' threat to the Supreme Court, all 53 Republican Senators sent a letter to the Justices that underscored our commitment to protecting the independence of the judiciary. We noted in the letter:

There is no greater example of the genius of our Constitution than its creation of an independent judiciary. . . . Time and again, our independent federal courts have protected the constitutional rights of Americans from government overreach even when that overreach was politically popular.

If we want our courts to continue protecting Americans' constitutional rights, then we need to ensure they remain independent.

The Democrats' interest in having judges who will rule according to their preferred outcomes is not new, but in the past, their interest has not led them to attempt to bully judges into voting their way. I hope the Democrats will think better of their repressive tactics before our independent judiciary becomes the victim of their political agenda.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I could stay here all day, listening to the names of the brave men and women whom I was lucky enough to serve with in the military. I could stay here all night, telling stories about their heroism and courage. I could stay here all week, all month, talking about the troops who are serving overseas right now and about those who are on their eighth or ninth tours of duty or about those teenagers who weren't even alive when the Twin Towers fell, yet who are ready to ship off to Afghanistan at this very moment if that is what is asked of them. I could go on and on all year if I wanted, and I still wouldn't be able to convey the sacrifices they are making because they love this country and would do anything to defend her.

I will not stand idly by and let a single one of them shed blood in an avoidable conflict because Donald Trump has abdicated matters of war and peace to a despot who regularly flouts basic human rights and openly murders journalists. Yet, after tensions spiked between Saudi Arabia and Iran this past weekend, that is exactly what he seemed to be willing to do. He tweeted that the U.S. was "locked and loaded" and just waiting for the Crown Prince to tell him how to proceed. We can't let that slip by.

The President—the Commander in Chief of the greatest military of the greatest democracy on the face of the Earth—just suggested that he was outsourcing the powers of war to a foreign monarch—powers that aren't even his to hand over—and he did it in a tweet.

While Trump may have never read the Constitution, I have, so let me direct his attention to article I, which makes it clear that the President does not have the authority to declare war. Only Congress has that power. We are the ones tasked with deciding when and how Americans are sent into combat. We are the ones charged with that most solemn duty, not Donald Trump and certainly not Muhammad bin Salman. Yet Trump is acting as if article I simply doesn't exist, as if he could just usurp this power from the legislative branch and trade it to whomever he pleases, as if obeying the Constitution is optional even while he tweets that he is willing to obey a foreign prince.

This should not be a partisan issue. No matter if you are struggling to pay rent or if your name is plastered in gold on the front of a building on Fifth Avenue, no one can overrule the Constitution. Trump doesn't get to mire us in yet another Middle East conflict just because he has a bizarre tendency to bow down and kiss up to the world's cruelest tyrants.

Whether you ask constitutional scholars or high school students taking U.S. history classes, they will tell you the same thing—that on matters of military force, whether they are our allies or our adversaries, American Presidents do not get to choose to take orders from foreign leaders. They take direction from Congress—full stop.

I am here to say that we have not authorized him to ensnare us in another endless, senseless war.

We haven't debated and passed a new authorization for the use of military force in more than 15 years, and there is just no way that the AUMF passed to go after the perpetrators of 9/11 can justify military action against Iran nearly two decades later, sending troops overseas who may not have even been alive when that AUMF was voted on.

Listen, it is not just me who believes this. It is not just my fellow Democrats in the Senate either. During the confirmation hearing for now-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, I asked Trump's own nominee point-blank whether the existing AUMF gives this administration the right to conduct a war with Iran. His answer? His answer was: No. No, they do not.

Even in decades past, when prior Presidents have gotten us entangled in bad wars based on bad intelligence, at the very least they made sure to loop in the United Nations, but Trump is acting as if he wouldn't even do that. He is too busy thumping his chest and catering to the whims of autocrats. He is too infatuated with maximum pressure to consider even minimum diplomacy, too distracted beating the drums of war to even think about how many troops he would be sending into harm's way.

For what? To protect the Saudi oil industry or the Crown Prince's personal profits?

Once again, the Trump foreign policy doctrine has proven reckless, senseless, and dangerous, full of gaslighting and bluster, a doctrine in which fact and fiction are one in the same.

It is shameful. It is terrifying that we have a Commander in Chief who comes to military decisions by virtue of temper tantrum and then announces them via tweet, a President who doesn't seem to care that if he keeps on the path of fire and fury he has been treading, our own homeland will be in greater danger, more wounded warriors will be sent to Walter Reed, and more fallen heroes will be laid to rest in the hallowed grounds of Arlington.

Donald Trump may never have deigned to put on our Nation's uniform, so he probably doesn't know that the commander's greatest responsibility is to safeguard the troops so they are able to carry out the mission. That means we do not send them into harm's way recklessly and without full support both logistically and legally.

As a former unit commander, I ran for Congress so that when the drums of war sounded, I would be in a position to make sure our elected officials fully consider the true costs of war, not just in dollars and cents but in the sacrifices of our troops and their families. That was the vow I made to my buddies that I deployed with and all those who have served since I hung up my uniform.

Now, as the drums of war are pounding once again, I am here today to keep my promise to do our troops justice and to make sure Donald Trump does not outsource overseas yet another American job—Congress's job to declare war. If the Trump administration wants to go to war, they must bring their case to Congress and give the American people a say through their elected representatives. They must respect our servicemembers enough to prove why war with Iran is worth turning more moms and dads into Gold Star parents. They must testify about what the end state in Iran actually looks like.

Then, when their case has been made, when Congress's debate is done, we should vote. It is our duty. It is the least we owe to the troops we would be sending into harm's way. If the vote to authorize military force passes, then I will be the first person to volunteer to deploy. I am ready to pack my rucksack, to dust off my uniform. I am ready to fly helicopters, take on the grunt work, do whatever else it takes to uphold that oath that all servicemembers and veterans have sworn: to protect and defend this Nation we love, no matter what.

It would be nice if we had a President willing to do the same instead of one who thinks he looks tough by pushing us to the brink of a needless conflict.

Listen, Trump may think he comes off as strong by using phrases like "locked and loaded" and by spewing threats 280 characters at a time, but he has never seemed weaker to me. A real

Commander in Chief would not dole out matters of war to the highest bidder. A true leader would not bend to the whims of despots just because of the size of their bank accounts. A strong President would not care more about keeping tyrants happy than safeguarding our most precious resource: the brave men and women willing to lay down their lives to defend our Nation. Yet, day after day, Donald Trump wraps himself in the flag in the morning and then abandons our servicemembers and our democratic norms by the afternoon.

While he may have already shirked his duty as an elected official, I refuse to abandon mine. So as many times as is necessary, I am going to keep coming back to this Chamber, keep raising my voice under this great Capitol dome, and keep demanding what is actually in our Nation's best interest because, you see, I don't take my orders from war criminals or dictators or princes or monarchs. I don't serve foreign regimes. I serve the American people. Trump would do well to try that sometime.

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. SCHUMER. Madam 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.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday, the Senate failed to advance a motion to proceed to a package of appropriations bills, demonstrating something that Leader McConnell already knew: There are not enough votes in the Senate for the President's wall.

The Senate refuses to fund the border wall that the President promised Mexico would pay for, especially not at the expense of our troops and their families and important public health programs like childcare and Head Start. Just yesterday, the Pentagon warned of dire outcomes if the money to fund the military is not provided.

Read today's Washington Post. Our military people are upset with this. Now, their chain of command is not going to publicly say it, but we know it. Over 120 military projects stand to lose funding, and we aren't talking about fixing parking lots. We are talking about military readiness. We are talking about medical facilities for troops in North Carolina. We are talking about schools for military families in Kentucky. We are talking about explosives stored in unsafe conditions. We are talking about a very important engineering lab at West Point to train our future soldiers. Even hurricane recovery projects in Florida are at risk.

The Defense Department was very clear that without this funding, lives would be at risk, but that is what Republicans on the Appropriations Committee proposed. The Senate rightly rejected that idea.

The Republican leader is saying we are hurting the military? Give me a break. We are defending the military. How much bull does the majority leader think the American public will swallow? They are taking money out of the military to put it in the wall, and he says that we are hurting the military? Oh, no. Leader McConnell is hurting the military, and we defended them. We defended them because we want the money to go to the military, not to the wall.

By the way, in that regard, Leader McConnell did not stick with the agreement. The agreement was not only on the 302(a)s but there would be bipartisan agreement on where the money on the defense side and the non-defense side would be distributed.

Instead of consulting Democrats, they tried to jam something down our throats, taking money out of defense, out of Head Start and other programs in the health and human services budget and put it into the wall. Well, that wasn't going to stand, it isn't going to stand, and it will not stand.

I hope Leader McConnell has learned his lesson. Shutting down the government or trying to eyeball for the wall isn't going to work. Let's roll up our sleeves and work together.

My friend the Republican leader and Chairman Shelby have now shown the President that they tried again to fund his wall. They have seen, once again, that the votes are not there. They have seen, once again, that when the Senate Republicans do the President's bidding and refuse to engage the Democrats, the only thing they accomplish is wasted time.

The pattern repeats itself far too frequently. The same impulse to do the President's bidding—they are so afraid of this President—and that is what led to the 35-day Trump shutdown earlier this year. Let's not repeat that, Republicans. Let's learn our lessons.

The same impulse led Republicans to deny for months disaster aid to Puerto Rico. In each case, whether it be taking money out of needed places like the military and putting it into the wall or not being fair to Puerto Rico when it came to aid, they had to relent and work with Democrats. I am glad they did for the good of the country.

So enough time has been wasted this work period. Leader McConnell, Chairman Shelby, let's sit down. It is time for you to sit down and negotiate with Democrats on the way forward.

(Mr. SCOTT of Florida assumed the chair.)

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. President, let's talk about the short-term CR, which was released last night. The continuing resolution is an important measure to keep the government open until late November and

allow appropriators to get a bipartisan agreement for fiscal year 2020.

One program that has not received enough attention is the agricultural relief program known commonly as the Commodity Credit Corporation. This is an important program that should help all farmers suffering from certain exigencies of the market, like price declines and natural disasters.

Unfortunately, over the past year, the President turned this important agricultural relief program that we all support into a giant slush fund. The relief payments have gotten political. Crops in red States have received outsized subsidies, while crops in blue States were shortchanged. Cotton, for example, has gotten a huge subsidy, compared to dairy and specialty crops, fruits and vegetables. The payments were not matched to the damage caused to each crop. Even soybeans, the supposed reason for this at the beginning, were greatly shortchanged for cotton, and even now cotton is being treated better.

In addition—and just as bad, if not worse—there have been huge amounts of waste and abuse in the program. Large agribusinesses, including some foreign agribusinesses, like a Brazilian beef corporation, are receiving funding through this program while American dairy farmers are passed over.

There are limits on the CCC program. If you make over \$900,000, you shouldn't get any money. The most any farm can get is \$250,000 if there are two farmers in the family, a husband and a wife. Those don't seem to abate either.

We are very pleased that Republicans acceded to our wish. Democrats were able to inject some transparency into the agricultural relief program.

In this short-term CR, we require reporting on whether the funding is going to foreign sources and justification for why money went where it did. We are going to look at this report before we move to the full appropriations bill in a month or two to make sure the money is going to our American farmers who need it—not foreigners, not wealthy agribusiness, not all slanted to one product like cotton when there are so many other needs.

This is a good victory for Democrats in a day of some victories for Democrats.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. President, there is another bright spot, election security. This morning, after months and months of Republican resistance and months of insistent Democratic pressure, Senate Republicans have finally agreed to support our Democratic request for additional election security funding in advance of the 2020 elections.

This is similar to an amendment Democrats offered during last year's appropriations process to help States harden their election infrastructure to protect against Russian or Chinese or Iranian interference.

A year ago, our Republican friends, unfortunately and shortsightedly, re-

jected this amendment. Maybe, just maybe, Republicans are starting to come around to our view that election security is necessary; that if Americans don't believe their elections are on the up and up, woe is us as a country and as a democracy.

It is not all the money we requested and doesn't include a single solitary reform that virtually everyone knows we need, but it is a start. Leader MCCONNELL kept saying that we don't need the money. I made umpteen speeches here, in this chair, and the Republican leader denied the need. But now, thank God, he has seen the light. We need more money for election security; ask election officials, Democrat or Republican, throughout the country. I hope today's vote means Senate Republicans are beginning to see the light on election security.

While this funding is important, it is not the only thing we need to do to secure our elections from Russian, Chinese, Iranian, or any other foreign country's interference. There are multiple bipartisan pieces of legislation awaiting action on the floor that would counter foreign influence operations against our democracy, safeguard our elections, and deter foreign adversaries from even attempting to interfere.

We have been warned time and again by our national security leaders—nearly all of them Republicans appointed by President Trump—that China and, of course, Russia are potential threats in 2020. We cannot sit on our hands while our adversaries try to replicate and outdo what Putin accomplished in 2016.

Leader MCCONNELL should bring the bipartisan bills. We are getting the money in approps, but we need more legislation to refine where the dollars are.

Leader MCCONNELL, now that you have seen the light on the money, go one step further: Bring the bipartisan bills—the Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression Act, the Secure Elections Act, and the DETER Act—to the floor for a debate and a vote. Otherwise, the job will remain incomplete and our democracy vulnerable.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. President, finally on guns, yesterday, according to reports, Attorney General Barr came to Capitol Hill to discuss a one-page proposal on gun legislation that he had put together. It became clear soon after that the White House, seemingly out of fear of reprisal by the NRA, was unwilling to embrace its own Attorney General's proposal. Once again, the White House refused to take a stand on what they propose to do on the question of gun violence.

President Trump and Senate Republicans are trying to find a way to have their cake and eat it too—searching for a plan that the public will accept and won't offend the NRA. It is a fool's errand.

Leader MCCONNELL, President Trump, you can't please the NRA and

at the same time do good gun legislation that will save lives. You cannot please the NRA unless you do something that is either regressive or, at the very best, toothless. Get it through your heads. That is how it is.

If you want to do something real on gun legislation and save lives, you have to reject the NRA's ministrations. The NRA is wildly out of step with the views of the American public. Its policies are reactionary; its leadership, recalcitrant and divided.

Look no further than the universal background check bill. Ninety-three percent of Americans, the great majority of gun owners, and 80 percent of Republicans support the idea. But not the NRA. As for yesterday's plan floated by the Republican Attorney General, a plan that would only modestly expand background checks, representatives of the NRA called it a nonstarter.

The views of the NRA and the views of the American public are fundamentally incompatible. President Trump, Leader MCCONNELL, Senate Republicans, which side are you on? Are you with the NRA or are you with the American people?

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

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today Speaker PELOSI unveiled the House's plan to try to lower out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs. This, of course, has been a priority for many of us in Washington, including the Presiding Officer.

We have been working on it really hard here in the Senate. Actually, three standing committees of the Senate have now reported out legislation dealing with this issue: the Judiciary Committee, the Finance Committee, and the HELP Committee, or the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. All are working together to try to come with up bipartisan packages to lower prescription drug costs.

These bills, of course, include ideas from Republicans and Democrats.

Mr. President, apparently, we have some technical difficulties here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I can hear you better now.

Mr. CORNYN. It sounds like we have fixed that. Thank you.

As I was saying, while these bills include ideas from both Republicans and Democrats, it shouldn't surprise people that in an area as complex as this, there are going to be some disagreements along the way. But that is what we do here: We work through those disagreements and try to build consensus.

While I know that it is only a bipartisan bill that has any chance at all to

make its way to the President's desk for his signature, Speaker PELOSI appears to have a different approach. House Democrats want to replace our free-market healthcare system with the heavyhanded government approach that puts us on a path to socialized medicine. They want to allow the government to set prices and put bureaucrats at the center of our healthcare system, instead of patients.

The Speaker's plan is just the latest example of a partisan messaging document masquerading as legislation, and it has absolutely no chance—zero, zip, nada—of passing the Senate or becoming law.

In contrast, the ideas we have been working on would lower out-of-pocket costs by increasing competition and transparency, while stopping the bad actors who try to game the system. Unlike the House, we have been considering bills that have broad bipartisan support, as I said, which means they have the potential to actually become law, to get something done.

Speaker PELOSI should take note that we in the Senate have done the hard work of finding consensus with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I encourage our friends in the House of Representatives to stop wasting time and, instead, start working in a bipartisan fashion and work on legislation that can actually become law. Only then will the American people see the benefit of a reduction in out-of-pocket costs for their prescription drugs.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, on another matter, with the end of the fiscal year just a week and a half way, we know the clock is running out for us to pass funding bills. After the longest government shutdown in history earlier this year, I thought there was bipartisan support to get the regular appropriations process back on track. Both parties knew there was a funding crisis at stake this fall if we couldn't come together and reach a compromise.

So that is exactly what we did before the August break. Our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, led by the chairman, Senator SHELBY, worked day and night to reach an agreement that was acceptable to both parties in both Chambers, as well as earning the support of the President. That is not easy to do. That was the 2-year budget caps agreement. But they got it done. That is until the August recess occurred, and, apparently, memories faded about what exactly had been agreed to, or people reconsidered their previous agreement and decided to withdraw their consent.

We knew this caps deal, as imperfect as it was, would lay the foundation for the appropriations process this fall and get us out of this reoccurring movie called the looming shutdown.

At the end of July, we passed a 2-year budget agreement. It was a fair compromise, considering everybody's interests. While there are still details to be

hashed out in the individual appropriations bills, it was a strong start. We thought we had made it past this shutdown movie and scenario.

We agreed to top-line defense spending and nondefense spending. There was a promise not to derail the appropriations process with poison pill policy riders, and we got it done with plenty of time to spare.

Now it appears that our Democratic friends are backing down from their commitments, which is a serious mistake on their part. If we can't work together in good faith and trust that our colleagues will actually stick to their word and keep their commitments, then, that is going to do nothing but further erode our ability to function on behalf of the American people.

Imagine my surprise when, yesterday, the Senate voted to begin debate on the first batch of funding bills and Democrats blocked it. They stopped it dead in its tracks. Even though they had agreed to the spending caps and a process to go forward, they blocked it. They voted to deny our troops the largest pay raise in a decade. They voted to withhold vital funding from our military at a time when we face growing threats around the world. They voted to derail the very process they had agreed to before August. In so doing, they once again put partisan politics above our responsibilities to the American people.

What is the reason for this? A disagreement over funding allocations of 0.003 percent of the total budget—0.003 percent of the total budget. That is like robbing a bank in order to steal the change from the gumball machine. I am really disappointed. We are better than that, and I hope our colleagues will reconsider.

Our national security is on the line. If there is one thing we ought to do above all else, it is to provide for the defense and to make sure that the American people are safe and that those who put themselves in harm's way and who volunteer to wear the uniform of the U.S. military are treated with respect and fairness. It is inappropriate and it is just wrong to play games with national security or with our military, as our Democratic colleagues appear to be doing.

DEBBIE SMITH ACT

Finally, Mr. President, 4 months ago, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill that I introduced with the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, to reauthorize what has arguably been the single greatest driver behind our progress to reduce the rape kit backlog.

The Debbie Smith Act was first passed in 2004 to provide State and local crime labs with the resources they need to end the backlog of unsolved crimes. At one point, we learned there were perhaps as many as 400,000 forensic kits, or rape kits, sitting either in evidence lockers or in labs that had been untested—400,000. In each one of those kits is the evidence needed to identify the assailant in a sexual as-

sault or, conversely, to rule out somebody in a sexual assault.

Also, as a result of uploading of this information, if it is tested, into the FBI system, or the CODIS system, it can help to solve a myriad of crimes, not just sexual assault cases.

The Debbie Smith Act is one of those rare cases where there has always been bipartisan and bicameral support. More than \$1 billion has been provided to forensic labs because of this law, enabling them to get untested evidence off the shelf so we can provide victims with answers and we can take these assailants, which, characteristically, don't just do it one time—they do it multiple times until they are ultimately caught—off the street.

As I said, while the primary goal of the legislation was to reduce the rape kit backlog, under the Debbie Smith Act, this has provided an abundance of DNA evidence that has been used to solve other numerous crimes. That is because once the evidence is tested, it is uploaded in the FBI's DNA database, called CODIS. Similar to the fingerprint databases, this DNA database can help to identify and convict people who commit any type of crime that is under investigation.

For example, if a criminal commits a burglary in one State, DNA from that burglary case can later be used to connect this criminal to an unsolved rape case in other States. It is that powerful.

According to the National Institute of Justice, 42 percent of the hits in the FBI's DNA database system are the direct result of Debbie Smith Act funding—42 percent.

Last month, I visited a living community in Grapevine, TX, called The Gatehouse. This is a place where women and children who have been victimized by domestic violence find the care and resources they need to restart their lives. I spoke with survivors of sexual assault, advocates, and law enforcement about the impact of the Debbie Smith Act and the need to reauthorize this critical program before it expires at the end of the month.

Here is the thing that completely confounds me. The Debbie Smith Act is not partisan. It is not even controversial. It is not divisive. The last time we voted on it, not a single Senator voted no. So there is no reason for the House to stall on this critical legislation. If the House doesn't act by the end of the month, it will expire.

Once again, I urge Speaker PELOSI to allow this bill to go to the floor of the House without further delay. It would be simply shameful to allow this program to expire, especially when she has a bipartisan bill in her hand and all she has to do is allow it to go to the floor of the House for a vote.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, in February of this year, the House of Representatives passed what is known as the universal background check in regard to gun sales. Since that time, the Senate has had no action whatsoever on gun safety issues. Leader MCCONNELL could bring this bill to the floor, and I am confident we have the support to pass it.

I do hear from many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that we are waiting for the President, and unless the President signs off on a bill, they are not interested in bringing it up. The last time I checked the Constitution of the United States, the first article of the Constitution provides for the legislative branch of government, and that is us. We make the laws, not the President of the United States. It is up to us to deliver and consider legislation and pass legislation. Yet there is no action from the floor of the Senate. Leader MCCONNELL will not bring up gun safety legislation.

Every day we wait—every single day—100 people in America die from gun violence. That is why many of us are frequently speaking on the floor of the Senate about the need to consider gun safety legislation.

It has been over 200 days since the House took bipartisan action on the universal background checks. Since that time, we have seen many mass shootings, including on August 3 in El Paso, August 4 in Dayton, and August 31 in Odessa. There is no action on the floor of the Senate. Every day, there are people dying in our communities and in our homes from gun violence. Yet there is no action on the floor of the Senate.

The United States is an outlier among the developed nations in the world. We have 10 times, 20 times, 30 times more instances of gun violence than in developed countries in the world. We have more guns in private ownership than the people of developed worlds, more suicides, more mass shootings, more gun violence. Yet there is no action on the floor of the Senate.

The issue is kind of simple. Inaction is not an answer to gun violence in America. Americans are expecting us—the Members of the Senate—to consider gun safety legislation. We want the majority leader to bring that bill to the floor today before another 100 people die. Let us take action.

I mentioned several times the bill that passed the House of Representatives over 200 days ago, the universal background checks. Let me just talk a moment about why that bill needs to be considered and passed as soon as possible. In 1993, we passed the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act. It

provides for a presale check as to whether an individual is entitled to own a handgun. As I am sure my colleagues are aware, the Supreme Court of the United States has determined that the Second Amendment is not absolute. If you have been convicted of a violent crime, if you have mental issues, you are not entitled to have a handgun. The Brady presale check determines whether you fall into those categories, and they will deny you the right to buy a handgun if you do.

Since its inception in 1993, 3 million sales have been stopped. It works. It is compliant with the Supreme Court, and it doesn't interfere with legitimate Second Amendment rights. It was passed in 1993. It is now 2019. Sellers of handguns have figured out a way to get around the 1993 law with private sales, gun shows, and internet sales. We didn't have internet gun sales in 1993. We need to close those loopholes.

Here is the situation. Some States have done this. In the States that have done it, we see that the results are favorable. There is less gun violence in those States that have passed universal background checks. However, let me just tell you about the State of Maryland. Of the guns that are recovered from crime scenes in Maryland, 53 percent are guns that were acquired in a State outside of Maryland. We need universal background checks in order to provide the types of results that can keep our communities safer by keeping guns out of the hands of people who are not entitled to have guns.

How do the American people feel about this? There are 90-plus percent who believe that we should have universal background checks. Yet there has been no action on the floor of the U.S. Senate. The Republican leader will not bring the bill to the floor. This is a bill that should have been passed a long time ago. Every day that we delay, there are another 100 deaths from gun violence.

We shouldn't stop there. We should deal with assault-style military weapons. When someone has one of these assault weapons, within a matter of seconds, he can shoot off multiple rounds and kill multiple numbers of people. Even if you have those who come to the rescue—if law enforcement is on the scene or people are able to deal with the circumstances—in a matter of seconds, you can already have multiple casualties. We need to get rid of these military-style weapons in private ownership.

When you talk to law enforcement officers and ask them what they fear the most when they go into a situation in which someone is armed, it is the assault weapons they fear. It is not fair to our law enforcement officers, who put their lives on the line for us and who rush into harm's way, to allow for these types of weapons to be available to the general public.

We can do something about it. Let us take up legislation that restricts the private ownership of assault-style

weapons. There has been no action, though, on the floor of the Senate. The Republican leader will not bring up any issues on gun safety.

I could add legislation with regard to the large-capacity magazines. We see that. They are used in mass shootings because you can shoot off multiple rounds without reloading. Again, as we have seen in mass shooting circumstances, it has added to the number of deaths. It is not inconveniencing the public to restrict that type of capacity from being out there, which is known to cause harm by those who want to create a situation of mass casualties. Again, there has been no action on the floor of the Senate by the Republican leader.

We have bipartisan legislation that would identify those individuals who pose extreme risks so that there is a red flag placed on those individuals that prevents them from being able to purchase handguns—bipartisan legislation. Our States are acting, but there has been no action on the floor of the U.S. Senate. The Republican leader will not even bring that up.

We could go over a whole host of other issues, such as mental health and earlier identification—those types of services. There are a lot of things we can do. I would hope that the one option that would be off the table would be that of doing nothing, but that seems to be the Republican leader's preferred option—to let this issue rest without there being any action taken by the Senate. It has been over 200 days since the House of Representatives acted, but there has been no action here on the floor of the Senate.

I urge all of my colleagues to impress upon the Republican leader that it is well past time for us to consider gun safety legislation. Let us bring these bills to the floor. Let us not wait for the President of the United States. We are the legislative branch of government. Let us act and do the right thing to keep our communities and our homes safer.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, let me join the Senator from Maryland in expressing my frustration. Many of us worked long and hard to be elected to the U.S. Senate, not just to represent our States but to respond to the challenges that face us in the United States. The challenge of gun safety faces everyone. Thank you to the Senator from Maryland for making that point on the floor of the Senate.

Many people come to the Senate Galleries, sit in the chairs, and wait for the Senate to act. It is a long waiting game because, unfortunately, the Senate does little or nothing under the

leadership of Senator McCONNELL. I don't know why this Senator has not accepted the fact that the U.S. Senate has an important role to play. We speak for people not only in Illinois and in Maryland but for those all across the United States, and they are very concerned.

In the recent trip home over the recess, I visited some of the areas around Chicago and in the city, and there were many conversations about the gun violence that we see across America. That gun violence has been punctuated by the horrible events in El Paso and Odessa, TX, and in other communities that have been affected by these mass killings. We have become numb, I am afraid, to the reality of gun violence in America. We have decided, I am afraid, that the Second Amendment to the Constitution is somehow holding us back—binding us and restraining us—from even doing the most basic things.

Overwhelmingly, the people of America, by a factor of over 90 percent—Democrats and Republicans—believe that we should have background checks. We believe that the people who have been convicted of violent felonies shouldn't own guns—period. We believe, as well, that when it comes to those who have serious mental instability, they should also be precluded from gun ownership. The laws do not allow us to adequately ask the question or to test whether the buyer has been convicted of a felony or has such a background.

In the city of Chicago, hardly a weekend goes by without there being dozens shot and 9 or 10 or more losing their lives. Most of them are young people, but not exclusively. Older people, as well, are caught in the crossfire.

People say: Well, I thought Chicago had these tough gun laws. What is going on there? Why do you have so many gun deaths?

The answer is obvious for those of us who spend time in that great city. We are about 20 minutes away from northwestern Indiana and from the gun shows that are held there, where people don't ask questions when they sell firearms. All you need to do is to have the money and the open trunk of your car to fill it up with guns and drive them back to the city of Chicago. That is why no State can solve this problem. We need Federal legislation.

As I talk to people across this country, they tell me the heartbreaking stories of sitting down with their children who have gone through some drill or program at school to forewarn them of what would happen if an active shooter were to come onto the premises. As we know, that reality is not beyond reach. In Connecticut, we saw a beautiful first grade class that was attacked by a killer with a weapon who took the lives of those children. If that scandalous massacre of children in a first grade classroom didn't move this Congress and this President to act, what will?

The President said to me in a conversation several weeks ago that we

are going to have a background check bill and that it will be the best in the history of the world. Well, I was skeptical when he said it. I am even more skeptical today. I knew what would happen. When the President had a choice between the public interest of gun safety and the special interest of the National Rifle Association, the National Rifle Association prevailed.

This President refuses to come forward with any proposal, and Senator McCONNELL believes his hands are tied and cannot bring this issue to the floor of the Senate. He cannot run the risk that his Members would have to be on the record as having taken a vote, as they were elected to do, on an issue of this importance.

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Madam President, this is not the only issue that we are ignoring—the only issue that is, frankly, not even being considered on the floor of the Senate. There is another one that is equally important to me and to most people across this country, and that is dealing with the challenge of immigration.

A few years ago, a bipartisan group of Senators—eight of us—I, Senator McCain, Senator SCHUMER, and others—sat down and wrote a comprehensive immigration reform bill. It was months of Republicans and Democrats sitting down, face-to-face, night after night, going through every section of our immigration code to come up with a comprehensive bill to deal with the obvious shortcomings, but we did it. We brought it to the floor of the Senate and it received 68 votes. There were 14 Republicans who joined the Democrats to pass this comprehensive immigration reform. We sent it to the Republican House of Representatives, and Speaker Boehner refused to even consider it. So all of our effort and all of our work was really for nothing.

We continue to face the challenge of immigration. We know what it is like at the border. Under this President, we have seen the worst border situation in modern times. His refusal to acknowledge the three Central American countries that are sending all of these immigrants to the United States has led to some horrible circumstances.

Recently, the inspector general of Health and Human Services came forward with a report on the Trump administration's response to this border crisis. It was a report on the policy of zero tolerance. I am sure you will remember it. It was under Attorney General Sessions, and he somehow found a quotation in the Bible to justify forcibly removing children from their parents. We removed 2,880 children from their parents at the border under this zero tolerance policy before there was an uprising in the United States against it and before the President backed off of it.

I commend the inspector general's report on what happened to those children—to every American. I saw it firsthand. I witnessed these children as

they were being removed from their parents and the trauma they went through as a result.

So why aren't we debating the immigration policy on the floor of the U.S. Senate? I am told that perhaps, later today, the junior Senator from Utah—at this point, I think he is the senior Senator from Utah—will come forward with a unanimous consent request to consider fixing one part of the immigration problem. I want to fix that problem and many more.

THE DREAM ACT

Madam President, I want to make sure that when we come to the floor to discuss immigration, as we should, that we take up the issue of the DREAM Act.

The DREAM Act was a bill that I introduced in the Senate 18 years ago. It states, if you were brought to the United States as a child and are undocumented in this country but you have gone through school and have had no criminal record of any serious consequence, you deserve a chance to be able to earn your way to legal status and citizenship. I introduced this bill 18 years ago. It passed in the Senate in 1 year and passed in the House in another, but it has never come up with the 60 votes—the supermajority requirement—in the Senate.

President Obama was a cosponsor when he was in the Senate, and when he had the White House under his control, I asked him to consider an Executive order to achieve the same goal, and he did. He created a program called DACA. There were 790,000 young people across America who paid the filing fee, who went through the criminal background checks, and who then received the protection to stay in this country and work legally.

Of course, in September of 2017, President Trump abolished this program. It took away the protection these young people had. He was challenged in court, and the court said we are going to continue this program until it is resolved at the highest levels of our Federal judiciary as to whether President Trump has this authority.

On November 12, across the street, the U.S. Supreme Court will consider that case—790,000 lives and more, for that matter, hang in the balance of how the Justices will make this decision on their future.

This should be debated on the floor of the Senate. It is why we are here. It is why we were elected. I think we can find bipartisan answers to many of these questions, but we need the Senate majority leader, the Republican leader, to really accept the reality of the Senate actually going to work. Instead of speeches by individual Senators on the floor, as impressive as they may be, we might actually pass a law. Think of that—a bill coming to the floor, subject to amendment, and actual debate in the Senate Chamber. We would fill the Galleries. It is such a novelty. It doesn't happen anymore.

Unfortunately for America, many issues, whether it is gun safety or sensible immigration policy, are the victims of our inaction in the U.S. Senate. We can do better, and we should. Ultimately, the American people have the last word as to whether this Senate will act on issues like gun safety and immigration. The last word is your vote. In the next election, I hope more and more Americans will vote for a Senate that responds to the challenges of our day and doesn't avoid our responsibility under the Constitution.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, for the information of all of our colleagues, the next vote will occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, cloture on the McGuire nomination.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 176.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph Cella, of Michigan, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, 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 senior assistant 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 the nomination of Joseph Cella, of Michigan, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, Shelley Moore Capito, Kevin Cramer, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, James E. Risch, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Martha McSally.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 367.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Daniel Habib Jorjani, of Kentucky, to be Solicitor of the Department of the Interior.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, 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 senior assistant 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 the nomination of Daniel Habib Jorjani, of Kentucky, to be Solicitor of the Department of the Interior.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, Shelley Moore Capito, Kevin Cramer, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, James E. Risch, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Martha McSally.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 292.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Fabian Black, of North Dakota, to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security for a term expiring January 19, 2025. (Reappointment)

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, 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 senior assistant 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 the nomination of David Fabian Black, of North Dakota, to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security for a term expiring January 19, 2025. (Reappointment)

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, Shelley Moore Capito, Kevin Cramer, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, James E. Risch, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Martha McSally.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls be waived.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 1044

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1044 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

I ask unanimous consent that the Lee amendment, No. 939, be agreed to, that the bill as amended be considered read a third time and passed, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PERDUE. Madam President, I want to commend my good friend from the great State of Utah, Senator MIKE LEE, for his work on putting this bill together and pulling the people together to support this bill.

I support this bill. We have some language that needs to be clarified, and I still have some concerns about the impact this legislation would have on