

Russia or any other adversaries copy their playbook.

Unfortunately, the White House and the leadership on the majority side of the Senate seem to be the only ones not taking this threat seriously.

Since 2016, this body has failed to vote on a single piece of stand-alone election security legislation. Four times in the last year, I have come to the floor in an attempt to pass my bipartisan election security legislation, known as the FIRE Act, by unanimous consent, and each time these efforts were blocked by my Republican colleagues.

Of course, when they blocked it, they got what they were looking for. They earned applause from the President on Twitter. In a different time with a different President, this bill wouldn't be controversial at all. It would simply say to all Presidential campaigns going forward that if a foreign power reaches out to their campaign offering assistance or offering dirt on a political opponent, the appropriate response is not to say, thank-you; the appropriate response is to call the FBI.

What a sad statement about partisan politics in our country when we can't even agree on that. We can't even agree that there ought to be a duty to report an offer of foreign assistance in a Presidential campaign.

I introduced this legislation months before the facts came to light about the President's pressuring Ukraine into announcing politically motivated investigations into the Bidens. I am not here to rehash the impeachment trial, but I do want to note one thing. A number of my Republican colleagues justified their vote by saying that, while not impeachable, it was wrong for the President to solicit foreign interference in our elections.

I take my colleagues across the aisle at their word that they believe foreign interference has no place in our elections, but at some point you have to put your money where your mouth is.

We know the President tried to trade election favors with Ukraine. According to the new book from John Bolton, the President tried to trade political favors with Xi Jinping during trade negotiations. Maybe that happened; maybe it didn't. But I would be much more inclined to give the President the benefit of the doubt if he hadn't asked China to investigate the Bidens on national television, if he hadn't asked Russia to hack Hillary Clinton's emails during the 2016 campaign, or if he had shown even a shred of interest in defending our democracy from foreign interference over the last 4 years.

We are under attack from adversaries who see this new area of cyber warfare and disinformation as a golden opportunity to undermine American democracy. We cannot afford to have a system that allows Presidential candidates to welcome this interference with open arms. If we can't trust the President of the United States and his campaign to do the right thing and re-

port foreign interference, then we need to require it by law.

I spent over a year inviting my colleagues across the aisle to work with us on this already—and I point out “already”—bipartisan legislation. I have tried to answer every objection and work through the right channels to get this legislation to the floor as part of the NDAA. What did we do? We went back to the Intelligence Committee—again, the only committee engaged in a serious effort to prevent foreign election interference. We made sure this year's intel authorization bill included several provisions to strengthen our defenses ahead of the November elections. The committee voted 14 to 1 to pass an intel authorization bill that included the FIRE Act, the act that I just described, so that if a foreign government interferes or offers you assistance or offers you dirt, you don't say thanks; you call the FBI. So you can imagine my surprise and frustration when I learned of a backroom deal to strip the FIRE Act out of the Intelligence Committee's legislation because of a supposed turf war with another committee.

I am back again today because the security of our elections cannot wait. Let's not hide behind process or jurisdictional boundaries. The stakes are far too high to continue the partisan blockade of election security legislation that we have seen over the last 3 years.

If, behind closed doors, my Republican colleagues want to strip this legislation out of the NDAA, then I am going to offer it up as an amendment to force an up-or-down vote and put every Member of this body on the record: Are you for election security or are you for allowing foreign entities to interfere and offer assistance with no requirement to report?

More than ever, it is time to put country over party and defend our democracy from those who would do it harm. I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment and send a clear message: Foreign interference has no place in our elections.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:31 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

MULTIEMPLOYER PENSION SYSTEM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, since I reclaimed chairmanship of the Finance Committee at the start of this

Congress, one of my top priorities has been to fix the failing multiemployer pension system and to help secure retirement benefits of more than 10 million workers and retirees in these multiemployer plans.

This is especially important since 150 multiemployer plans have failed or terminated, and many others are expected to run out of money in the coming 10 years. In the decade after that, many more plans are expected to fail. In all, more than 1.5 million Americans would be affected by the failure of these multiemployer pension plans.

Now, the coronavirus has had its effect on these plans as well. We don't yet have a firm read on how much the economic downturn has affected plans' funding or even the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's insurance fund backing up those plans that have failed. We expect more details on those issues later this summer.

Now, one thing that we do know for sure is that this problem is only going to get worse and more costly to resolve if we wait longer to solve it. That is why all this concentration at this point. Now we have a real opportunity to get it fixed—and hopefully this year.

Last November, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee chairman LAMAR ALEXANDER of Tennessee and I released a draft plan to reform the multiemployer pension system, protect retirees, and at the same time secure the PBGC's insurance fund. We received many thoughtful and constructive comments, and we worked over the past several months to address those comments to make our reform plan as effective and balanced as possible.

So what is standing in the way? The usual thing: You have got to have bipartisanship to get anything done in the U.S. Senate. The short answer is that the Democratic leadership doesn't seem to be very interested in working to find that bipartisan solution. They seem to think the no-strings bailout which they tried to force into the CARES Act in March and which now appears in the House's HEROES Act is somehow a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. That doesn't work very well, particularly in the Senate, where it takes bipartisanship to get anything done.

I would also hope that they are not playing election-year politics. If they are, then they are playing those election-year politics with the retirement security of millions of Americans. As every day goes on, the prospects of people retiring on what they thought they were going to retire on—these multiemployer plans—is getting less and less. Delaying a solution until next year is only going to make it more costly, and it will still require bipartisan support.

We can and we must do better if we want a healthy multiemployer system for the long haul. We have a chance to fix this problem long term. Otherwise, we will be right back here in 5 or 10 years dealing with the same problem.