

to be something the leaders on the other side want.

On Monday, the Speaker of the House claimed she could not wait to start negotiations, but then on Tuesday, she said her discussion with the administration “isn’t a negotiation.” And then the Speaker said: “The appropriate thing for the Senate to do is pass a bill and then we can negotiate with them.” Meanwhile, the Democratic leader is over here making sure that cannot happen. This is quite the partnership: the House Speaker moves the goalposts while the Democratic leader hides the football. They will not engage when the Trump administration tries to discuss our comprehensive plan. They will not engage when the Administration floats a narrower proposal. They, basically, will not engage, period.

The Speaker and the Democratic leader are playing rope-a-dope with the health, welfare, and livelihoods of American families. With benefits expiring, with the Paycheck Protection Program winding down, and millions unemployed, the Democrats are saying “my way or the highway” with a Socialist wish list that was laughed off by everyone from journalists to economists the instant they introduced it.

This is what reporters had to say about Speaker PELOSI’s proposal in May:

“The more than 1,800-page bill makes a long wish list for Democrats.”

“Neither this bill nor anything reassembling it will ever become law.”

Even the Speaker’s own Democratic Members knew it was a joke. “Privately, several House Democrats concede the bill feels more like an effort to appease the most liberal members of the caucus.”

Yet this is what they are holding out for. Let’s recall some of the specific items. These are the things over which Democrats are blowing up negotiations and forcing a lapse in extra unemployment benefits: tax increase on small businesses; taxpayer-funded checks for illegal immigrants; taxpayer-funded diversity studies of the legal pot industry; and their ongoing obsession with something called the State and local tax, or SALT, which would be a massive giveaway for high earners in blue States. In other words, a tax cut for high earners in blue States. Let me say that again. Democrats are holding up help for struggling people over special tax breaks for rich people in blue States, an idea that has been criticized by economists from all sides.

Republicans want to get more help to families right now, but Speaker PELOSI says: Let them eat SALT.

They also want to spend another trillion dollars bailing out State and local governments that only spent—listen to this—25 percent of the money we sent them back in March. Some State and local governments have only spent 25 percent of the money we sent them back in March, and the Speaker and Democratic leader want to send them another trillion dollars.

This is silly stuff. None of it should be stopping negotiations and none of it would be if our Democratic colleagues actually wanted to get an outcome.

Let’s talk about unemployment insurance. Both Republicans and Democrats agree in these extraordinary times it makes sense for the Federal Government to provide the stark additional help on top of normal unemployment. Republicans don’t want this aid to expire. Our plan continues it, but the Speaker and the Democratic leader say they will not agree to anything unless the program pays people more to stay home than to work.

Prominent Democrats have publicly said they agree with our position. The Democratic Governor of Connecticut says he wants to continue the benefit at a more targeted level. Multiple Members of the Senate and Speaker PELOSI’s own House Democratic Majority Leader have all said in the last few days that they are open to negotiating this, but the Speaker and the Democratic leader have cut all their colleagues out. They are standing alone, saying: “Our way or the highway.” And so people are going to suffer.

I understand the Democratic leader said he felt offended when I noted that some people are suggesting the Democrats’ strange behavior is explained by politics; that some people think Democrats are behaving like national suffering would only hurt President Trump. Now, the Democratic leader, himself, pointed that exact accusation at various Republicans during the Obama Presidency on multiple occasions. I know memories can be short around here when it is convenient.

More broadly, actions speak louder than words. Democrats spent weeks shouting that the Senate should act on police reform, but when Senator TIM SCOTT gave them the chance, they blocked action. They blocked the Senate from even taking up the subject. And now, so far, this is the sequel.

Democrats talked a big game about wanting to provide more assistance, but now that it is “go time,” they show zero appetite for any bipartisan outcome at all.

This is personal for me. Kentucky has not finished fighting with the coronavirus, and the Federal Government must not be finished helping Kentucky. Laid-off Kentuckians need more help. Kentucky schools need more help. Under our proposal, Kentucky alone would receive \$193 million for testing and contact tracing to fight the spread of the disease. This should be just as personal for every single Senator.

None of our States deserve the Democrats’ rope-a-dope. No American family deserves it. Don’t my distinguished ranking member colleagues wish they could be involved in robust bipartisan discussions with our chairman, like back in March, and not watching from the sidelines as their leader shuts down talks on TV? Do they really think the Democratic leader’s tactics are serving the common good of their States?

Republicans have put forward a framework that would do huge amounts of good for huge numbers of American families. If Democrats ever come to the table, we will be able to bridge our differences and make a law.

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 Derek Kan, of California, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, 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 Democratic leader is recognized.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the Senate will soon acknowledge a moment of silence for the 150,000 Americans who have now died from COVID-19—more lives than our country lost in World War I. This national tragedy is more keenly felt because it has not and cannot be properly mourned. One of the most devastating consequences of this disease is that it keeps us apart even in death. There is no final clutching of the hand of a loved one, no funeral to remember one by. Grandchildren, wrapped in protective gear, wave goodbye from across the hospital room. There are 150,000 Americans who have died, which is more than in any other nation on God’s green Earth—more than of our allies and more than of our adversaries, more than in the most populous nations, more than in those with mere fractions of our wealth and power, and more—so many more—than in the nation from which this virus originated.

We will debate the reasons for this ugly truth—we must—if we are to avoid compounding our errors and heaping sorrow upon sorrow as the