

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

virus continues to rage throughout our country. Yet now we spend a moment to acknowledge how much our country has suffered already.

We have lost friends and neighbors, brothers and sisters, fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, a beloved professor at Howard University, a civil rights pioneer, and a renowned psychiatrist. We have lost a Brooklyn doctor, at 62, on the verge of retirement, who in the early weeks of the crisis in New York, worked day shifts at the ICU and night shifts at the Hospital Center across the street before finally succumbing to the disease himself. We have lost so many in so short a time. Unable to grieve them in the manner they deserve, we respect this moment of silence, this moment of sorrow.

I ask unanimous consent that there be a moment of silence to recognize the more than 150,000 American deaths from the novel coronavirus.

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

There will now be a moment of silence to recognize the American deaths from the novel coronavirus.

(Moment of silence.)

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, as COVID-19 continues to spread through dozens of States, our country is dealing with multiple crises at this time.

We learned today that the most recent quarter was the worst on record for our economy. The problem is not new or surprising. Millions of newly unemployed Americans cannot go back to work, cannot afford the rent, cannot put food on the table. Small businesses are waiting to see if the Federal loan program that kept them alive will be renewed. Parents are worried sick about their kids returning to school in the fall. The State and local governments that fought this disease on the frontline when the Trump administration refused to give them help are deep in the red and are slashing public services, teachers, firefighters, and more.

Throughout America, people wait days and days—even weeks—for the results of their tests, which renders the tests almost useless because we don't have an adequate testing program at the national level. This is the greatest public health challenge and crisis and the greatest economic challenge in at least 75 years. We need to confront all of these crises.

Senate Republicans hardly want to address any of them. They dithered for months and then produced a half-baked, halfhearted proposal of half measures—a proposal that their own caucus and their own President didn't fully support. Just last night, the Republican leader confirmed that 20 Republican Senators want to do nothing in the face of the historic problems we face, and because the Senate Republicans haven't gotten their act together, 2 weeks have now gone down the drain and 3 months went down the drain before that because the Republicans have been wedded to a twisted

ideology that the Federal Government shouldn't help people even in a time of national emergency.

As the country is about to careen over several cliffs as a result of Republican delay, dithering, and disunity, our friends on the other side are now scrambling. It is dawning on them now—not a week ago, not 3 weeks ago, not 2 months ago—that we are facing a cliff with unemployment—although we face cliffs on other issues, as well, right now.

I understand that, today, a few of my colleagues on the other side will ask the Senate to pass a reduction of the enhanced employment benefit from \$600 a week to \$200 a week or, even worse, a smaller percentage of a worker's wages than the Republicans proposed in their bill earlier this week. An already stingy Republican proposal has gotten even stingier as the week has gone on.

I have made it very clear why the proposal by the Senator of Wisconsin is terrible policy for four main reasons.

First and most obviously, it would hurt the unemployed as 1.4 million Americans filed new claims for unemployment last week, and the number is going up again. Our economy is still shedding jobs, and Americans are losing their paychecks through no fault of their own. Yet the Republicans want to take \$1,600 out of their pockets every single month. They want to give people who lost their jobs through no fault of their own a 34-percent pay cut. It is shocking, inhumane, wrong.

Second, it would exacerbate poverty. Our enhanced unemployment benefits have prevented nearly 12 million Americans from slipping into poverty. The Republicans want to slash and burn that poverty-preventing policy. Let's have more people go into poverty. That is what this amendment would do.

Third, it would devastate our economy. One of the few bright spots over the past few months has been consumer spending, in no small part because these unemployment benefits go to those Americans who need to spend them as soon as they get them. No wonder respected economic forecasters project that the Republican policy on unemployment insurance would cost us over a million jobs this year and 3 million more next year.

Finally, we know that this policy is impossible to implement. When our office called State unemployment offices to ask them about the Republican proposal, they said its implementation would be a catastrophe. One office simply said: "This would cause chaos."

This is not a serious proposal. We all know it will never pass the House and that it doesn't have enough votes to come close to passing in the Senate. Large numbers of Republicans will vote against it. This effort appears to be an effort to provide the Republicans some political cover because they can't get their act together and force the country over these cliffs.

We are trying to negotiate with the White House and would welcome nego-

tiations with our Senate colleagues, but the reason negotiations are going nowhere right now is that the Republicans are divided. Who is leading the effort on the Republican side—Chief of Staff Meadows and Secretary Mnuchin? Is Senator JOHNSON and Senator BRAUN's effort to pass reduced unemployment benefits a real offer from the Republicans or just a stunt?

Leader MCCONNELL has said that the Democrats will not engage. I would remind him that he refuses to go into the room when Speaker PELOSI, Secretary Mnuchin, Chief of Staff Meadows, and I sit in there. Once again, Senator MCCONNELL engages in "Alice in Wonderland" tactics and speeches and words. What he says is exactly the opposite of what is true. We are trying to negotiate, and the Senate Republicans are not.

Next, it is clear that the Senate Republicans don't have a unified position on anything. The main thing we hear from Leader MCCONNELL is that he would torpedo all of the relief that the Americans are counting on unless there is a giant corporate immunity provision attached, and he says he will not even negotiate on it. Who is holding things up? Who is standing in the way? Leader MCCONNELL and his Republican caucus are, certainly, at the top of the list.

And President Trump is all over the lot. He himself called the Republican Senate proposal "semi-irrelevant."

When your own President says your proposal is semi-irrelevant, as Trump has said to the Senate Republicans, you know that they are tied in a knot and can't get anything done.

The President seems to endorse a different policy every time he finds a microphone. The one thing we are sure he supports is spending taxpayer dollars on a new FBI building to boost the value of his hotel.

Yesterday, we learned the President asked for nearly \$400 million in renovations to the White House in the Republican COVID proposal. Seriously? The President proposes no help for Americans to stay in their houses but wants the taxpayers to fork over nearly \$400 million to help him renovate the White House?

Simply put, negotiations with the White House and Senate Republicans right now are like trying to nail Jell-O to the wall. We are trying to work with our counterparts, but it is immensely frustrating to deal with a negotiating partner who can't say what they support on nearly any issue.

Now, we are hearing the President and his representatives have floated the idea of a skinny bill to address one program, to extend unemployment insurance at much lower rates, which hurts the unemployed. But while the Nation waits, desperate for comprehensive relief, they leave everything else out.

What about improving testing, where people have to wait in line—wait for hours, days, and weeks to get their