

The Democrats say they want many of the same things. I certainly believe that many of my Democratic colleagues who serve as ranking members want many of the same things and could easily find common ground with our chairmen if the Democratic leader would let them talk. Instead, we have gotten a full week of the Speaker of the House's and the Democratic leader's shutting out all of their own Members and refusing to move an inch off of demands that everyone knows are outlandish.

The Democratic leaders want the entirety of their massive, far-left wish list—all of it. Speaker PELOSI is still agitating for strange, new special interest carve-outs for the marijuana industry—even claiming they are COVID-related. She said that, with respect to this virus, marijuana is “a therapy that has proven successful.” You can't make this up. I hope she shared her breakthrough with Dr. Fauci. In the other corner, Leader SCHUMER is still demanding massive tax cuts for rich people in blue States or he won't let any relief become law.

These are the kinds of nongermane pet projects that our Democratic colleagues are demanding—not a dime for kids, jobs, and healthcare unless the administration let's them check off every leftwing lobbyist's Christmas list 5 months early.

Let's listen to what Speaker PELOSI's own House Democrats said about this bill when they passed it. Here is what House Democrats said about the bill that Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leader now say is their absolute redline:

One quote: “The partisan nature and wide scope of this bill make it doomed upon arrival in the Senate.”

Another quote: “In response to COVID-19, our relief efforts must be targeted, timely, and transparent. The HEROES Act does not meet those standards.”

Another quote: “This isn't a plan; it's a wish list.”

Another quote: “Partisan gamesmanship.”

Another quote: “Some in my own party . . . have decided to use this package as an opportunity to make political statements and propose a bill that goes far beyond pandemic relief and has no chance at becoming law, further declaring the help so many need.”

Those are quotes from House Democrats' views about the so-called Heroes Act, but now the entire thing is the price of admission for giving hard-hit Americans any more aid.

What worked back in March with the CARES Act were productive and good-faith conversations between chairmen and ranking members—a bipartisan process led by Members.

But this time, the Speaker and the Democratic leader have forbidden their Members from negotiating at all. The ranking member on HELP cannot even discuss testing with Chairman ALEX-

ANDER. The ranking member on Small Business cannot even discuss PPP with Chairman RUBIO and Chairman COLLINS.

No, no; the Speaker and the Democratic leader only want themselves at the table so that behind closed doors they can say that nobody gets another dime of Federal unemployment money; nobody gets extra school funding; and nobody gets more money for testing and PPE unless they burn cash on 1,000 unrelated things.

I am talking about things like stimulus checks for illegal immigrants; a trillion-dollar slush fund for States, even though States and localities have only spent a quarter of the money we sent them in March. Let me say that again—a trillion-dollar slush fund for States, even though States and localities have only spent a quarter of the money we sent them in March. In my State, the State administration only spent 6 percent of the money we sent them—6 percent—diversity and inclusion studies, a soil health program, and on and on and on.

The House bill does all these things while completely forgetting a second round of the Paycheck Protection Program—no second round for PPP—and sending less money for schools than the Senate bill.

This is what they will not budge from. And every day the script is the same, and the script is: We had a pleasant conversation, but we don't feel like making a deal. Maybe tomorrow.

Here is the problem: Every day the Democratic leaders repeat the same act here in the Capitol, they are letting down the struggling people who need our help. Day after day, Americans are trying to stay above water—layoffs, benefit cuts, threats of eviction, the possibility of losing a family business forever, towns wondering if their Main Streets will ever come back, school principals with no idea what to tell communities.

That is the reality in Kentucky and in all 50 States, and none of these people are helped one bit, not one bit, by the Democratic leaders' charade.

What American families need is an outcome, a bipartisan result. Senate Republicans have had a roadmap sitting on the table for more than a week. We didn't put every Republican wish list item in history into an 1,800-page encyclopedia and insist on starting there.

We built a serious starting place based on the bipartisan programs we passed back in March—unanimously, by the way—and what the country needs now.

If our colleagues across the aisle would do the same—frankly, if our colleagues across the aisle were even allowed—allowed to take part in the discussions, we could get this done for our country. We did it in March. We could do it again, but both sides have to actually want it.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mark Wesley Menezes, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.

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.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I just listened to my friend the Republican leader. The Republican leader is so tied in a knot by his own caucus and his President that all he can do is give Alice-in-Wonderland, partisan speeches. All he can do is threaten to force sham votes that will not pass and will not answer the anguished cries for help that are coming from so many of our fellow Americans.

On the other hand, over the weekend and yesterday, Speaker PELOSI and I continued our negotiations with the White House on the next phase of COVID-relief legislation. After a week of stalled talks because Republicans could not articulate a position on hardly anything, I believe we are making progress. We came closer together on several issues; however, we remain far apart on a number of issues, but we are finally moving in the right direction.

At the moment, the gap between our two parties in the negotiations is about priorities and about scale. As this huge crisis engulfs our Nation, Democrats believe we need a bold, strong, and vigorous response from the Federal Government. It will take a lot of resources, but if we don't commit those resources now, for sure the costs will only grow in the months to come.

Democrats are fighting to meet the needs of a desperate nation. Our Republican friends, however—President Trump, his aides, and the Republicans in the Senate—do not seem to appreciate the gravity of the situation. They do not understand the needs of the country that are so great, and they are not stepping up to meet those needs. This disease has washed over our country like a great flood, and Republicans