

Nonetheless, he identified that, without payroll tax revenue and no replacement from the general fund, the trust funds would run out of money pretty quickly.

Of course, this is obvious to anyone who has even slight knowledge of these programs, but information was not the aim of the Democratic Senators' letter. Instead, it was to put forward a silly hypothetical case that doesn't correspond to anything that anyone has or is proposing. Of course, they attributed it to the President of the United States.

I know you all now see the purpose of this replay—because it is an election year. They used the Chief Actuary's response to claim that authoritative sources have shown that President Trump has a plan to essentially defund Social Security, and in due course they engaged in the cottage industry of groups which exist here in Washington, DC, that regularly scare seniors and the disabled, especially before an election, about some sort of backdoor plan or Trojan horse plan to destroy Social Security, and the Democratic Senators used the Chief Actuary's response to feed the Biden campaign with a false talking point about Social Security.

So you see the motives of these Senators in their using the Chief Actuary as their tool. You see it pretty clearly. The Biden campaign has run ads, stating, among other mistruths, "If Trump gets his way, Social Security benefits will run out in just 3 years from now."

Let's go back to the Washington Post. Even the Post's Fact Checker gave those ads four Pinocchios, meaning that they contained a whopper of a lie. The Fact Checker also concluded: "To make a long story short, Democrats ginned up a letter from the chief actuary to describe a plan that does not currently exist."

In a followup letter that Ranking Member KEVIN BRADY of the House Ways and Means Committee and I wrote to Social Security's Chief Actuary, we expressed our concerns about the Democrats having, once again, used his office for political purposes, and, once again, it refers back to the 2016 era that I have already talked about. From his response, we learned a few things.

First, we got confirmation that no one has a plan to defund Social Security, including the President of the United States. That confirms that the Democrats' letter was just pretty silly, but not oddly, pure politics.

Second, we got confirmation that the Democratic Senators, during the 2016 election, published lies in the Huffington Post article, invoking the Chief Actuary in an effort to smear a trustee nominee.

Third, we learned that Social Security's Chief Actuary feels compelled to respond to any hypothetical posed to him by any Senator, independent of how silly or blatantly political it would be.

Of course the Chief Actuary shouldn't be so compelled. With that

latter lesson, it would be easy for a Republican Senator to ask the Chief Actuary to analyze hypotheticals corresponding to the allegations made by Senator SANDERS, one of the authors of the letter, concerning the "hypothetical legislation" about Vice President Biden's history on Social Security.

Senator SANDERS, during the primary, has run political ads characterizing Biden's record on Social Security, saying that Biden's claim that he has always protected Social Security are "patently false."

It wouldn't be hard to send a hypothetical in for analysis by the Social Security Chief Actuary to get an answer to reinforce Senator SANDERS' views that former Vice President Biden has not acted to protect Social Security.

It wouldn't be hard to send a letter to the Chief Actuary asking about how Senator SANDERS' plans to reform Social Security—which Senator HARRIS has cosponsored—would harm the middle class by raising payroll taxes, with no corresponding benefits for people with incomes below Biden's \$400,000 threshold for defining who is rich and who is not.

It certainly wouldn't be hard to construct politically charged hypothetical legislation and ask the Chief Actuary about it in order to make political points and use the Actuary's position for political purposes.

It happens that the Chief Actuary doesn't exist for the purpose of political interference.

In my view, though, none of those would be a proper use of Social Security taxpayer resources, in the same way that the Democrats are wasting resources using the Chief Actuary for political purposes. So Democrats should stop wasting Social Security's resources trying to construct false and misleading political points to use in elections to feed their political base and dark money groups who then use the points in social media and attack ads against Republicans. But that is how they wasted the taxpayers' money—by writing the letter and eating up the time of the Chief Actuary for nothing other than pure partisan politics.

They should also stop politicizing Social Security's actuaries and the Social Security trustee's position in their transparent attempt to mislead the public and try to score political points about Social Security.

The American public should—especially during even years, in the runup to elections—turn a deaf ear to scare tactics that Democrats continue to use on Social Security beneficiaries. But when senior citizens who aren't sophisticated in the operation of the Federal Government or the uses of politics to scare people—they might believe this stuff. So you are doing a disservice to a lot of people who shouldn't have to worry about where their next meal is coming from.

As well, I think journalists should be more responsible when reporting on these political shenanigans, although I will note that even the most recent ploy was at least called out by fact checkers and given four Pinocchios.

Rather than acting like demagogues on Social Security, we should do what we can to improve these programs. Social Security trustees across administrations have continually and consistently recommended addressing the projected trust fund shortfalls since protected benefits will continue to outpace revenues.

Some sort of reform is inevitable, but outside of broad reform, there are many programmatic improvements that can help make the programs work better for beneficiaries and today's workers.

While not as encompassing as broad reforms, there are plenty of areas that we and Social Security Commissioner Saul continue to monitor and work to reduce backlogs and improve services.

Just recently, for example, the Senate passed by unanimous consent a bill that we entitled "Improving Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act." That was sponsored by this Senator and Senator SINEMA. This bipartisan effort will help people who fall victim to identity theft by providing improved services from Social Security with a single point of contact.

In my view, more bipartisan work to improve the programs is the way we should go. Partisan attacks to scare beneficiaries into believing that people are out to destroy people's retirement and disability benefits do nothing to help working, disabled, and retired Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from New Hampshire.

CORONAVIRUS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to urge that we come together and resume negotiations on a comprehensive, bipartisan COVID relief package—the kind of package that this country has been calling for.

Today, nearly 200,000 Americans, including 436 Granite Staters, have died from COVID-19, and we still have as many as 40,000 new cases each day in this country—enough people to fill a baseball stadium each day. As a result, our economy continues to struggle, with nearly 30 million Americans still out of work and more than 1 million filing new applications for unemployment each week. Many Americans have been forced to raid their retirement savings just to pay rent and put food on the table—and that is for those people who actually have retirement savings. Sadly, too many people do not.

The President's recent Executive orders have many State unemployment officers tied up in knots. Those orders affect Social Security and Medicare, and they provide no new help for the nearly 13 million households who could be at risk of eviction in the coming months.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration and Majority Leader MCCONNELL have refused to recognize that too many Americans are still suffering and still need help.

It has been 4 months since the House of Representatives passed the Heroes Act—a bill to provide assistance to Americans who are in need. Instead of negotiating a bipartisan bill, as we did with the CARES Act back in March, Leader MCCONNELL has released partisan legislation—written in secret—that is woefully inadequate and ignores many of the problems I am hearing about from Granite Staters.

Not surprisingly, the bill that was put on the floor last week—the so-called skinny bill because it didn't provide the kind of help so many people need—that bill failed. I opposed that skinny bill because I didn't believe it came close to addressing the public health and economic issues that our country is facing. It provided no funding for hospitals or healthcare providers on the frontlines, and the nursing home and hospital staff I talk to in New Hampshire tell me that more financial support is needed to stem the financial losses from this pandemic.

New Hampshire hospitals have already experienced more than \$550 million in lost revenue statewide, and they don't see an end this year. Losses of that magnitude are unsustainable, and the skinny bill that we voted on last week would not have addressed those losses.

That proposal provided no support for State and local governments that are facing severe budgetary shortfalls. The State of New Hampshire expects to experience a budget shortfall of nearly \$540 million, over half a billion dollars. That is about a 20-percent drop in State revenues.

In the city of Manchester, which is our largest city, they expect to spend \$11 million between this year and next related to COVID-19 expenses—money they hadn't budgeted for. They had hoped that some of those expenses would get reimbursed by FEMA, but under the recent order from the administration, FEMA is being told to no longer reimburse those expenses.

So what I am hearing from mayors and municipal leaders in New Hampshire is that they are soon going to have to face some very difficult choices about whether they are going to have to cut essential services like trash collection and water and sewer and whether they are going to have to lay off teachers and firefighters and police officers.

The bill we voted on last week, that skinny bill, provided no financial help for families struggling to pay the bills and put food on the table. There was no help in there to feed kids, nothing to address broadband needs—the needs that we have seen in New Hampshire for telehealth and for remote learning. We have significant parts of our State and significant communities where we have students who don't have access to technology to do remote learning.

There wasn't nearly enough to help with testing and contact tracing and no real assistance for the Postal Service even as it faces bankruptcy.

Funding for schools in that skinny bill? That was tied to whether the students are going in person or learning remotely. Well, in New Hampshire, we believe those kinds of decisions should not be made in Washington; they should be made by States and local school districts. If local school districts don't feel they can bring kids back safely, then they shouldn't be forced to do that just to get the help they need to ensure that kids can go to school safely.

I think the American public wants results. They want a bipartisan, comprehensive bill so we can address the needs of Granite Staters and the people of this country. That is what I am fighting for, and I believe it is past time for people to come to the negotiating table so we can get that done.

What we have seen during this pandemic is unemployment levels that we have not had in this country since the Great Depression. We need to provide additional unemployment benefits for people who need those dollars so that they can continue to pay their rent, their mortgages, put food on the table, and pay their bills. We need to make sure this emergency relief continues to be available to Granite Staters.

Small businesses need a second round of PPP loans, which would prioritize those smallest businesses and those industries that have been hardest hit by this pandemic, industries like tourism and the hospitality sector.

We need to provide support to our live venues. I recently visited the Bank of New Hampshire Stage in Concord, our capital. I heard firsthand how their business has been affected by the pandemic and the ripple effect that has on all live entertainment venues, on the performers who depend on those venues to be able to support themselves and the other members who are part of their performances.

We need to make sure that childcare centers are supported. I was visiting a small business, a restaurant that has two locations in New Hampshire—one in Portsmouth and one in Epping. The business is called Popovers. It is very popular. What I heard from them is that the PPP loans had made a huge difference. They were able to keep some of their employees on. But as they are looking to the fall, they are worried about whether those employees are going to be able to come back full time because they don't have access to childcare and they are not sure whether schools are going to be remotely or in person. We need to provide help so that those businesses can get their employees back to work and people can continue to support their families.

We need a comprehensive bill that provides emergency housing relief and food assistance to Granite Staters.

We should support our counties and towns that are experiencing historic

drops in revenues and that desperately need help to continue providing the most basic services—schools, firefighters, police, trash collection, water and sewer, and wastewater treatment—because those have been dramatically affected by the loss in revenue.

Of course, we urgently need assistance for our nursing homes and for our long-term care facilities, which in New Hampshire account for more than 80 percent of the COVID-19 deaths, the highest percentage in the country.

We need an answer from the administration as to why they are not disbursing the funds that Congress directed. For instance, the CARES Act provided up to \$200 million for nursing home infection control efforts. To date, only \$17 million of that has been sent out to those long-term care facilities that need it.

On top of that, HHS has only spent about half of the \$16 billion that Congress provided for the acquisition of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies. Nursing facilities and providers across the care system in New Hampshire desperately need this help, and they need it now.

We had a hearing this morning in the HHS Appropriations Subcommittee, and I had a chance to ask some of the officials from HHS about why they have not distributed these funds. And, of course, the answer they gave me was this: Well, we don't know. That is not part of our responsibility.

Well, that is part of everybody's responsibility—to ensure that funds that Congress has provided get distributed in a way that Congress has said they should be distributed, because we have people across this country who need that help and they need it now.

We need a comprehensive bill to help treatment and recovery centers for those who are still struggling with substance use disorders, because we have seen this crisis worsen during the pandemic. We had been seeing deaths go down from overdoses in New Hampshire, and since the pandemic, we are beginning to see those numbers go up again.

This isn't a problem that is unique to New Hampshire. I heard Senator CAPITO in the hearing earlier this morning talking about the challenges that West Virginia is facing. It has become more critical than ever that Congress provide substantial funding for substance-use disorder treatment and prevention.

We need real support for the post office, which was lacking from that skinny bill last week. The Postal Service is the only Federal agency mentioned in the Constitution, and every community in New Hampshire and the United States relies on its essential services, especially those States that have rural communities. A lot of rural communities in New Hampshire don't have access to the internet. They depend on the post office for communications going in and out and the packages that go in and out. What I am hearing from Granite Staters is that there are Postal Service delays that are affecting

their ability to pay their bills and to receive medications, and that small businesses are not able to complete their transactions. Congress has a responsibility to enact legislation that will restore timely delivery and fully fund the Postal Service.

Finally, we need to ensure that the Census Bureau has the time necessary to execute a complete and accurate 2020 count. You know, it has been interesting to me to see the efforts of this administration to try and politicize the census, because this is no red State or blue State problem. The States with the lowest percentage of households that have been counted during the census are Alabama, Montana, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, and South Carolina. They are mostly in the South, but not all. We must give the Census Bureau time to make a complete and accurate count by including a statutory delay for the apportionment and redistricting count that is part of any package before we go home. This is something that the Census Bureau asked us for last spring, and it is something that we should make sure they receive, even though under political pressure they changed their request.

Bipartisanship on these priorities is possible. We were able to negotiate the CARES Act legislation that passed the Senate by a vote of 96 to 0. We did it before. We can do this again because that is how government is supposed to work. We are supposed to come together and negotiate and deliver for the American people.

Probably the most often heard remark that I hear in New Hampshire is this: Why can't you just all work together to address the needs of this country?

That is what we should be doing around everything, and it is what we should be doing around responding to this coronavirus.

We should not recess until we can get a bill to the President's desk. We were sent here to do a job. We have an obligation to get it done. The foot dragging has gone on for far too long. Brinkmanship should end because time is running out on the needs of the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning the Republican majority of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee authorized another smattering of subpoenas in what seems to be an ongoing effort to disparage a former Vice President and his family.

While the rest of the country is busy fighting COVID-19, this is what the Homeland Security Committee has been up to—using the powers of the Senate to, in effect, conduct opposition research for President Trump's campaign.

The Republican chairman has said he plans to release a report about it next

week—merely a month before election day. There is a dark similarity here to the Republican effort in the House in the previous election to discredit the Democratic Presidential candidate with the Select Committee on Benghazi.

You may remember the now-minority leader of the House Republican caucus bragging that the Republicans created the committee to bring down Hillary's poll numbers. You know what they say about a political gaffe: It is when politicians tell the truth.

Well, it seems like the Republican chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has made the same gaffe that Minority Leader MCCARTHY made in 2016. In a little-noticed interview with a Wisconsin radio station last month, Senator JOHNSON said that his probe would "help Donald Trump win reelection," and yet somehow the current activities of the Republican majority in the Homeland Security committee are even worse than what the House Republicans did in 2016, because in the rush to find scraps of information for these investigations, Senate Republicans may have collected and propagated disinformation that came from Putin's intelligence agents.

Some of the allegations that the Homeland Security chairman is now pursuing are the same ones pushed by Andriy Derkach, a known Russian agent who was sanctioned by President Trump's own Treasury Department for interfering in our elections.

Powerful Senate Republicans are echoing the same claims that the Russians are pushing, the same nonsense that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 elections and not just Putin.

We have all become so inured to scandal during this scandalous administration, but the fact that a powerful Senate committee may have fallen victim to misinformation from Moscow is appalling.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the Democratic leader yield?

Mr. SCHUMER. I will yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The chair will remind Senators that Rule XIX provides that "No Senator in debate shall, directly or indirectly, by any form of words impute to another Senator or to other Senators any conduct or motive unworthy or unbecoming a Senator."

Mr. SCHUMER. I am aware of it. Everything I have stated here is factual—everything, every single thing.

So, this afternoon, my colleagues and I have drafted a simple resolution that calls for the cessation of any Senate investigation or activity that allows the U.S. Congress to act as a conduit for Russian disinformation.

I cannot fathom how any Member of this Chamber could justify blocking such a resolution. There must not be a single aspect of this Chamber that wittingly or unwittingly furthers the propaganda machine of Vladimir Putin.

Now, I know what my friend from Wisconsin might say. He will deny re-

ceiving information from the particular Russian agent that I have mentioned, Mr. Derkach, but Chairman JOHNSON has never provided a full accounting of all the Russian- and Ukrainian-linked individuals he sought information from. One of the chairman's subpoenas, for example, targeted a Ukrainian national who is an associate of Mr. Derkach.

So anticipating his objection to this resolution, I would simply ask the chairman to provide a full accounting of whom he sought information from, so we can know who they are, what their motives are, and, therefore, the Senate can see if they are trying to interfere with our elections.

The chairman should have no issue furthering a complete accounting of his contacts with Russian and Ukrainian sources. The American people ought to know whether the U.S. Senate has been sullied by potentially receiving information from discredited Russian agents. The American people should expect the Senate to pass this resolution today.

What were our Founding Fathers most worried about? One of the top things—top things—was interference by foreign powers in our elections. Back then, their concerns were about bribery or treason or a foreign actor who infiltrated our government. Today, in our information age, the methods of foreign interference are different, but the risks are the same.

Our chief adversaries—Russia, China, Iran, North Korea—have found that disinformation and misinformation are a weak point in open societies like ours. That makes it incumbent on us—all of us—here in the Congress to be careful about the information we receive and repeat.

In the zeal for partisan advantage, we hope the Republican majority on the Homeland Security Committee has not become a sympathetic audience and a potential entrance point to foreign influence campaigns, wittingly or unwittingly. What a disastrous and disgraceful state of affairs. The Senate should pass this resolution today.

I yield the floor to my colleague from Oregon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise in support of this resolution offered by the Democratic leader. We are calling for an end to a horribly flawed congressional investigation. The foreign threats to our democracy—attempts to poison it with disinformation and to sow distrust—are an established matter of fact.

It is especially troubling because for periods over the last year, two Senate committees have conducted an investigation involving Ukraine, former Vice President Biden, and his son Hunter: the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, led by our colleague from Wisconsin, Chairman JOHNSON; and our colleague from Iowa, Chairman GRASSLEY, of the Finance Committee, in which I am the