

The program proved so popular that it quickly committed all its funding. So, in April, we refilled it with more money. That was unanimous in the Senate as well. Then, in June, we tweaked the program on the fly to help small businesses even more. Once again, it was unanimous—no objection from any Republican or any Democrat here in the Senate. This program has had the most bipartisan pedigree possible, and those bipartisan beginnings have led to a major policy success story.

For millions of Americans from coast to coast, the PPP has made all the difference in the world. It has kept paychecks coming into their mailboxes and bank accounts where there otherwise would have been pink slips. Every State, every town, every city knows the difference it has made.

So where are we today?

That historic first draw of the PPP has wound down; the program has closed to new applications; many firms have run through their funds, but, clearly, our economic recovery remains a work in progress. For many workers, business has not come roaring back to normal, and it won't until the health situation allows it.

Fortunately, Senator RUBIO and Senator COLLINS have stepped up again. Our colleagues have legislation that will refund and reopen the PPP. It will establish a whole second round for the hardest hit small businesses that need help the most, and thanks to the efforts of several colleagues, the legislation will also streamline the program and strengthen oversight.

I would submit that, even for a Congress this divided, even in the year 2020, reopening the PPP really ought to be a no-brainer. There is bipartisan agreement that American workers still need help, and there is already bipartisan infrastructure in place to provide that help, but there is a problem. The PPP has been taken hostage. Just like the funding for safe schools, more funding for testing, more funding for vaccines, more funding for Federal unemployment benefits, and commonsense legal protections that charities and university presidents have been pleading for, the PPP has been taken hostage by Speaker PELOSI and Leader SCHUMER.

The Democratic leaders have spent months holding out for a long, far-left wish list of non-COVID-related priorities and obstructing any additional aid until they get it. All or nothing—that has been their position. Either Democrats get every unrelated policy they want or American families get nothing. So, for months, they have blocked bipartisan aid at every single turn. The Democratic leader even tried last night to adjourn the Senate so we could do nothing at all for 3 weeks—nothing at all for 3 weeks. That is how urgent he thinks it is to help working people. He wanted to go home for 3 weeks.

Because President Trump will not just cave to the entire Democratic Par-

ty's platform—for example, the President won't simply hand out endless sums of cash to chronically mismanaged State and city governments out of proportion to COVID needs—Speaker PELOSI has seen to it that working families have gotten nothing rather than something.

So, look, every Senator in this body knows this is not how people act if they actually want an outcome. American families, working families, have waited months and months for Speaker PELOSI to end her “Marie Antoinette” act and let Congress find common ground. There is no reason this second round of the Paycheck Protection Program should wait another single day. So we are going to vote on this legislation today—one clear vote on one clear program that all in this Chamber say they want to pass.

Well, I will let you in on a secret. There is something Senators do when we want something to pass. Here is what we do when we want something to pass: We vote for it. It is no counter-argument to complain that the PPP legislation does not also contain 100 other things. The entire point is to agree where we can and make law while we keep arguing over all the rest.

If my Democratic colleagues oppose the job-saving PPP, they should come to the floor and say why they oppose it. Otherwise, this afternoon should bring another unanimous vote.

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. Mr. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, COVID-19 has changed just about every aspect of American life—every aspect. The bottom line is very simple: The way Americans work, the way we send our kids to school, and the way we run our businesses have all changed. COVID has derailed the economy.

Millions of Americans have missed the rent, missed the mortgage, applied for unemployment, been forced to skip meals. American poverty is beginning to increase more dramatically. More than 8 million have gotten sick. More than 220,000 have died.

The response here in Congress to a pandemic that affects our country in a way we haven't seen in decades should be to comprehensively provide relief. Our mission is not to pick out one or two industries and say “maybe later” to the rest. We can't privilege a small issue here or there and ask everyone else to wait. Our mission is to deliver big for a country and a people who are suffering direly. Our mission is to meet the needs of the country and leave no one—and leave no one—behind.

But Leader MCCONNELL and the Republican majority have failed to grasp the gravity of this situation from the beginning. They put the Senate on pause for more than 5 months, while cases went up and the death toll mounted. When the time came for them to pull together in August, they couldn't even get Republican Senators to agree on one. Eight months into this long and brutal crisis, the Republican leader is filled with stunts and playing the smallest of small ball, when so many are hurting.

Today, the Republican majority will try to force a stunt—not even a real vote on a bill—but it leaves almost the entire country out of the picture. They are holding the vote over a backdrop of a dire increase in cases. The majority of States are seeing spikes right now. Half of all States have had their highest single day ever in total cases in the last month.

Experts say we have hard months ahead of us. It is possible the worst is yet to come—a second wave. We must act now to provide relief to the whole country, and our Republican leader and the Republican Senate are up to a stunt and not even negotiating or putting a bill on the floor, and the American people know it. They know who is to blame. They blame President Trump and the Republican majority. We know that.

We know, when it comes to COVID, that the blame correctly falls on the shoulders of Leader MCCONNELL and all his Republican Senators, who are afraid to do anything, who are divided. Anytime Mr. Mnuchin gets on the phone with them, they say: Don't do anything. We are too divided.

Everyone knows that.

We must provide real relief. That is what Democrats want to do. But in the Republican proposal today, there is no funding—zero funding—for testing or tracing, the best way to stop this COVID menace.

And in the Republican bill tomorrow, the funding for testing and the plan for testing is so completely inadequate that it is laughable, especially given the recent spike in cases.

In the Republican proposal today, there is nothing for American families, schools, daycare, or food assistance. They are left behind—all of them. Renters, homeowners, folks struggling to keep a roof over their heads—they are left behind. Americans who have lost their job through no fault of their own and need unemployment insurance—they are left behind in these Republican proposals.

State and local governments that are being forced to slash critical public service in the middle of a recession—they, too, are all left behind.

Even on the issue of small business, the issue on which this bill is focused, it lacks specific funding for restaurants, for independent theaters and venues, for local newspapers, TV, radio stations, critical-need hospitals, minority-owned businesses, and all of our

nonprofits. In each of those areas in which the Republican bill is deficient, so many are left behind.

We have bipartisan support for programs that are not even being considered here today. And why is that? Why is McCONNELL doing stunts? The truth is, because the leader can't pass anything on the floor, he is resorting to a series of political stunts. That is all. Everyone knows it.

The Republican leader himself admitted that as many as 20 Republican Senators don't want to vote for "a dime more"—"a dime more," his quote—of relief for the American people—so out of touch, so callous, so cruel.

So what we have here is a series of show stunt votes designed to fail because the Republicans want them to fail. It is not going to get the job done for the American people. They can't even put a real bill on the floor. The only bills that they can pass are filled with poison pills that they know no Democrat will support in the House or Senate.

That was the only way they could get them to vote even for this meager amount in tomorrow's bill—by telling the big corporations: No liability for you if you egregiously hurt a worker who has COVID; by telling wealthy parents: You can pay for private school education with a complete tax break—free, free, but public schools get left out, middle class people get left out, poor people get left out. Wealthy people who send their kids to private schools—that is it—while they refuse to give money to the public schools that need the money.

If Leader McCONNELL were serious, you know what he would be doing. He would be negotiating. He wouldn't be saying: I can't negotiate; my caucus is divided. He would be leading instead of following the 20 hard-right, cruel, callous thoughts of those who don't want to spend any money because their wealthy paymasters don't want to pay taxes. Let people suffer. I don't want to pay taxes. Let people suffer. I don't want government to do anything—when we all know the only real hope here is for a strong, active, and bold government-led program. The private sector can't fight COVID alone. The private sector can't get us out of this deep recession alone. We know that, but not the hard-right Republicans. They are stuck in their narrow ideological prison.

So instead of stunts, Senators will actually have a chance today to vote on a real comprehensive bill to address the current state of the country. For months, Democrats have been pushing for the Heroes Act, a second installment of the kind of comprehensive COVID relief we passed in the first bill that brought so much to people, helped them stay in their homes, brought pandemic unemployment insurance, helped our hospitals, helped our local governments, helped do some testing—testing money, by the way, and tracing money, which the Trump administration hasn't even distributed to the States.

This bill passed the House over 3 months ago, and since then, Democrats have modified the bill to move closer to our Republican counterparts. Still, Leader McCONNELL refuses to even bring it up for a vote in the Senate. So today Democrats will move to have the Senate take a vote on the Heroes Act, a comprehensive bill that does so much, that doesn't leave all the people behind that this proposal does. We will see where every Republican Senator stands on real COVID relief—not a stunt, a fake that leaves people out.

Unlike the partisan, emaciated Republican COVID relief bill, the Heroes Act will not leave large portions of the country behind. It will not include poison pills like sweeping corporate immunity provisions that Leader McCONNELL has insisted on in every version of Republican legislation. It will deliver actual relief to American workers, American families, American States and localities and Tribes. It provides assistance for food, rent, and housing; real funding for testing and tracing; unemployment insurance and aid to small businesses of all kinds, not just a few.

This morning, a poll conducted by the New York Times and Siena Research showed that 72 percent of Americans, including a clear majority of Independents and Republicans, support another \$2 trillion stimulus package. In other words, 72 percent support the Democratic plan to provide COVID relief. Even President Trump has told our Republican Senate colleagues to "go big or go home."

If my Republican colleagues were listening to the American people, they would not be playing these partisan games around small-bore, stunt-driven COVID bills. They would be working with Democrats on something that absolutely meets people's needs. Instead, the Republican leader is wasting the American people's time on a vote he knows will fail, and he doesn't even seem to mind.

NOMINATION OF AMY CONEY BARRETT

Mr. President, on SCOTUS, yesterday, on a 4-to-4 split ruling, the Supreme Court declined to hear a case that could have prevented the State of Pennsylvania from counting all the votes in the November election. It was an important decision for democracy but also a reminder of what is truly at stake in a Supreme Court vacancy left by Justice Ginsburg. One more vote provided by a hard-right, Trump-nominated Justice could be the difference between voting rights and voting suppression.

Over the past several years, closely divided decisions of the Supreme Court have meant the difference between having the ability to marry the person you love or not; the ability to have your right to vote protected or not; the ability to make personal choices about your own healthcare or not.

The American people should know exactly what is at stake in the nomination of Judge Barrett to the Supreme

Court—nothing less than their fundamental rights as Americans. So, frankly, it was an insult to the intelligence of the American people for Judge Barrett to spend the entire Judiciary Committee hearing dodging every single question of substance, including questions as to whether voter intimidation is illegal or whether the President could unilaterally delay the election—to not be able to answer whether the President could unilaterally delay the election? Whoa.

Just think about what it means for a sitting judge to refuse to answer a question about voter intimidation—voting, the wellspring of our democracy—because she thinks it is too controversial. Think about what it means for a sitting judge to refuse to answer a question about the peaceful transfer of power—the bedrock of our democracy—because it might upset her patron, President Trump. It is absurd. No one is buying it.

Every election season, Republicans promise to nominate judges who will tear down our healthcare and roll back the clock on women's rights. The far right promises to deliver judges who will dismantle the environmental regulations that keep our air and water clean and protect our planet from runaway global warming. President Trump has made the same promises out loud many times. But as soon as someone is nominated to be a Justice, all of a sudden that person becomes a legal vacuum, a cipher, totally devoid of ideas, views, or opinions, even on the questions of basic legal, uncontroversial fact.

The truth is, Judge Barrett does have, unfortunately, hard-right views and opinions on these issues. Her views are so far away from the American people that none of them could pass in this Senate—even though it is controlled by Republicans—and certainly not in the House.

She has harshly criticized decisions to uphold the Affordable Care Act. She has been closely affiliated with organizations that advocate for the elimination of a woman's right to choose. She has drafted judicial opinions on the issue of gun safety that put her far to the right of even Justice Scalia.

That is why, in the hearings last week, the president for the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law said: "Judge Barrett's views are far outside the mainstream." That is why yesterday the plaintiffs in the decisions that resulted in marriage equality—Obergefell and Hodges—said they oppose Judge Barrett for the Supreme Court because she will endanger those hard-won rights.

So the idea that Judge Barrett is some sort of neutral arbiter who will only interpret the law as it is written is just not believable. She will make hugely impactful decisions that will alter the fabric of American society, starting with what will be one of her very first cases—a lawsuit pushed by President Trump and Republicans to