

before Senate Republicans is this: Are you willing to spend an amount equal to just half of that windfall to America's billionaires in order to help 160 million Americans?

Right now, the 52 Senate Republicans serving in this Chamber are the only thing standing in the way of \$2,000 being sent to 160 million of our neediest citizens.

The House passed the bill authorizing the checks in a big, bipartisan vote. It is hard to get two-thirds of the House of Representatives to agree on what time it is, but two-thirds of the House of Representatives voted for the \$2,000 checks. President Trump supports the \$2,000 checks, so he will sign the bill if the Senate sends it to him. We can vote on the House bill today in a matter of hours if Senate Republicans agree.

So why isn't this happening? Why didn't Senator MCCONNELL announce the schedule for the vote on the \$2,000 checks bill? Why didn't he agree to Senator SCHUMER's request to bring it up for an immediate vote?

Now, a lot of Republicans are saying they object to the payments because they cost too much and they are going to add too much to the deficit. Well, frankly, spare me the fake righteous indignation about the deficit all of a sudden.

Three years ago, these same deficit hawk Republicans passed a tax cut bill that, before the pandemic hit, had already added over \$200 billion to the annual deficit, and that was a tax cut where 80 percent of the benefits went to the richest 1 percent of Americans.

Warren Buffet wrote in his note to investors last year that the deficit-financed tax cuts earned his empire \$29 billion overnight. That windfall, Buffet noted, "did not come from anything we accomplished at Berkshire." So it is funny: Deficits just didn't matter to the 52 when it was tax cuts to the 600 richest people in America.

But even if this Congress weren't ending in 5 days and we had time to figure out how to pay for it, do you know how we can't pay for it? Cutting foreign aid.

President Trump has been talking a lot about foreign aid in the last week. Now, the money we spend on foreign aid, all supported by Democrats and Republicans over the years, all of it smart investments in our Nation's security—that actually wasn't in the COVID relief package. It was in the annual budget, as it always is. It just so happens that this year the COVID relief package and the annual budget were passed together.

But just for argument's sake, let's say Trump got his way and every single dollar of foreign aid was cut out of the budget. Would that pay for the \$2,000 checks? Not even close. President Trump apparently has an oversized impression of how much money we spend on foreign aid, because our annual foreign aid spending doesn't even equal 10 percent of the cost of a one-time \$2,000 payment to low- and middle-income citizens.

There is also some speculation that Senator MCCONNELL is going to join together the \$2,000 payments with other, much more controversial measures, much more complicated measures, like the reform of our internet liability laws. That is an invitation for this entire effort to fall apart.

The House has finished voting. They have passed the \$2,000 payment bill and sent it to us. They are not interested in taking up anything else. If we start adding poison pills to the \$2,000 payment bill, that is just another way of telling the American people that this body doesn't support \$2,000 payments.

Listen, being a billionaire must be crazy. I make a lot of money as a Senator, but even I would have to work 7,500 years before my earnings equaled \$1 billion. You know what was happening \$7,500 years ago? The Stone Age.

There isn't a good reason to oppose giving Americans who aren't billionaires a measly \$2,000 check to help them put food on the table for their kids in the middle of this once-in-a-lifetime crisis.

There isn't a good reason to choose to make moms and dads all across this country decide which two meals they will feed their kids each day because three meals are not an option. Two thousand dollars doesn't put dinner on the table every night, but, man, going to bed hungry when you are 11—it sucks. And even dealing with it every other night instead of every single night, no kid is going to turn that down.

There are 52 of you, and in the next 24 to 48 hours, you get to decide: Do you protect the billionaires or do you choose to feed that 11-year-old kid? The only thing that stands between the American people and a \$2,000 emergency survival check is 52 Senate Republicans. Got it? Understand?

There is a bill pending right now before the Senate that gives \$2,000 to ordinary Americans. Yes, it costs a lot of money, and maybe down the line we will have to ask the billionaires to pay for it, but the bill is here right now. The legislative session expires in 5 days. President Trump says he will sign it, and all that matters right now is what these 52 people decide.

The House passed the bill with lots of Democratic and Republican support. The President supports the idea. The only thing that can stop \$2,000 payments to struggling Americans right now is 52 Senate Republicans.

Some things in Washington aren't that simple—but this is.

I yield the floor.

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. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, we didn't expect to be in session this week, but we are. And, of course, as we all know, the theme for this entire year has been "COVID-19 writ large."

More than 330,000 Americans have died from the novel coronavirus. Tens of millions have lost their jobs, and every community across the country has felt the devastating blow dealt by this pandemic, but, as we know, the threats that existed long before this virus still are with us. Even though most of the world hit pause to battle COVID-19, our adversaries did not, and our brave servicemembers didn't pack their bags and not show up for work when everybody else shut down.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the last several months, as the Senate has worked to support our country through this pandemic, we have kept an eagle eye on the other threats on the horizon, and we passed the National Defense Authorization Act to ensure that we are prepared for whatever comes at us.

For our forces to continue fighting and defeating our adversaries in every corner of the world, they need funding. They need stability. They need to be able to plan, and they need the unwavering support of the U.S. Congress and all 330 million Americans.

The 2021 NDAA provides that support from Congress. It will prepare our military and servicemembers to address the threats that exist today, while preparing for those that we will inevitably face tomorrow.

Earlier this month, this legislation passed the House by a vote of 335 to 78 and the Senate by a vote of 84 to 13. Those are rare vote margins in Congress these days, and that alone is a testament to the importance of this legislation and its bipartisan support.

We know the President has the constitutional authority to veto any bill for virtually any reason, and he has exercised that power with this legislation. The reasons the President has given I don't think are frivolous at all, but they just shouldn't be tagged to this particular piece of legislation. His concerns about section 230 under the Communication Decency Act and the power of these social media platforms that censure speech is troubling indeed. This is something we really haven't confronted before. We know that under the First Amendment, the government can't censor speech, but with smalltown newspapers and media outlets and other alternatives fading away, more and more the American people rely on Facebook and Google and other internet platforms to get their information, and they have, I believe, become de facto public forums. So I agree that we do need to address section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, as the President has pointed out.