then I hope the other side would agree that lowering costs for seniors, lowering energy costs for families, and finding ways to preserve the planet are worthy causes that merit the attention of responsible legislators.

So let me say it again: I urge my Republican colleagues who are tired of MAGA, who know it is a formula for disaster, who know that it is, while embraced fiercely by a small group of extremists, it is not where the majority of Americans or even where the majority of Republicans want to go.

We have been reminded again and again that the extreme MAGA agenda is not only toxic but dangerous to our democracy. It condones and sometimes lies right in bed with those who urge violence to hurt America and destroy our democracy.

But, thank God, the American people have rejected that. If there is any lesson to derive from the midterms, that is certainly one of them. The American people don't like MAGA. They don't like hard-right nastiness. They don't like threats to democracy.

Look, I know the other side will not rid itself of MAGA overnight. And, unfortunately, some on the other side are hell-bent on doubling down on MAGA, but for the sake of the country and for the sake of the future of the Republican Party, we need to find ways to work together.

To borrow from a quote attributed to Sam Rayburn, anyone can kick a barn down, but it takes a good carpenter to build one back up. He, supposedly, used slightly more colorful language. I won't repeat that here, but you get the point.

I hope that good carpenters exist on both sides because there is still a lot of rebuilding to do across this country, and new building, new frontiers to launch bravely toward. As majority leader, I will do my best to find opportunities for both sides to work together.

So let us move forward together with fearlessness, with clarity of purpose, and with a ceaseless hunger to reward the trust that Americans have placed in all of us.

I thank my Democratic colleagues for the trust they have placed in me. I congratulate every single member of the leadership, and now let's roll up our sleeves and get back to work.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. President, now, there is still a lot to do before the end of the year. Later today, the House is scheduled to vote on the NDAA, and when it arrives here in the Senate, I hope both sides can come to agreement quickly, pass it, and send it to the President's desk.

Defense authorization and preservation of national security are important. I hope the Senate can act rather quickly. Equally important is funding the whole government, and we need to do whatever it takes to make that happen.

We need to make sure our whole government is postured to compete with China, both at DOD and across the government. We need to fund our efforts to assist the Ukrainians. We need to fund our new commitments to our friends in Taiwan. While there is still more work to do before we bridge the gap, I am hopeful we can get a full government funding package done soon.

I want to remind everyone—I think people know it—that fully funding the government is the best outcome, not only for the public but for our servicemembers in uniform who work day and night to keep us safe. Short-term extensions will hinder their ability to work at full capacity.

I hope we don't go down that road, and I urge all sides to keep negotiating until we reach a solution.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask that the vote not occur until after comments by Leader MCCONNELL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF WESTERN KENTUCKY TORNADOES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Kentucky is approaching the 1-year anniversary of one of the deadliest tornado outbreaks in our Commonwealth's history—1 year since 80 lives were lost and a deep scar was cut through Western Kentucky. We still remember the lost and pray for their loved ones.

A few days after the storm, I visited some of the hardest hit towns. I saw how the pictures of the damage in the newspaper and on television didn't even begin to capture the local devastation in places like Mayfield, Campbellsville, Bowling Green, and Dawson Springs. Homes were literally ripped off their foundations; trees scattered like twigs; whole neighborhoods gone in an instant. The pain is still fresh, but as I have seen in multiple return visits, slowly but surely, Western Kentucky is coming back.

This weekend, Kentuckians are carving out time to honor those whose lives were lost and continue helping those whose lives were severely disrupted. Dawson Springs just erected a beautiful, solemn memorial to the 19 residents that the city lost that day. In Bowling Green, an organization is delivering handmade Christmas ornaments to storm victims. In Mayfield, even as members of the high school football team fought to rebuild their families' lives off the field, the community cheered the team to an undefeated regular season. Even in tough times—actually, especially in tough times—Kentuckians stick together.

I am thankful to all the volunteers and charities helping us in Kentucky remember this tragic anniversary and for all the men and women who spent days and weeks working tirelessly to remove debris and to rebuild.

Things are looking hopeful in the region this Christmas. Homes and businesses are coming back. Families will gather again under one roof. The road to recovery remains quite long, but Kentuckians will stand shoulder to shoulder until the rebuilding is done, and I will keep standing right beside them.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT AND GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on another matter, yesterday, I explained a simple and obvious reality that will determine whether the NDAA and government funding legislation succeeds or fails. Here is the simple fact: Protecting America and supporting our troops is not some partisan Republican priority that we will cajole and reward Democrats into accepting. Providing for the common defense is a basic, minimum responsibility of those of us in government. Passing a Defense authorization bill and appropriating the money our military needs are not rightwing demands that Democrats get unrelated goodies for going along with. The Commander in Chief's own party does not get to take our troops hostage for unrelated policy aims. Democrats will not be getting special rewards for simply doing their job.

Yesterday, I praised the bipartisan deal that our Senate and House Armed Services Committees have struck on the NDAA. The House was supposed to advance the bill yesterday, but instead the Democratic majority fell into disarray.

Some Democrats want to scuttle the Defense bill by attaching unrelated liberal demands that would guarantee its collapse. Attaching partisan non sequiturs to this carefully negotiated NDAA would achieve one and only one outcome: It would ensure that neither the NDAA nor their wish list would become law. The only outcome that partisan game-playing would produce is the collapse of this bill—a massive injury for the U.S. Armed Forces at the hands of President Biden's party on President Biden's watch.

The House needs to send us the agreed-upon bipartisan NDAA and do so without delay.

The same reality applies to appropriations. Democrats just spent 2 years using the partisan reconciliation process to lavish trillions of extra dollars on liberal domestic demands while our Armed Forces were languishing on the back burner. The Biden administration printed and spent trillions on things like welfare and solar panels like there was no tomorrow, but they couldn't even assemble a budget proposal that sufficiently funded our troops.

So my friends across the aisle have zero standing to demand actually even