seniors, anyone who depends on basic services working smoothly—and it makes absolutely no sense. It doesn’t save us money; it costs us more.

It is no secret that the biggest obstacle right now has been Republican poison pills that were never truly on the table. They were always going to be nonstarters. But we have made really good progress on the first few bills, and we can get them done if extreme demands are pushed aside. We cannot let a few holdouts derail the basic functioning of government. There is no reason to listen to them, and there is no way we are going to let them impose extreme policies that go against the basic values of the American people.

I hope bipartisanship will prevail. Let’s show the public that Congress still understands a few very simple things: Shutdowns are bad. Working together is good. Let’s move past the poison pills and on to the hard work of legislating.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming, with the unanimous consent of the Senate, asks for leave to withdraw the nomination of Terese E. Bonner to be United States Court of International Trade Judge.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Hampton Y. Dellinger, of North Carolina, to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, for the term of five years.

The PRESIDENT OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, “We have the means and just enough time this week to avoid a shutdown and to make serious headway on our annual appropriations. But as always, the task at hand will require that everyone rows in the same direction: toward clean appropriations and away from poison pills.” Those are not my words. The Republican leader said that yesterday, and he is absolutely right. And I just heard that the Speaker said he doesn’t want a shutdown, after meeting with the President. That is good.

But let’s be clear. A shutdown that hits air traffic controllers and food inspectors and so much more would be incredibly damaging, and it would make getting all of our funding bills done that much more chaotic and challenging.

There is no reason for a shutdown—not if both sides and both Chambers cooperate in a bipartisan way. So I am working around the clock to wrap up several spending bills by Friday. If we need to pass a very short-term CR along with whatever bills we can finish this week, Democrats are ready to make it happen so we can prevent a completely unnecessary shutdown and continue making progress on our bills. I have been here before too many times and I can tell you that a shutdown is costly, and it is harmful to our economy. It hurts real people—Federal employees, not to mention families,
The conflicts in the Middle East are devastating, destructive, and destabilizing. They threaten America’s interests and America’s allies. Yet President Biden works hard to accommodate our enemies. He is a fair-weather friend to our neighbors and an ally in the Middle East, Israel. We see that in his maximum concessions policy towards Iran.

Early on, Biden pushed to rejoin Obama’s Iran nuclear deal. He was negotiating to lift all sanctions imposed by President Trump.

The Biden administration’s lack of sanction enforcement and use of sanction waivers simply funded the Iranian regime. Iran used this flood of cash to bankroll Hamas, Hezbollah’s Houthis, and other terrorists proxies.

In turn, the terror proxies attacked America, attacked our allies, and the attacks have only increased since October 7. Iranian proxies have attacked Amel oil tankers in the Middle East at least 180 times in the past 4 months. Let me say this again—180 attacks on American servicemen in the last 4 months. We have lost five American troops because of these attacks.

As the Commander in Chief, President Biden bears full responsibility for the continuity of crises that he has created.

It is no surprise that Americans overwhelmingly believe our country is heading in the wrong direction. Americans need to change course. Republicans are the party of American strength. We believe in peace through strength. We depend on our enemies. Americans deserve a President who is strong and a nation that is safe and a nation that is secure. That is our commitment.

So I will tell you, Mr. President, the day I came back from Djibouti, it was very disturbing to see the report in the New York Times. They reported that America and this administration have failed to do what it said it would do in terms of Iran selling oil to China.

Every one of those tankers ended up in China. The American people would know that the administration would never tell them that tanker after tanker has moved 59 million barrels of oil from Iran to China. Every one of those tankers passed 59 million barrels of oil from Iran to China.

By President Trump, the administration got tankers to pass 59 million barrels of oil from Iran to China. Every one of those tankers ended up back in Iran. That is the money Iran has been using to fund these 180 attacks on American servicemen in the last 4 months.

We know where the money is coming from. Yet Democrats look the other way. The Secretary of Treasury, hapless as she is, came to Congress and testified—incorrectly, misleadingly—that the administration is doing everything they can. Well, they are not. This administration is looking the other way as a hapless and diminished President Biden continues to be played by Iran, and this is evident to the world.

As Joe Biden bungles along, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and communist China continue on the march. We need a strong President to keep us strong and safe and secure.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

MR. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Children and Teens’ Online Privacy Protection Act, or, as it is known, COPPA 2.0, the Child Online Privacy Protection Act.

We stand at a truly consequential moment for protecting children online in our country. Our kids are suffering from an acute mental health crisis. The statistics are staggering: One in three high school girls in the United States seriously considered suicide in 2021—one in three teenage girls considered suicide. At least 1 in 10 high school girls attempted suicide in the United States in 2021—1 in 10 teenage girls in America attempted suicide. In 2021, amongst LGBTQ youth, the number is more like one in five LGBTQ youths attempted suicide in 2021.

We know that Big Tech’s tracking, targeting, and traumatizing of our young people is contributing in a significant way to that crisis. As the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing just a few weeks ago demonstrated, Big Tech CEOs still don’t understand the damage they have caused and remain unwilling to make the necessary changes to fix their platforms. As the Senate Commerce Committee has found, Big Tech CEOs and tech companies have failed and failed miserably. Otherwise, we would not be in this mental health crisis.

In the face of this defiance by the industry, policymakers at the Federal Trade Commission and from State, and local levels have been introducing and passing new legislation to address the crisis. More notably, last week, the Florida legislature felt compelled to pass a law to ban all kids under 16 from social media all together in the face of Big Tech inaction. Do you hear what I am saying? Florida is passing a law banning kids under 16 from being on at all.

I am glad that bipartisan lawmakers and regulators have mobilized across the country to address this problem, but we must also be careful because social media is not inherently bad. Many young people use social media to share their voices online and organize there on issues such as the climate crisis and gun violence. Online platforms allow young people to connect with loved ones, share their own experiences, and learn from others in ways that are just not available to them offline. They need, in many instances, the online communities. If we shut down those spaces in our efforts to keep children and teenagers safe online, we may just trade one youth mental health crisis for another.

For most of my career, I have worked to get this balance right—to protect kids from the dangers of new technologies without undermining the social, the political, and the economic benefits of those very same technologies. There is a Dickensian quality to these qualities. There are the best of technologies and the worst of technologies simultaneously. They can ennoble, they can ennable, or they can degrade and debase.

We want the benefits but also have to protect our society—especially young people—against the degradation that has now overcome so many parts of the internet. We just have to find a balance with social media that is not done in many other areas of our country.

Fortunately, we are not writing on a blank slate. The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, the original COPPA, laid the groundwork for protecting kids online by empowering parents and allowing corporate incentives with our policy goals. And unlike more draconian laws from that era, COPPA remains the law of the land. In fact, the only Federal privacy protection for kids online is my law, which passed 26 years ago, which protects kids under the age of 13.

But we can now see that it has expanded beyond anything that people actually thought about in 1998. And in the 26 years since COPPA’s passage, much has changed, but at the same time the core principles of that bill still hold the key for protecting young people today. That is why I am fighting so hard to pass COPPA 2.0 and update those privacy policies. And it is why it is worth revisiting the passage of COPPA in 1998 and its successes over the past two decades.

As many of my colleagues remember, the late nineties were an exciting and scary period for technology. This spectacular growth in home internet access was ushered in a digital and communications revolution, making it easier than ever to find information, discover new communities, and interact with friends, families, and strangers online. In fact, I am the author of the key three bills that moved America from analog to digital, from narrowband to broadband. I am very proud of that. Not one home had broadband in America in February of 1996. So I am proud of those bills I authored at the time.

We want the benefit of the information superhighway. We want the revolution. But in that early Internet period, the possibilities appeared endless: online classrooms, remote work, telehealth services. The Internet threatened to upend every aspect of society, and we lawmakers, the public, individually and together, we were all trying to catch up with these changes that the laws that I authored were now ushering in, real changes in commerce, education, and healthcare.

Even in those heady days, however, the dark side of the digital revolution was already apparent on the dark side of cyber space. Heads rose almost immediately. New personal computers and access to the internet created vast