

is just exactly to do that: Put this fund out there. As you say, it is going to save money. But I want to make sure that CBO, when they say something, we have a way of verifying that.

So I want to say that I appreciate the intentions of this bill. Increasing preventive healthcare to improve health outcomes and help patients and taxpayers avoid costly treatment and services down the road is a laudable goal. However, I am concerned that, as currently constructed, this bill will lead to budget gimmicks that will ultimately increase rather than decrease health spending.

The sponsors are well aware of my concerns. I worked in good faith to offer up ideas to address my budget gimmick concerns. I made it clear I am willing to compromise. I have already done so with my most recent offer and dropped commonsense budget process reform provisions that I thought were important. And these budget process reforms were what was in the famous Enzi-Whitehouse bill that Senator Enzi—former-Senator Enzi—and, now, Senator WHITEHOUSE worked out in Budget Committee reform. And I have said that BURGESS was willing to go along with my changes to establish commonsense guardrails and to prevent budget gimmicks. But these changes have been rejected in the Senate, and my concerns haven't been addressed.

The bill before us contains no commonsense guardrails, such as requiring a disclaimer that a supplementary estimate doesn't replace a CBO 10-year cost estimate, ensuring supplementary estimates are separate and distinct from the 10-year cost estimates, and requiring the Congressional Budget Office to be transparent in their modeling.

That latter point is based on the proposition that we expect CBO to show us how they arrived at figures dealing with cost savings of some particular preventive medicine program.

The bill also doesn't address concerns about how supplementary analysis could be used for budget gimmicks in the future, such as depositing uncertain out-year savings into the Medicare and Medicaid Improvement Funds.

The bill needs commonsense guardrails to prevent budget gimmicks. So I would like to suggest this alternative.

So I ask the Senator from Maryland to modify his request to include my amendment, which is at the desk; that the amendment be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, if I might—and, again, I appreciate Senator GRASSLEY's comments about this Senator. I feel the same about Senator GRASSLEY. He has been an incredible voice in the U.S.

Senate, particularly on transparency, particularly against waste, and has taken on some of the most challenging battles here on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

I have worked on this legislation now for several Congresses. My partners are Senator CRAPO, Senator CRAMER, Senator KING. We have all worked on this bill together.

And the bill is very simple. It just allows a more realistic budget window for preventive healthcare. And it is something that we have been talking about for a long time so that we don't get trapped with high upfront costs that have large savings, and we never get to the savings because CBO cannot score it under the current budget rules.

The challenges that Senator GRASSLEY is raising are not in this bill. We have worked very closely with the budget people to make sure that this bill does not contain the concerns that Senator GRASSLEY is raising.

The Senator might be raising a very legitimate concerns, but it is not this legislation that is causing it. This legislation only allows us to be able to implement in a more realistic way preventive healthcare services with legitimate cost estimates and offsets so that we can get the savings from preventive healthcare and implement preventive healthcare sooner, saving lives and dollars.

We can make progress on this issue now. The problem is twofold with the request that is being made. First, the potential abuse is not in this legislation. It deals with a broader issue. And then, secondly, if this bill is amended, I think Senator GRASSLEY also understands the chances of passage are zero. There is no possibility that this bill can be taken up in the House at this late stage.

So this is our last opportunity. I came to the floor today and not before because I respect greatly Senator GRASSLEY and his concerns, and I was hoping we could find a path forward for that to happen. But there is no path forward for that to happen now, and by including the request, I would be sacrificing both bills. And I would hope the Senator would recognize that and allow this modest improvement for preventive healthcare to go forward.

With that, I regretfully object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection on the modification is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, yes, I object. I would like to—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Around here, we use the words "budget gimmickry" pretty freely. And I want to say, as an example, that every Senator in this Senate knows the term "Medicare sequester" as a budget gimmick, so something at the end of the 10-year window we are going to draw in to spend money today. That is one example of a budget gimmick. I just want to make sure that we don't widen that down the road.

I yield the floor.

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

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

COUNTER-UAS AUTHORITY EXTENSION ACT

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 5639, which was introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5639) to extend the authority for the protection of certain facilities and assets from unmanned aircraft.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PETERS. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read three times and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 5639) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 5639

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Counter-UAS Authority Extension Act".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF COUNTER-UAS AUTHORITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

Section 210G(i) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 124n(i)) is amended by striking "December 20, 2024" and inserting "September 30, 2025".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, as we near the deadline to fund the government tonight without a clear path from my Republican colleagues in the House, it appears that we are once again on the brink of a government shutdown. When the clock runs out at midnight, the current authorities that the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI have to safely disable drones that pose a security threat will also expire, and we simply cannot let that happen.

I just received unanimous consent to pass a bill that will extend the current authorities for 1 year. I appreciate my Senate colleagues for joining me in passing this legislation so that our Federal law enforcement Agencies can continue to protect against dangerous drones while giving us additional time

to work on bipartisan legislation that Senator JOHNSON and I have authored to strengthen counterdrone efforts.

There are now more than 1 million drones currently registered in the United States, and the overwhelming majority of them are used for hobby, commercial, or law enforcement purposes and in a responsible and legal way, but we have also seen many instances where drones can pose a serious threat to the safety of the public, our critical infrastructure, our airports, and our communities.

From the reports of drone sightings in New Jersey that have led to airport runway closures and caused alarm in multiple cities to drone incursions at NFL games that put fans and teams' safety at risk, we need to be able to take the appropriate actions to identify, track, and safely disable drones that could be a threat.

Earlier this week, I called on the Senate to pass strong bipartisan legislation that would not only extend the current authorities we have in place to take down threatening drones but that would also help address the current concerns we are seeing from communities all across our country by helping to provide State and local law enforcement with the authority to use technology to identify and disarm risky drones so that they can protect our own communities. Unfortunately, that legislation was blocked from passing, and that is why it is so important that we just passed this 1-year extension so that the FBI and the DHS will be able to disable any drones that pose a danger to public service.

So I want to thank my colleagues for joining me in passing this 1-year extension so that we can ensure we will be able to protect our communities from any immediate drone threats. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will continue to work with me in the months ahead, along with Senator JOHNSON, on a larger piece of legislation that will allow us to more effectively address the risks posed by increasing numbers of drones in our country.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

118TH CONGRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is hardly breaking news that this is December 20—5 days before Christmas, a day celebrated by 2 billion people throughout the world. It is also the last day of the 118th Congress, and there is no better time than the present to take stock of what we have done or not done this last year.

Students around the country wrapped up their semester, and they have come home with a report card to show their parents the grades they have earned in things like math, science, English, and other subjects. Of course, report cards are a helpful metric of advancement—

or not, as the case may be. It is also a means to hold people accountable—where they are excelling, where they need to improve.

Here in the Senate, I think it is important to issue the Democratic majority a similar report card-style evaluation. People may wonder: Well, why would it just be of the Democratic majority and not the Senate as a whole? Well, obviously each of us represents our respective State, but there is one important difference: Only the majority leader, the Democratic majority leader, sets the Senate's schedule.

That means we consider bills that only he calls up for consideration. No one else in the Senate—not the other 99 of us—can schedule bills for votes.

That also means that what he does not schedule on the Senate's calendar is not considered, including bills that have passed the House, even by broad bipartisan majorities. And in a few short days, all the bills that he has chosen not to schedule will suffer a quiet death.

The majority leader's ability to run this Chamber has repercussions in every State, city, and community across the country. As public servants, we are all accountable to the people we serve. And leaders of the institution should be accountable as well, which is what I want to proceed to do now.

Last year, the majority leader's report card at the halfway mark of the congressional session showed that he had quite a bit of room for improvement in the second half of this 2-year session. But, unfortunately, I am sorry to report, he did not improve his performance last year. In fact, in the recent referendum on Senate Democrats' performance, which is the general election of November 5, the American people voted for Republicans to take over the reins of the Senate next year because they believed the Senate—and the country—was headed in the wrong direction.

So let's start with government funding. That seems particularly timely now, since here we are in another government shutdown narrative, which is—I will show or attempt to show that it is entirely contrived and is by design and is not the way the Senate should be running.

You recall, last year, the majority leader earned an incomplete on this subject. I had hopes that we would see a change in the way we handled the government funding. So the first 2 months of this calendar year, we saw the Appropriations Committee pass bipartisan appropriations bills that were never scheduled on the Senate floor.

Now we find ourselves in the exact same situation as last year. The Appropriations Committee did their work, again, on a bipartisan basis. Many of the 12 bills they passed were passed unanimously but never called up or scheduled for votes here in the Senate.

Leader SCHUMER made the exact same mistake he made last year. He procrastinated on scheduling floor time

to consider the bills, and we are, even now, as I speak, dealing with the funding decisions that should have been decided and settled last September.

So here we are, less than 3 days before the Senate was scheduled to head home, he negotiated a text of a bill that was more than 1,500 pages. You might wonder why is it that he would fail to call up the 12 funding bills for the entire rest of the year and then 3 days before we are supposed to leave for the Christmas recess, propose a 1,500-page bill.

Well, it should seem pretty obvious. It is because the people who negotiate that bill are not the rank-and-file members of the Senate. As a matter of fact, they don't even get a chance to change the negotiated product, which is done between the so-called Big Four. So he was hoping to shove through a "cramnibus" that lawmakers would not even have time to read, and he snuck in a pay raise for Congress to boot.

Now it is only a few days before the end of the year, and we are in the exact same boat we found ourselves last year. We are now tasked with passing a continuing resolution to kick the can down the road even more into March. Again, this should have been addressed last September.

I must say, I am disappointed but not entirely surprised. It was part of a plan.

So I believe that on the appropriations process, keeping the lights on and keeping the government open, the report card for the Democratic majority and the majority leader is an F.

Now let's turn to the National Defense Authorization Act. I have said time and time again on this floor something that I think we all recognize; that this is the most dangerous world since World War II, with North Korea sending soldiers to fight with the Russians in Ukraine; with Kim Jong Un launching missiles over allies of the United States into the Sea of Japan; with Hamas and Hezbollah and the Houthis—the proxies for Tehran—killing innocent people; and then, of course, the war in Ukraine, which has tragically gone on for 2 years with hundreds and thousands of people dead. So you would think that one of the most important things we would do is pass the National Defense Authorization bill—something we have done literally 63 years in a row.

That bill should have been signed into law by the end of the last fiscal year, which is September 30. But, yes, once again, the majority leader—the only person who can schedule these bills on the floor—procrastinated.

That bill was finally completed the last week of the year, more than 2 months past the deadline. But just like government funding, the majority leader did not learn from his mistakes on the NDAA.

Two days ago, on Wednesday of this week, he actually came down here and brazenly acknowledged what many people had said; that they were worried