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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROGER MARSHALL, a Senator from the State of Kansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our God, we are thankful that You have not only known us, but You have made Yourself known to us. You told us in Genesis 8:22 that as long as time shall last, there will always be seedtime and harvest.

May our lawmakers plant seeds that will bring a harvest for Your glory. Inspire them to seek Your wisdom and guidance as they acknowledge that without You, they can accomplish nothing that will endure. As they seek to be Your ambassadors to our Nation and world, may they remember to use our liberties and privileges bought with so crimson a cost to promote the common good of humanity.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 30, 2025.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ROGER MARSHALL, a Senator from the State of Kansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MARSHALL thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2296, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2296) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2026 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Wicker-Reed amendment modified No. 3748, in the nature of a substitute.

Wicker (for Ernst) amendment No. 3427 (to amendment No. 3748), to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on casualty assistance and long-term care programs.

Thune amendment No. 3863 (to amendment No. 3427), relating to the enactment date.

Thune amendment No. 3864 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 3748), relating to the enactment date.

Thune amendment No. 3865 (to amendment No. 3864), relating to the enactment date.

Motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Thune amendment No. 3866, relating to the enactment date.

Thune amendment No. 3867 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 3866), relating to the enactment date.

Thune amendment No. 3868 (to amendment No. 3867), relating to the enactment date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we are just 14 hours away from a government shutdown. The House has passed a clean, nonpartisan continuing resolution to fund the government until November 21. The President is ready to sign it, but Senate Democrats are standing in the way.

In a vacuum, this CR would get almost every Democratic vote. It just would. This is a clean CR that has no partisan riders, extends a bunch of programs that are Democratic priorities. . . . it's clean.

Those last few lines aren't mine, and they are not a quote from some other Republican. They are a quote from a mainstream journalist who is acknowledging what everyone knows, and that is that Republicans have offered up a clean, nonpartisan funding extension, the same kind of extension Democrats have repeatedly supported in the past, and Democrats are blocking it for their own partisan purposes.

It is right here. This is what it is. This is a partisan CR—24 pages to keep the government open until November 21, at which time the Democrats will have almost the same leverage they have right now?

I mean, hopefully, by then, we will have passed more appropriations bills. I would like it if we passed all of them, but it is reasonable to expect we won't have them all through conference and in place on the President's desk. So they will have another funding cliff they can take advantage of come November 21.

This is ready to pass right now. This keeps the government open. This funds the government and protects Federal workers and the American people from the hostage-taking that has become, evidently, now the Democrat norm, even though it is something they decried not that many years ago.

It is right here in front of us—right here. We can pass this today. We can pass it right now. All we have to do is get support from the Democrats.

The House has passed it. This is a House-passed bill. We take it up, and the Senate passes it. We send it to the President, the President signs it into law, and the government stays funded.

Pretty straightforward, right?

And it was something that was done many, many times in the past, as I mentioned, by Democrats when they had the majority.

Now, this right here is a chart. I mentioned 13 times. So when the Democrats were in the majority around here, on 13 different occasions we passed short-term continuing resolutions, funding resolutions to keep the government funded. And, as you can see, there were a lot of, interestingly enough, Republican votes—Republicans who voted to keep the government open when the Democrats had the majority—on 13 separate occasions. You can look at the numbers there. The lowest number on any one of those is 65 votes.

All we need today in the Senate, in order for us to keep the government open, is to get eight Democrats to vote with Republicans. That is all it takes. That is all it takes, eight of them. It doesn't have to be all of them.

I mean, I understand the reason, in many cases, the Democrats don't want to go down this path now. It has nothing to do with the substance of this. I mean, again, look at this. They want to argue about the substance of a continuing resolution that funds the government for 7 weeks, at which time they will have similar leverage?

It doesn't have anything to do with that. It has everything to do with politics because, when this happened, there was a Democrat President in the White House. Now there is Republican President, President Trump. That is what this is about. It is about partisan politics.

Now, there is another chart, which I will show you here, which I think points out, too, the hypocrisy of the Democrats. This is the percentage of Democrat Senators who supported Biden-era CRs.

Look at that: 100 percent—100 percent. There were two of them at 98 percent. So they must have lost one or two on the other side on a couple different occasions. But 13 times, when they had the majority, almost all of them, without exception, voted to fund the government because that is kind of simply what we do. We try to avoid government shutdowns because they tend to be disruptive. Everybody knows that.

In fact, I could go through a long list of quotes, and I will just give you a few to give you a frame of reference.

In 2023, the Democratic leader called a shutdown ''avoidable, irresponsible and deeply damaging'' and noted that a shutdown would cause ''disruptions for millions of New Yorkers to services they rely on, while thousands of Federal workers would be furloughed.''

In 2019, during the midst of a government shutdown, the senior Democrat Senator from Hawaii stated:

> While rich people are protected, this shutdown leaves the people who are most vulnerable to fend for themselves.

In 2023, the senior Democrat from Massachusetts, who has been one of the biggest voices in support of a shutdown this time around, had this to say:

> Okay, so let's start with how much pain a government shutdown is going to cause us right here in Massachusetts. . . . [W]e have about 25,000 federal workers in Massachusetts. These are public servants just trying to do their jobs, trying to help people. They have mortgages, they have childcare bills, they've got to put gas in the tank and food on the table, and they're not going to get their paychecks.

Well, that is a sampling. This is an endless video loop of Members on this side who have been saying these things now for years, not decades.

So I could go on. In fact, let me just give you a couple more for some additional perspective. We have got Democrats, as recently as this year, talking about the negative effects a shutdown has on American families. And now Democrats are so committed to shutting down the government, they are rejecting a clean—clean, clean—nonpartisan, short-term funding extension, the very same kind of extension that, as I mentioned, they supported 13 times during the Biden administration.

So what has changed? I think we all know. It is not that the problems with a shutdown have changed. All those quotes that they said, I assume, maybe, they still believe them. This is the Democrats far-left base and far-left Senators that have demanded a showdown with the President, and the Democrat leaders have bowed to their demands. And apparently—apparently—the American people just have to suffer the consequences.

When I took office as majority leader, I made clear my commitment to regular order, in particular to a bipartisan appropriations process, and I have delivered on that. We have passed three of the fiscal year 2026 appropriations bills with strong bipartisan margins here in the Senate, and I am eager to get back to bipartisan appropriations work. That is why Republicans have put forward a clean, nonpartisan short-term funding resolution to keep the government open to enable us to finish that appropriations work.

We wanted a completely noncontroversial bill so that no one would be inclined to vote against it and so that we could get back to funding the government the way it should be funded, not through endless CRs but through thoughtful, considered, yearlong appropriations bills.

But the Democrats just can't take yes for an answer. They are rejecting a bipartisan process and attempting to take government funding hostage.

And I had hoped that yesterday's White House meeting might mean the Democrats are starting to rethink their plan to shut down the government, but it seems that their leadership, at least, is full speed ahead.

Republicans—House, Senate, and White House—are united in our commitment to fund the government through a clean, nonpartisan funding resolution and then to get back to the business of bipartisan appropriations.

So Democrats have a choice to make. They can shut down the government and subject the American people to all the problems that come with a shutdown—many of which, as I have said, they have enumerated in the countless quotes they have made in the past—or they can join Republicans to pass a clean, nonpartisan, short-term funding bill and keep the government's lights on.

For the sake of the American people, Mr. President, I really hope they choose the latter.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank the leader for letting me borrow his chart for a minute.

So he has pointed to each of these bar graphs, the percentage of Democratic Senators who supported Biden-era CRs.

Yes. That is true. Guess why. In each case, Democrats negotiated with Republicans and said: Let's have a bipartisan bill.

The leader says: It is a clean bill.

It is a partisan bill. Not once were Democrats asked for what input should be in the bill. We were not told about it, we were not asked about it, et cetera; nor did Speaker JOHNSON talk to HAKEEM JEFFRIES.

You cannot pass legislation in the Senate when it comes to appropriations unless it is bipartisan.

So the leader will say it is clean. No, it is not clean because there was no discussion. Every one of these times, I went to the Republican leader and said: What do you need? What do you want?

In many cases, we had to significantly change the bill. One of our bills had aid to Ukraine. The Republicans didn't want it. To avoid shutting down the government, we talked to them, negotiated, and took it out. But not once—not once—was there any bipartisan discussion or talk on this bill.

We wanted to give our Republican colleagues a chance. That is why some of us back in March said OK. But we saw what happened after that. We saw a decimation of healthcare in the BBB—so bad right now that 80 percent of Americans support renewing the tax

credits of the ACA. We saw them use rescissions, pocket rescissions, impoundments, to undo what was done in the legislative process.

So the world has changed, and one way it has changed—and there are several, and I will get to those—one way it has changed is there was no discussion. And we asked to have meetings. HAKEEM JEFFRIES and I asked the leader and the Speaker to sit down with us as early as July. They didn't.

The job of a leader—

Mr. THUNE. The appropriators—

Mr. SCHUMER.—is a bipartisan negotiation. And the appropriators, which he will say are discussing things—but the two issues we care about—

Mr. THUNE. The date. They put the date in there.

Mr. SCHUMER. The two issues we care about: extending the ACA credits—broadly popular with the American people, so they don't want to talk about it; they want to change the subject—and ending these rescissions and impoundments that would undo what we would do—the four appropriators, when they got down and discussed it, they said: That should be for the four leaders to discuss.

That is what THUNE said. That is—sorry. That is what COLE said, the Republican head of Appropriations in the House. That is what COLLINS said. That is what MURRAY said. That is what DELAURO said. They did not discuss it with us at all.

So to say the appropriations process is working is wrong. It is not working. It is not working because the leaders wouldn't discuss it with us, as we discussed with Republicans on every single one of these what should be in the bill and on the bill.

Please.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. THUNE. So the Senator from New York—the way that we have done it was a different business model than the one he used. We actually had the Appropriations Committee sit down, and the date that they come up with, November 21, was agreed upon by the House and Senate appropriators, Republican and Democrat.

Mr. SCHUMER. Would the speaker yield? Would the leader yield?

Mr. THUNE. I will. I will.

And the Ukraine issue you are talking about wasn't a CR. That was an entirely different issue. So don't throw that into this mix.

Mr. SCHUMER. It was not. It was not an entirely different issue.

Mr. THUNE. But what we are talking about—the Democrat leader and his colleagues have the same leverage on November 21. This is a short-term CR. This is what we do all the time around here, as witnessed by the chart you were just using. It is 24 pages long, funds the government until November 21, at which time you have the same leverage then that you have right now. And we have until the end of the year to fix the ACA credit issue, and we are happy—as I said yesterday and I said on multiple occasions—to sit down with you to do that.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you.

Now reclaiming my time—

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. They did not agree to the bills that the leader is talking about because they said explicitly—Democrat and Republican—there are two issues they can't resolve: impoundments and rescissions and ACA tax credits and healthcare. And they all agreed, the four of them, that they couldn't agree to a bill until the leaders discussed it with us.

We asked the leaders to discuss it with us in July, in the middle of August, at the end of August and September. They refused. And now he says: Give us another 45 days.

Well, frankly, the Republicans have had 45 days since March—one 45 days, another 45 days, another 45 days. And in the room yesterday, JOHNSON said he doesn't want to do it at all; he doesn't want to have any compromise.

So the time to do it is now, and the idea that we can do it until January—when we talked to the President yesterday, he didn't understand this, but I know that the leader does. On October 1, in a day or two, millions of Americans—millions—are going to get notices that their insurance premiums will rise an average of $400 a month, $5,000 a year. A middle-class family can't afford that.

We want to renew those credits—among other things in healthcare—but renew those credits so that people won't pay that horrible increase. You can debate healthcare all you want, but the overwhelming majority of Americans—Democrat, Independent, and even a good number of Republicans—want us—want us—to renew those credits.

The impoundment, rescission—I mean, what does the leader think? That we should go along, come to an agreement, and then let them undo it unilaterally as they have done once and now have asked to do it more? No way. That is not how you deal with this. And we never had another President who did it.

So I repeat—I love this chart—Democrats negotiated with Republicans, Democrats negotiated with Republicans, Democrats negotiated with Republicans, and on through the whole chart. Didn't happen this time. Leader THUNE did not come once to me and say: Is this bill acceptable? What do you want in the bill?

So they call it clean; we call it extremely partisan—not one discussion, House or Senate, between the two leaders. That is not how you negotiate, and that is not how you pass appropriations bills.

The Appropriations Committee is stalled, by their own admission, because the leader will not come and talk to us about it.

Now let me make a few other points. Republicans are heading us into a shutdown. We stand at the precipice of a government shutdown because Republicans are not serious about keeping the government open.

If you want one glaring instance of that, Speaker JOHNSON sent his people home. They are home right now even though the government will conclude at midnight. There is only one conclusion you can draw when the Speaker sends the House home: that he wants a shutdown, he doesn't want to negotiate. All they want to do is force us, try to bully us—they are not going to succeed—into taking their partisan bill. Take it or leave it. That is not how this place works. And that is why we are headed into a shutdown—because Republicans refuse to negotiate a bipartisan bill that deals with the healthcare needs of the American people, which they care about.

Yesterday, Leader JEFFRIES and I went to the White House to meet with the President and Republican leaders about finding a way out of this impasse. It was a frank and candid discussion. It was long overdue. As I said, we had asked for it for months.

We asked the President to meet with us when THUNE and JOHNSON wouldn't. He said yes. And according to all reports, JOHNSON and then Leader THUNE, who just followed what JOHNSON wanted, said ''Don't do it,'' and the President withdrew.

So on Friday, I called Leader THUNE and said, ''Let's have a meeting,'' and we did, but it is at the last minute.

There is still a chance. It is only the President who can do this. We know he runs the show here, and he has got to say to our Republican colleagues: Deal with this ACA issue so that people don't get $400 premium increases; deal with this impoundment and rescission issue—which, when we told him about it yesterday, he seemed not familiar with it, but now he knows—and we can solve this problem.

But JOHNSON won't. THUNE won't. And so the President is not going to be able to persuade them unless he tries at the last minute. That is the only hope here.

Look, sitting in the room with the President, it was very clear that the President hadn't fully grasped the magnitude of the disaster he is causing when the government shuts down.

As healthcare costs go up, as people lose their healthcare—rural hospitals are already closing.

Speaker JOHNSON, in the room, said to me: They are not.

I pointed out to him that TIM KAINE just informed us that three rural clinics in Virginia, southwest Virginia, were closing, and the head of those clinics said it is because of the bills that the Republicans passed, the so-called BBB, which we know is not beautiful. The American people know it is not beautiful.

So they know—our Republican colleagues know that the American people are fully behind us when it comes to lowering costs but also—also—when it comes to healthcare and making sure those premiums don't go way up.

Then I spoke to Speaker JOHNSON directly in the room. I told him, because he can't debate healthcare because he knows it is not—the American people are not on the side of wanting these increases—even Republicans—I told him to stop making up stories, that too many Republicans are lying through their teeth. They say: Oh, the Democrats want undocumented immigrants to get healthcare, to get the Federal dollars of healthcare.

That is utter bull, and they know it. The law—the law—prohibits undocumented immigrants from getting payments from Medicare, Medicaid, or the ACA. There is no money, not a penny of Federal dollars, that is going there. So why do they bring this up? Because they are afraid to talk about the real issue, which is healthcare for American citizens, healthcare for people who need the healthcare and can't afford these premiums.

Let me say it again. Undocumented immigrants cannot receive premium tax credits by law. So they should stop these lies and address the real issue which, of course, they are afraid to do. A standard Republican MO—a standard Republican MO—is to make something else up because the American people are on our side.

Now, this week, here is what House Republicans sent out as guidance to their Members. They said ''not to make the message about healthcare because Republicans lose that argument.'' They are right. Their position is callous, malicious, unpopular.

So they are not only refusing to talk about healthcare, but apparently when they do, it is only to spread misinformation, to spread lies.

I said this to Speaker JOHNSON in the Oval Office yesterday. I told him it was total bull—I think that is the word I used—to say that we want undocumented immigrants to get Federal benefits, that it can't happen by law and nothing we proposed in our bill changes that. He sort of smirked. That is it—because he knows the truth. He knows the truth. And they are lying to the American people, these Republicans who use this, because they know how unpopular their position is.

Kaiser Family Foundation poll: 75 percent of Americans support extending the ACA premium tax credits, including 63 percent of Republicans.

Republicans have chosen the losing side of the healthcare debate because they are trying to take away people's healthcare. They are going to let people's premiums rise. And this idea that we can do this in January—no. The notices go out October 1 as to how much of an increase people will get in 29 States, and they only have a short time—long before January—to decide, are they going to drop their healthcare because they can't afford it? Are they going to take a lesser plan where they pay more through deductibles and copayments or are they going to keep that plan and cut back on buying a car, going on a vacation, or worse?

Simply put, folks, the Republicans have chosen the losing side of the healthcare debate—the losing side. And in the White House meeting yesterday, Speaker JOHNSON made it perfectly clear he didn't care if people's premiums go up because his conference is against it.

So, again, the House isn't even set to come back until October 7. You tell me which side is actively manufacturing a shutdown. Why did the House do that? Because they want to negotiate? I don't think so. They wanted to jam it through, but they are not going to be able to.

Yesterday, during a House Republican conference, Representative LISA MCCLAIN made it explicit. She said ''Don't talk about healthcare'' to her Republican colleagues. They don't want to talk about it, so they make these other things up, facts out of thin air.

So the Republicans have until midnight tonight to get serious with us about solving this crisis and keep the government open, but right now, they are not even talking to us seriously. They are sort of in la-la land.

On another related issue, yesterday, the President posted an offensive deepfake AI video of Leader JEFFRIES and me with sombreros, fake music, impersonating my voice through AI—it wasn't me talking—with even more lies about healthcare and immigration.

Listen to this, America, hours away from a shutdown—which we don't want, the American people don't want—the President is busy trolling away on the internet like a 10-year-old. And that is exactly why Americans are going to blame him if the government shuts down. That is another proof point as to who is to blame—his video, JOHNSON going away and adjourning the House until next week.

We have less than a day to figure this out, and Donald Trump is busy tweeting deepfakes. It is not like he is in touch with reality; he is in a bubble. He doesn't understand if government shuts down, people with healthcare premiums will go up. When we told him about it in our meeting yesterday, by his body language, he seemed not to be aware of the ramifications. If the President was smart, he would move Heaven and Earth to fix this healthcare crisis right away because Americans are going to hold him responsible when they start paying $400, $500, $4,600 more a month on healthcare.

We have less than a day. If there was ever a moment for Donald Trump and Republicans to get serious about healthcare, it is now. Even right now, even this morning, even here on the precipice of this crisis, the President would rather troll on the internet and lie about healthcare than tell the truth and get to work.

That is why the polls are abundantly clear that Americans will hold Donald Trump and Republicans responsible if the government shuts down. Senate Republicans could stop this crisis now. The President should get on the phone with Leaders THUNE and JOHNSON and tell them to work with Democrats to fix the crisis before it is too late and work with Democrats to fix our healthcare crisis.

Let me just say, once again, we tried over and over and over again to meet with the Republican leadership, and they said no. Appropriators said they couldn't resolve the issues until the leaders met. So we asked the leaders to meet again, and they said no because they didn't want to negotiate. They wanted it their way or no way—their way or no way. That is not how the Senate works.

If Republicans cause a shutdown, they will probably keep lying and distracting because they know we are on the side—Democrats are on the side—of the American people. We will continue to focus on healthcare. The American people will be completely on our side.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The majority whip.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, we just heard the minority leader come to the floor of the Senate, once again, refusing to admit it is the Democrats who are driving America into a shutdown. Let me remind everyone what Senator SCHUMER, himself, said in 2013. That was when the government faced another government shutdown. This is his quote. He said:

> What if I persuaded my caucus to say, ''I'm going to shut the government down unless I get my way?'' It's a politics of idiocy.

His words—a shutdown is ''idiocy.'' They are his words, not mine.

So, today, Republicans are committed to keeping the government open. We are going to vote to do that again today. The House has already passed a clean continuing resolution with bipartisan votes, and it keeps the government open and functioning for the next 7 weeks. It allows Republicans and Democrats on the Appropriations Committee to continue their bipartisan work on a full year of funding for our Nation.

This is where Senators from both parties have a very important part to play. The continuing resolution is now in the Senate. Senate Republicans support it. Senate Democrats should join us and vote yes to keep the government open because, if not, the government shuts down at midnight tonight. Democrats have no problem voting for 13 clean continuing resolutions, just like the one we have here today. They did that when Joe Biden was President. Now they refuse to do what they did 13 times for Joe Biden. Instead, they are demanding a ransom.

Senator SCHUMER has come to the Senate with a ransom note. He is asking for $1 trillion just to keep the government open for 4 short weeks. This proposal is a far-left wish list. The Democrats in this body know that they are responding to the demands of the far-left, radical wing of their party—radical, extreme, dangerous, scary people who want to take this country far, far to the left and are happy to see a government shutdown. They are demanding a government shutdown by the Democrats in this body.

So what do they want to do with this trillion dollars that is in this wish list—this ransom note—from the minority leader? Well, they want to spend $400 billion to keep Biden bonus COVID payments forever—forever. They want to repeal reforms that strengthen Medicaid. It strengthens Medicaid for the people who need it the most. That is not what the Democrats want. They want it to go to people who are unwilling to work, want to sit home, want to get free healthcare. These are able-bodied individuals who refuse to work. Democrats say: Give them healthcare, no responsibility, none whatsoever.

Oh, and they want to spend billions of dollars for overseas projects related to their obsession with extreme climate policies.

The minority leader made a statement today on healthcare that I found to be preposterous because I am a doctor. I practiced medicine for 24 years. I was in a rural hospital in Wyoming just this past week. The Democrats' proposal—the ransom note that they have provided—wants to repeal the critically important $50 billion rural hospital fund. Every Democrat in this body voted against a $50 billion rural hospital fund.

Just a few minutes ago, the Senate minority leader came to the floor. He said one of his Members went to some rural communities in his home State and said that the healthcare providers there are really concerned. Well, then those healthcare providers haven't been informed by the Democrat Senators from that State about what is in the bill that passed this summer and the incredible resources that are being made to make sure that rural hospitals can be sustained, to stay afloat, to stay open to provide healthcare.

The Democrats are so against rural communities of this country. They view them as the enemy, the red counties. They are so fixated with the big cities and kowtowing to the big city mayors that they actually introduced a bill in July. It is stunning. They call it Protecting Health Care and Lowering Costs Act. It is preposterous because that act alone repeals the $50 billion for the rural hospital communities. They didn't just do it once with their bill in July; they have done it again with a ransom note from CHUCK SCHUMER to the Republicans, saying that if you want to keep the government open for 4 short weeks, get rid of this rural healthcare hospital lifeline.

Hospitals all across my State and yours realize it is important for their sustainability to provide healthcare in rural communities where the next hospital may be 100 miles away. That is something foreign to the other side of the aisle who ignore, so often, the rural communities in their own States, who can say they can ignore them; don't campaign there; don't go there; don't talk to those people. It is the big cities that sustain us, and we are going to actually punish the rural communities by stripping from a successful piece of legislation $50 billion set aside for rural healthcare in this country.

What the Democrats are proposing is an outrageous shakedown, and that is why we are going to have a shutdown because they refuse to keep the government open while we are working on bipartisan funding bills. Everything they are doing is focused on satisfying the most radical, extreme, dangerous, scary part of their party.

In March, I believe, Senator SCHUMER did the right thing. He voted with Republicans to keep the government open. What happened? The far left immediately attacked him for doing the right thing.

NANCY PELOSI said:

> I myself don't give anything away for nothing.

She was even against it.

AOC questioned why he would ''hand away our leverage for free.'' Eighteen of Democrats' own candidates who are running right now in open seats for the Senate in 2026 were questioned by one of the newsletters in town. They all said they refused to say whether they were going to vote for him as leader of the Democratic Party.

So now, according to an Axios report from last week, what we have seen the minority leader do is he built a private war room—their quote, ''private war room''—with liberal groups to orchestrate a shutdown. When I hear the minority leader come to the floor say: Oh, we don't want to do it, he has been orchestrating this, according to this news report, for months, orchestrating with his liberal private war room. He and his staff have been meeting with these groups every week for the past 2 months to plan the shutdown that begins tonight at midnight.

Senator SCHUMER is doing exactly what he once called the politics of idiocy. He is threatening to shut down the government unless he gets everything that he wants. Well, Republicans are not going to pay the ransom, and the American people aren't going to pay the ransom. We are not going to sell out our Nation's servicemembers, our law enforcement officers, our seniors, our air traffic controllers.

Let me remind everyone who pays the price for a Schumer shutdown. The American Legion warns of a shutdown that will ''directly affect the lives of veterans and their families.'' They will pay a price for the Schumer shutdown.

Vietnam Veterans of America put it plainly:

> For veterans, a shutdown is . . . an immediate disruption of care, support, and progress on life-saving initiatives.

They will pay a price for the Schumer shutdown.

The National Fraternal Order of Police says a shutdown ''will cause major disruptions for programs that fund public safety efforts in our communities.'' They will pay a price for the Schumer shutdown.

The National Association of Police Organizations adds:

> Federal law enforcement officers, who are working to protect our cities and communities from violent crime, drugs, and guns, will be putting their lives on the line without getting paid.

They will pay a price for the Schumer shutdown.

The Association of Mature American Citizens warns that seniors on fixed incomes will face ''backlogs and service disruptions.'' They will pay a price for the Schumer shutdown.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association says farmers and ranchers will lose ''predictability and stability'' as harvest season begins. They will pay a price for the Schumer shutdown.

The National Grocers Association warns that vital programs feeding low-income families and children will run out of money. This is the reality of a Schumer shutdown.

Here is the bottom line: Republicans are fighting for veterans, for servicemembers, for law enforcement, for Border Patrol agents, for senior citizens, and for rural hospitals. Democrats are willing to shut down the government for illegal immigrants, climate extremism, and wasteful Washington spending.

Twelve years ago, Senator SCHUMER decried the politics of idiocy. If Democrats shut down the government at 12 midnight tonight, the idiocy will be theirs.

The House has done its job. It passed a continuing resolution to fund the government. President Trump is ready to sign it. It is time, today, for the Senate to pass it. The American people are watching.

I urge my Democrat colleagues to join with us. Tear up the ransom note. Keep the government open. Otherwise, Democrats will own the Schumer shutdown. The American people will suffer the costs and the consequences.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, well, here we are again. Republicans merely want to fund the government for 7 weeks. The House of Representatives passed a simple bill with no partisan tricks or poison pills. Yet, for the second time this year—the second time in barely 6 months—we again find ourselves on the cusp of a Schumer shutdown.

Now, I am not here to remind you that Senator SCHUMER came to the Senate in 1999 and that, since then, he has supported and voted in favor of a

continuing resolution to keep the government open more than 56 times.

I am also not here to remind you that, when Senator SCHUMER was in charge last year, the Democrats had 224 days to bring 11 bipartisan spending bills to this Senate floor, and even though 6 of these bills were passed out of committee unanimously and the other 5 with overwhelming bipartisan support, then-Majority Leader SCHUMER failed to bring a single one of those bills to the floor—not one.

I am also not here to tell you about the impact the Schumer shutdown will have on our national security, on our economy, and on the American people and their families.

Instead of doing any of that, I think I will just let the Democrats speak for themselves. Let's turn the clock way back to the fall of 2013, when the series finale of ''Breaking Bad'' was aired and when the word ''selfie'' was added to the Oxford Dictionary. Though it may seem like ages ago, many of the Senate Democrats who are here now similarly found themselves on the edge of a government shutdown in 2013. Let's listen to what they had to say.

Senator DURBIN said shutting down the government was ''no way to run a country.''

Senator HIRONO agreed, stating:

Dysfunction is not the proper way to govern.

Senator WARREN also echoed her colleagues and explained:

Hostage tactics are the last resort for those who can't otherwise win their fights through elections, can't win their fights in Congress, can't win their fights for the Presidency, and can't win their fights in Courts.

I don't disagree. The American people made the winners very clear when they went to the polls last November, and the Democrats lost their fights for Congress and for the Presidency. I would be remiss not to note all of the leftwing radical policies that continue to be challenged and also lose through the courts.

Out of touch with reality and fresh out of ideas, the Democrats have made a shortsighted play to back the Schumer shutdown. Look at the dog and pony show they are putting on right now. The Democrats are attempting to extort a laundry list of what President Trump has rightly called ''unserious and ridiculous demands.'' These demands include restoring taxpayer-funded healthcare for illegal aliens, wiping out a $50 billion rural hospital support fund, and sending your tax dollars overseas for climate initiatives.

In short, Democrats want to add $1.4 trillion in new spending to pay for the partisan pet projects that were soundly rejected by the American people last November.

Radical Democrats refuse to be reasonable and negotiate in good faith. This reinforces a point that Senator JACK REED made back in 2013 when he said:

Forcing the government to shut down for reasons the vast majority of Americans disagree with is a terrible signal and could create undue hardships for families and businesses.

This statement is as true now as it was then. Democrats who support the Schumer shutdown are voting to withhold the paychecks of air traffic controllers, our troops, Federal custodial staff, and countless other hard-working Americans.

As Senator SANDERS put it in 2013, ''shutting the government down will disrupt the economy and cost us jobs.''

Senator SCHATZ added:

Every moment that the government remains closed endangers our economy and American families across the country.

The bottom line: The Democrats have acknowledged that a shutdown is not some political stunt. As they said, a government shutdown can threaten national security by, for example, disrupting military training and recruiting, disrupting ongoing work to modernize our nuclear forces, and creating uncertainty in our defense supply chains.

That is not the model of peace through strength that Americans have demanded of their elected officials.

But rather than listen to the American people, Senator SCHUMER and the Democrats are making their own absurd demands. To make matters worse, the Democrats are conflating the budget process with policymaking, an approach that they have long condemned.

Senator MURPHY perhaps put it best, in 2013, when he said:

There is a time and place to debate healthcare, just like there is a time and place to debate energy policy and immigration and education—but not when the funding of the federal government, and all the lives that are impacted by it, hang in the balance.

Senator MURPHY in 2013:

[T]here is a time and place to debate healthcare . . . not when the funding of the federal government . . . hang[s] in the balance.

Enough is enough. Again, in 2013—more than a decade ago—Senator KLOBUCHAR called for an end to the ''political gamesmanship.''

Likewise, Senator BLUMENTHAL pledged to ''do everything possible to work with my colleagues to make sure budget brinksmanship and political gamesmanship are halted.''

Yet, solely because of the Democrats, here we are. The political gamesmanship and the budget brinksmanship are still going on.

So let me state clearly: A Schumer shutdown will be carried out at the expense and on the dime of the American people. Remember, it wasn't happenstance that the American people threw radical Democrats out of the Oval Office and congressional leadership last fall. So don't be fooled. The Schumer shutdown is a last-ditch effort to save face after spending years passing disastrous policies that led to rising costs and skyrocketing crime.

Let me leave you with one last quote from 2013:

Don't hold the American people hostage, simply because you're so sure you are right and everyone else is wrong.

Any guess who said that one? You've got it: Senator ''Shutdown'' SCHUMER—because he has decided to move forward with this Schumer shutdown and has refused to take his own advice, unfortunately, the American people will be left paying the price.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5100

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today to seek unanimous consent to pass H.R. 5100, a bill to extend the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Programs for 1 year. This bill was unanimously passed by the House of Representatives, led by the Republican chairs of both the House Small Business Committee and the House Science Committee.

Hundreds of small businesses have written to Chair ERNST and to me, urging the passage of the House bill to avoid ending the program. The National Academies, including Trump's former Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, wrote to us, urging the passage of H.R. 5100.

And given that the House will not be in session today, any objection or modification to this unanimously passed House bill will result in the program's ending. Yet here we are, watching the clock expire on one of the most bipartisan and successful small business programs in our government.

If we don't pass this bill, more than $4 billion worth of research and development funding for research institutions and small businesses is at stake. SBIR and STTR have led to technologies that have changed American lives: the world's smallest heart pump, new cancer therapies, Alzheimer's treatments, GPS, and Qualcomm wireless communications systems.

This program has gone above and beyond the expectations of those who enacted it more than 40 years ago. For every SBIR dollar spent, the program returns $22 to $33 in economic benefits; and this number includes, contrary to recent rhetoric, positive returns on investment from the top 25 companies, and 63 percent of the top 25 companies have commercialized their technology. In 2024, 60 percent of SBIR awardees had won their first awards in the last 5 years, and, annually, 30 percent of awardees are new entrants.

If we don't pass this legislation today, we will be hitting the ''off'' switch to the light bulb of innovation in our country.

But that is not to say that the programs are perfect. In May, I introduced a 52-page bill with suggested improvements and extensions for the programs.

I want to provide small businesses with the certainty they deserve by making the programs permanent to ensure we do not watch the clock hit zero again. I want to increase how much

Agencies are required to allocate for these programs in order to maximize our innovation potential. I want to strengthen our commercialization efforts through better data collection, training, and designated commercialization officers. I want to increase the number of new entrants by reauthorizing and codifying new programs that aim to reach underserved populations.

I, like all of my colleagues, want to make sure that our technology never falls in the hands of our adversaries. That is why I want to continue the bipartisan program enacted in 2022, which has identified and mitigated foreign risk in its short period of implementation.

According to the Department of Defense, only 0.04 percent of their applications have been deemed a foreign risk. If H.R. 5100 is not enacted, the current safeguards we have in place for foreign risk go away. Small businesses cut off from government funding will be left vulnerable, opening the door for foreign adversaries to swoop in and acquire American technology, and I know that none of my colleagues want that situation to become a reality.

The SBIR and STTR Programs are not graduation programs. They are research and development programs. These programs work because of their merit-based competition nature—Darwinian, paranoia-inducing competition. Kicking successful companies out of these programs would be like cutting your highest scorers after winning the NBA title. Instead of innovation, we would get decimation. We would be stifling potential technology critical to national security, our economy, our health, or to the next energy revolution in our country.

It should not matter where these technologies come from, whether it is Massachusetts or Texas or New York or North Carolina or Iowa or any State. Our standing on the world stage of innovation depends on these small businesses, and a lapse in the program would be devastating. It would lead to expansive layoffs, setbacks to scientific advancement, leave government-funded technology vulnerable to foreign adversaries, and cut billions for small business innovators.

We are already seeing the impact of uncertainty in the programs. Last week, the Department of Defense delayed their SBIR applications, and we have heard from multiple Agencies that they will do the same if the program is not reauthorized.

To be clear, this was not in response to a government shutdown but in response to Congress's not coming to an agreement on the reauthorization of the SBIR and STTR Programs.

That is why five of the six negotiators, including the two Republican House chairmen, for these programs have agreed on a 1-year extension. We all want to see improvements made, but we need the time necessary to ensure that we are making informed, evidence-based decisions that do not harm American innovation.

So, from my perspective, I ask my colleagues to work with the other five corners, pass the 1-year extension, and work toward a longer reauthorization with the improvements we all want to see.

With that, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be discharged and that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5100; further, I ask that the bill 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?

The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the status quo will not work. I cannot continue to let China win, allow waste to run rampant, or fail our warfighters.

When it comes to foreign influence and the SBIR–STTR Programs, the fox is in the henhouse, and my colleague wants to shut the door and check back in a year.

America's seed fund is in trouble: $5 billion of Agencies' R&D budgets is set aside each year for American startups to develop critical technology. In practice, however, too many large companies—not truly small businesses—drain millions of taxpayer dollars by churning out white papers—white papers—instead of turning the taxpayers' investments into reality.

In the past decade, 25 companies alone in the Pentagon's SBIR Program received 18 percent of the funding. A single company received $650 million—more award dollars than the total issued to all companies in 26 States combined. Even the Pentagon's Defense Innovation Board concluded that the SBIR Program has consistent overinvestment in a small number of companies that fail to deliver scalable capabilities to warfighters, warranting direct corrective action.

In short, our warfighters are not properly benefiting from the billions of dollars being invested into SBIR mills.

Additionally, companies linked to our adversaries funnel taxpayer-funded intellectual property into communist China and beyond.

I have been crystal clear that I cannot support a 1-year clean extension of the SBIR-STTR Programs unless meaningful reforms are included to ensure every dollar serves America's interests.

In just 2023 and 2024, we know that 835 applications for SBIR-STTR funding were flagged for having foreign risks—835. Yet only 303 of those applications were denied.

Even worse, a lack of foreign due diligence standards across government has opened the door for exploitation. Some Agencies denied 100 percent of those flagged applications, while other Agencies denied less than 1 percent of those flagged applications.

When I shared my report with the Pentagon, they agreed that there are significant threats to our national security that must be addressed.

If this program is to be extended, our taxpayers deserve to know that their representatives are, at a minimum, stopping wasteful spending to unproductive firms and implementing urgent safeguards to protect technology from our adversaries. That is why my amendment to H.R. 5100 would provide a 30-day extension of the SBIR and STTR Programs with necessary reforms.

Simply, this measure would, No. 1, root out waste and prioritize our truly small businesses by establishing a reasonable lifetime limit on SBIR funding, which would affect only 0.2 percent of participants in the program and, No. 2, counter Chinese espionage by standardizing the foreign risk definition across our Federal Agencies.

It is common sense, folks. We shouldn't be serving as a subsidy for Beijing when we are unleashing the golden age of America. But that risk is real and present today, and additional taxpayer dollars cannot go out the door unless we secure this program now.

Our country cannot and should not delay these reforms any longer.

If my colleagues truly oppose even basic safeguards, then this SBIR set-aside charade should end and taxpayers' dollars should be restored to the Agency's R&D budgets, where they will better serve our warfighters and strengthen our Nation's competitiveness. Instead of recklessly extending the status quo for another year, these set-aside dollars would simply be returned to each Agency, and small businesses can continue to compete for those awards.

I believe President Trump has assembled a world-class administration that is more than ready to deploy these R&D dollars. Unburdened by additional layers of bureaucracy, Agencies can execute awards to small businesses in line with both the taxpayers' interests and our national security.

I am willing to work with you to find a commonsense solution, one that works for both sides and ultimately the American people; however, as the proposal stands, on behalf of our warfighters, our national security, and our truly small businesses, I cannot let the status quo continue.

Therefore, I ask that the consent be modified and the Ernst substitute amendment at the desk 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. MARKEY. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the substitute amendment offered by the Senator from Iowa.

The SBIR and STTR Programs expire at midnight tonight, separate from everything else that is going on here in the Senate today. The only bipartisan option to avoid the program ending is to pass H.R. 5100 as passed by the House of Representatives already before us. The Republican chairmen in the House have already passed it over to us.

As I said previously, we all have changes to the program we would like to enact, and that is just going to take time. They recognize that over in the House, the Republican chairmen.

We should extend these programs, which we should do on a bipartisan basis, while continuing to work on a bipartisan basis to address the Senator from Iowa's concerns, along with other reforms that other Senators and House Members would like to make.

I object to this amendment because it guarantees a lapse and because it would, No. 1, punish successful, innovative small businesses; No. 2, force small businesses to avoid pursuing the riskier, more cutting-edge ideas that keep American innovation at the forefront—it is the small companies that do the innovation; big companies buy that innovation from small companies, but it is the small companies that do the innovation in our country; and No. 3, prevent Agencies from being able to fund technology that aids their mission if that technology comes from a successful small business. The so-called waiver included in the amendment would only result in party politics as opposed to merit-based competition.

Finally, the wide-sweeping foreign due diligence changes would require Agencies to forgo the flexibility to determine their own risk tolerance. It would also leave the door open for Agencies to deny applications on any grounds they see fit, even if it is not in statute or regulations.

To top it off, this proposal aims to dismantle the entire SBIR and STTR Programs, while only extending authorization for 1 month.

Now is not the time to play games with small businesses and American innovation. We must make sure we do not hand over our crown jewel—American small businesses and decades of American innovation—to our foreign adversaries by allowing this program to end.

So I ask my colleagues here, I ask my colleague from Iowa to join me and the Republican chairs of both the House Small Business and Science Committees to pass the overwhelmingly supported extension for 1 year on a bipartisan basis so we can work out the differences. We should not allow this program to end.

We never cap what big businesses can get from the Federal Government. Their tax benefits are permanent. Their ability to go to the Defense Department or other Agencies with big contracts—that is never capped, and we should not be capping small businesses.

That is why we need to have the discussion, because it is critical that this program continue tomorrow.

So with that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection to the modification is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Our Nation cannot afford to extend another flawed program that fails to meet the innovation challenges of the 21st century.

With China at our heels and wasted taxpayer dollars being funneled out the door, it is clear the status quo does not work or serve our truly small businesses. The moment for action is now, but my colleague wants to shut the door on that and continue with more of the same for another year.

I will keep working to safeguard SBIR-funded technologies from our adversaries and ensure we invest in the best and brightest small businesses so America maintains our technological advantage; however, continuing the status quo is not a solution I can support.

Without my amendment, on behalf of our warfighters, our national security, and our hard-working taxpayers, I therefore object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Iowa.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, the same Washington politicians who were whining about DOGE laying off unnecessary bureaucrats just a few months ago are now exposing who is and who isn't an essential employee by forcing a government shutdown.

In the past, nonessential employees were sent home and then eventually paid for not working during a shutdown. This is an absolute waste of taxpayer dollars.

With Democrats blocking passage of the bill to keep the government open, thousands of nonessential employees could be furloughed indefinitely when funding expires tonight at midnight. Instead of paying these bureaucrats for not working, the Trump administration may eliminate many of these nonessential positions altogether.

Of course, our brave men and women in uniform will continue answering the call to duty without pay if there is a shutdown, as will other essential employees. But do you know who will still get paid? The politicians who failed to do their jobs and caused the shutdown; namely, Senator SCHUMER and the Democrats in Congress.

Keep in mind, the bill they are blocking would keep the government funded at Biden's budget levels—go figure—while we continue working out our differences. Senator SCHUMER himself stated earlier this year:

No reasonable Member on either side, Democrat or Republican, wants a government shutdown. Both sides recognize that a government shutdown would mean crushing delays to veterans programs; nutrition programs for women, infants, and children; delayed benefits for our military; and so much more.

Senator SCHUMER went on to say only extremists who can't win an argument are willing to shut down the government to bully everyone else into submission, and, folks, that is exactly what is happening now. But, ironically, it is Senator SCHUMER who is being bullied by the extremists within his own party. These are the radical socialists demanding we defund the police and ICE and allow our streets and borders to, once again, be overcome by chaos and lawlessness.

Senator SCHUMER previously shut down the government for over a month in a failed attempt to stop President Trump from securing our southern border. During that time, food safety inspections were stopped, permanent damage was done to some of our national parks, scientific research was put on hold, applications for small business loans became backlogged, the low-income folks and the elderly and people with disabilities lost rental assistance and were forced to live in fear of eviction. And 300,000 Federal employees who went without a paycheck for over a month were eventually paid for doing nothing, costing taxpayers $3 billion.

Folks, no one wins when Democrats shut down our government. It is obvious the Democratic leader is shutting down the government for one simple reason: to protect his own job. But that is not even working. Just last week, the Washington newspaper POLITICO reported that, across the country, the Democratic base is rebelling against Schumer's ''rudderless leadership.''

Well, folks, that is a sentiment we all share. From the far left to the right, there is widespread disappointment with Senator SCHUMER's inability to perform his basic duties, like doing his part to make sure our military gets paid on time and the government stays open.

So on behalf of all Americans, for his rudderless leadership, his petty partisanship, and his silly shutdown shenanigans, the recipient of the ''Nonessential Government Employee of the Year for 2025'' is Senator CHUCK SCHUMER.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

ANNIVERSARY OF ROUTE 91 HARVEST FESTIVAL SHOOTING

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, for the residents of southern Nevada and so many others, October 1 is no ordinary day. On October 1, 2017, my hometown of Las Vegas was struck by an unimaginable tragedy that forever—forever—changed our communities. We experienced an attack on a scale far worse than anyone could ever have imagined, a devastating tragedy that ripped families apart and destroyed lives.

During any given weekend, the Las Vegas Strip is buzzing with tourists and visitors from around the world, and that was the case on October 1, 2017. That night, tens of thousands of people came to Las Vegas to attend the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival, enjoy a fun night out with friends and good music. The weather was beautiful. But in just 10 minutes—10 minutes—their lives and our entire State would be changed forever. Ten minutes was all it took for a gunman to open fire on an unsuspecting crowd, killing 58 innocent people, injuring thousands, and leaving a permanent scar on the hearts of everyone in our State and on the hearts of the families and friends of those injured and killed.

In the years since, we have lost two more individuals as a result of this tragedy, which remains the deadliest mass shooting in American history. So I want you to think about what that means. The families of the victims of that tragedy had their world shattered in just 10 minutes—10 minutes that day that changed their lives forever—families who now don't get to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, holidays; families, and I think this is one of the hardest things, who never got to say goodbye to the people they love.

And that night also changed the lives of everyone in our city: people who were attending or working at the festival, Nevadans who were just driving down the Strip, and the first responders who ran toward danger to help save lives.

In the chaos and confusion of that night, our heroic first responders, our police officers, our firefighters, and our paramedics ran toward the scene. They saved countless lives. I know taxi drivers ran; everyone ran to try to help people escape. And in the midst of this darkness, we saw our community—my community—go above and beyond to help.

Our entire State rallied together. We saw lines of people around entire blocks, waiting hours to donate blood, willing to donate blood to save the lives of complete strangers in the middle of a mass casualty.

I remember that day going to the line to talk to people and try to comfort folks in the midst of those first few days. There was a woman in line to give blood, and I went up, and I talked to her. She started crying. She put her arms like this. She goes: I don't have much but blood; blood is all I have to give, and I am here.

She started crying. I started crying. It was such a moving moment. She goes: This is what I can give—her arms outstretched.

And so I want everyone to think about that; that the hearts of so many, in a tragedy, go out to those they don't even know, to do what they can and give what they can, coming from the heart. And these selfless acts of not just this woman—this is just one story of so many that I was proud to hear and be a part of—this showed the country why we are Vegas Strong. And I am here today to honor the memories of those whom we lost as a result of that terrible night on 1 October and everyone else who was impacted. As we remember and reflect on this event, we must also commit ourselves to action to make sure that no other community in the Nation goes through what we went through.

In the last few years, we have, so sadly, seen shootings at universities—including UNLV in Las Vegas—in schools, in places where people go every day, like supermarkets and churches. We saw that just this weekend. And just this year alone, there have already been 53 school shootings in the United States.

So it is clear we need to act, and there are things we can do on a bipartisan basis. The 1 October shooter relied on bump stocks. They are just dangerous devices that attach to guns to make them fire bullets even faster so that a shooter can fire more bullets in a shorter period of time in order to inflict as much pain and carnage as possible.

And I hope we could agree that nobody wants that—no one wants that.

In response to this unprecedented tragedy in 2017, President Trump issued a Federal rule that banned bump stocks, and it did help save countless lives from these deadly modifications. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court overturned this commonsense Federal ban, allowing these dangerous bump stocks to flow into our streets once again.

This puts more lives and communities at risk, which is why I helped introduce bipartisan legislation earlier this year to restore this commonsense Federal ban on bump stocks because we have the power to do something. So let's pass this bipartisan bill and save lives before the next tragedy hits another unsuspecting community because, trust me, nobody wants to go through this—no community. Nobody wants to give this speech. Nobody wants to look in the eyes of the families. No one wants to go to that reunification center. No one wants to go to the hospitals. No one wants to see the memorials grow and grow, time after time. No one wants to see this in community after community every single day. There has to be some common sense about what we can do.

So, as we approach the eighth anniversary of the 1 October shooting, I would just ask all of my colleagues in this Chamber to remember and honor the memories of the victims, their families, their loved ones, and everyone whose lives were forever changed that night. I also ask that we come together as Republicans and Democrats, in a bipartisan way, just to save lives by passing our commonsense bill to ban bump stocks. I think it would make a difference.

And I just pray that those out there watching find comfort in remembering that their loved ones' memories serve as a blessing to them and that we will always continue to honor them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GLOBAL MARKETS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, for a long time, the United States has benefited from free and competitive global markets.

For too long, we have relied on conventional wisdom that engaging with China—in particular, the Chinese Communist Party—by bringing them into the global marketplace would be mutually beneficial. But it has become increasingly obvious and as plain as the nose on our face now that China's primary interest in that so-called free market is to use it to undermine our interests and to further their own.

I am grateful to President Trump for ringing the alarm bells on China and for helping us reframe the way we look at the People's Republic of China.

We need to be clear-eyed about exactly what is going on. China is not interested in a level playing field where both parties benefit from a bit of friendly competition. The People's Republic of China is treating competition in the global markets as a zero-sum game where they win and the West loses.

Nowhere has this become more apparent than in the case of critical minerals and rare earth elements. I doubt many of us have given a lot of thought, at least in the years past, about the role of rare earth elements and critical minerals, but now we have become educated way too late about the importance of these two elements.

There are two ways that a competitive market economy can be undermined. One is excessive government regulation making it harder for more competitors to enter a market. This makes it more difficult for newer, smaller entrepreneurs to get off the ground. But another way for a competitive market to be threatened is when one seller has a monopoly on a particular good or service.

When a single provider of a service or good gets so big that they are the only game in town, then they get to set the terms. A monopoly can ask whatever price they demand because there is no one competing with them for a cheaper or better version.

This is precisely what China is doing with respect to mining and processing rare earth and other critical minerals, but the People's Republic of China takes it one step further: They are actively sabotaging their competitors, including the United States.

For a long time, up until the 1980s, the United States dominated the industry for rare earth elements, but then

China decided to begin rapidly subsidizing their own rare earth industry.

China benefits from some unfortunate advantages in this competition. They have lower labor costs because they are less concerned than we are in the United States about ensuring that workers are paid fairly and kept safe. We know China has lower environmental standards than we do here in the United States, which further makes it more difficult for the United States to compete against them. The third and most critical advantage that China has over the United States in this field is that their government recognized the importance of these critical minerals a long time ago and was willing to put generous government subsidies in place to launch their industry, while somehow we were lulled into complacency and failed to realize our dependence on China and their processing of critical minerals and rare earth elements.

Now, people may be asking: Why do we care about critical minerals and rare earth elements? Well the truth is, these elements are essential to producing magnets and other components of our vehicles, our robotics, our aerospace, and our defense systems. We can't build our weapons systems to defend our Nation and to deter aggressors without access to these processed rare earth elements and critical minerals. That is how important it is.

But China has been successfully sidelining the United States and other global competitors, becoming effectively the only game in town—or I should say in the world—when it comes to mining and processing these minerals.

Whether we realize it or not, there is hardly an aspect of our daily life that would not be affected were China to cut off our access to these processed rare earth elements and critical minerals—from our iPhones to the cars we drive and even our washing machines.

Because China recognized how important these minerals are, their government was willing to take extraordinary measures to make sure they control the supply chain for these critical minerals in the future.

What are these extraordinary measures they have taken? Well, over the last 20 years, China has invested $57 billion through state-backed financial institutions in the form of loans to Belt-and-Road participant countries in order to gain leverage over the global supply chain for these critical minerals.

More than 75 percent of these investments are structured through joint ventures and special-purpose vehicles in such a way that Chinese entities have ownership stakes, allowing them to influence the extraction and processing of these critical mineral projects.

More forebodingly, last December, China took steps to ban exports of technologies used in mining and processing rare earth elements in order to exert further control over the supply chain and enhance its leverage when dealing with the United States in various binational negotiations.

In April of this year, China placed export controls on seven rare earth elements, requiring any company that wishes to export them to acquire a special license, and if they didn't, obviously, it would be illegal. While the terms and conditions of the licensing process are still being spelled out in more detail, this may become the tool to incentivize various countries to act in Chinese interests to protect their own access to these minerals. In other words, it is not just the United States that depends on these rare earth elements and critical minerals; it is virtually every other part of the global community.

When China sees likely competitors, it floods the market with excess supply of these minerals, lowering the market price and thereby sidelining any potential competitors.

Now, just to be clear, rare earth elements and critical minerals can be mined in many places across the globe. Where China has gotten the monopoly or virtual monopoly is 90 percent of them are processed in China. So you may mine rare earth elements or critical minerals in Chile or in the United States or Australia or somewhere else, but 90 percent of them must be processed in China because there are not other competitors for the reasons I have mentioned.

Because China would stop at nothing to manipulate the market, prices have dropped dramatically when they flood the market with processed minerals. Since 2023, for example, cobalt prices decreased 59.5 percent, from $82,000 per ton to $33,000 per ton—again, because China has been manipulating the market to discourage any competition. Nickel prices decreased by 73.1 percent, from $48,000 per ton to $13,000 per ton. Lithium prices decreased 86.8 percent, from $68,000 to less than $10,000.

Consequently, several plants that were designed to open up in the United States to compete with China had to close because of their inability to maintain profitability in this economic environment. The United States' only cobalt mine opened in 2023 and was forced to close less than a year later, while nickel plants in Australia and New Caledonia shut down in the same timeframe.

While these competitors have closed their doors, Chinese firms have continued to hold on to their state-sponsored monopoly. China has been taking these steps for decades right beneath our nose to develop this near monopoly that they currently hold on mining and processing of critical elements.

As the United States, we should have seen this coming, and we could have done something about it, but we didn't. Joe Biden could have spent the last 4 years in the White House tackling this issue head on, but here we are with virtually nothing to show for the Biden administration's so-called efforts. So we are playing catch-up with the Chinese Communist Party, which is not a good place to be.

If another pandemic were to happen, disrupting global supply chains, or if we were to find ourselves in a hot war with China or even difficult trade negotiations with China, which we will, and they decide to cut off trade with the United States, there would be drastic consequences to our economy, to our military preparedness, and to our ability to deter an aggressive Chinese Communist Party.

Americans would not be able to purchase the electronics that power our lives day in and day out. Our Department of Defense—or Department of War, as it is now called—would be hamstrung in its ability to obtain critical components for the weapons systems that are used to deter aggression by our adversaries. Elderly or chronically ill Americans would be unable to obtain the pharmaceutical remedies they rely on to simply stay alive.

Well, fortunately, while we are late to the game, things are moving now in a better direction under unified Republican control. In March of this year, for example, President Trump issued an Executive order directing the Departments of the Interior, Defense—or now, as it is called, War—Agriculture, and Energy to work together to accelerate domestic investment and production of critical minerals.

Congress also did some things in the One Big Beautiful Bill to help. That legislation included an allocation of $2 billion to the Secretary of War to increase U.S. critical minerals stockpiled through the National Defense Stockpile Transaction Fund, and an additional $5 billion was provided for investments in critical minerals through the Industrial Base Fund.

Furthermore, this law tightened our definition of a ''foreign entity of concern,'' which will help ensure that Chinese critical mineral companies are not availing themselves of U.S. tax credits in order to invest in their own critical mineral efforts.

There are ongoing discussions to ensure that the Defense authorization bill we are currently on includes provisions such as the reauthorization of the Development Finance Corporation that our colleagues Senators RISCH and SHAHEEN have sponsored this year. We need to make sure they are successful in those efforts.

The Development Finance Corporation works to incentivize private capital markets to invest in our most critical supply chains.

I have introduced something called the Critical Minerals Security Act, which directs the Department of the Interior and Department of State to further identify vulnerabilities in U.S. supply chains for critical minerals.

Now, I believe these are important steps, but we have a bigger problem in America. We simply have a hard time building things anymore. A lot of that

has to do with overregulation, problems with gaining the appropriate permits, and the litigation environment, which means that any sort of critical infrastructure is probably going to be delayed years, maybe decades, from endless lawsuits.

That is a larger, more threatening situation, and I am only talking about a small part of it here today.

The steps we have taken so far are unfortunately too little, too late, in my view, but they are at least a step in the right direction. They are not enough, by themselves, to ensure that we have safe and secure supply chains for both mining and processing of critical minerals to meet our Nation's needs.

Once again, Deng Xiaoping, who said, ''Hide your motives and bide your time,'' has successfully snookered the United States and our other allies around the world so that we are now almost entirely dependent on Chinese processing of critical minerals.

So there is not a day to wait. We need to make sure that we catch up and we catch up quickly. It is going to take a lot of work for the United States to claw our way back to where we need to be, but I am confident that we can, if we rise to meet the occasion.

So I would urge all of my colleagues to listen to and respond to this alarm bell that I am trying to ring here on the Senate floor today and take seriously the urgency of securing our supply chains and securing American processing facilities for critical minerals.

We simply do not have a choice. Otherwise, we will continue to be held hostage by an adversary that does not wish us well. They don't want friendly competition. They want dominance, and they also want to take Taiwan in the coming years.

If we can't build things because we can't deter them by building the weapons necessary to do that, if we can't sustain our economy by continuing to manufacture technology that allows us to compete with China in the coming years, we will have failed in our fundamental responsibility as Members of Congress. If America is to have a safe, secure, and prosperous future, we have to compete and we have to win the critical minerals race with the People's Republic of China.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled recess begin immediately.

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:18 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. MOODY).

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1377

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, in just a few hours, the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act is set to expire. If we don't extend these critical authorities, we will lose one of our most effective defenses against cyber attacks as our adversaries' attacks continue to grow more aggressive and more sophisticated.

This law has protected our economy; it has protected our infrastructure; and it has protected our government for more than a decade. It allows private companies and Federal Agencies to share real-time threat information before attacks spread, before systems are compromised, and before damage becomes irreversible. If this law expires, it will be harder to protect businesses and critical infrastructure against cyber attacks, and cyber criminals and our adversaries will be emboldened to continue to try to breach our defenses.

The original law was passed with a strong bipartisan support, and there is bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate to renew these protections for another 10 years. Even the Trump administration fully agrees and the White House and the Department of Homeland Security support this 10-year extension.

A broad coalition of industry leaders are asking for Congress to act quickly to pass a long-term extension, which provides businesses with the certainty they need to know these protections will be available to them for years to come.

That is why Senator ROUNDS and I introduced a clean, bipartisan 10-year extension in April, with strong support from stakeholders who are absolutely counting on these protections. It is time to pass this bill today; otherwise, we will lose our networks, our businesses, our economy, and we will leave them exposed, vulnerable, and defenseless. We need to pass this legislation.

I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 1377 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object, there is nothing better in politics than to fake outrage. ''I am so outraged my program is going to go away.'' But you can vote this afternoon at 5 o'clock to extend your program.

Instead of all the hot air, why don't you come to the floor and tell us you are actually going to vote to keep the government open and your program will be extended. You have a chance. Let's see how you vote this afternoon.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. I want to be clear. This is a voluntary program that businesses across the country have been able to count on for 10 years. These same companies are urging us to extend the exact same protections for another 10 years.

These cyber security protections keep our country safe. They have stopped cyber attacks that could have exposed America's private data, compromised businesses and our economy, or even taken over critical infrastructure like our electric grid and our transportation systems.

Countless businesses in every industry across the country depend on these protections. Telling them they could be eliminated again in just 2 months with a short-term CR does not give them the certainty they need to work. This is why they want the 10-year extension.

The Federal Government needs to help them prevent catastrophic attacks. We have broad bipartisan consensus, not for just a couple of months—that doesn't help anybody—but broad bipartisan consensus, including support, again, from the Trump administration, which fully supports this, to extend these authorities for the next 10 years. That will ensure that every industry in America can continue to count on these protections to be available.

If my colleague doesn't support a clean authorization—he is chair of the committee—he should have initiated a bipartisan process. He should have, perhaps, convened hearings like a chairman normally would if they actually care about an issue. The committee should have had a chance to hear from key industry stakeholders. The committee could have heard directly from officials from President Trump's White House and President Trump's Department of Homeland Security. They would tell them, as they have told everyone, that they need to pass a 10-year extension—not a couple of months, a 10-year extension—but that hasn't happened in our committee.

But if my colleague is not interested in meaningful compromise or working across the aisle on legislation in his committee's jurisdiction that is absolutely essential, then I would ask that he at least—at least—stop standing in the way of the rest of the entire U.S. Senate and broad bipartisan support in the House and pass a clean 10-year extension of this proven law.

I cannot predict the ways in which cyber criminals and adversaries will try to take advantage of this situation if we can't extend these authorities. At this moment, let's be very clear, there is only one person—one person—standing in the way. I am certainly willing to work with my colleague on his concerns about free speech. He would not