

The CFPB has done an extraordinary job ending predatory practices and returning funds to ordinary working families. If you want working families to fail, then allow predatory products. If you want them to succeed, if you have a vision for America that involves the success of families, then let's end these financial wealth-stripping predatory practices. That means the CFPB has to be able to do its job. So it would be 100 percent the wrong direction to put these policy riders in the dark of night to dismantle the Dodd-Frank protections on these spending bills.

The Senate Democratic caucus is going to keep fighting for our American families. We are going to keep fighting for our American consumers. We are going to keep fighting for the success of individuals across this country and to ensure that the Wall Street casino stays closed.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, 3 short weeks ago, many of us, many of my colleagues enthusiastically welcomed the budget agreement reached between the White House and congressional leaders of both parties. It was a budget agreement that put aside the short-term shutdown politics and gave us the opportunity to finally give American families and businesses the longer term economic certainty they need and deserve. It was a budget agreement that made balanced increases in both defense and nondefense discretionary spending—increases that were fully paid for. It was a budget agreement that was negotiated in good faith by Republican and Democratic leadership and the White House. It was a preview of what we might be able to accomplish if we put the politics of the moment, the partisan politics of the 2016 campaign, and other issues aside and actually focus on getting some things done.

Barely 3 weeks later, barely 3 weeks since bipartisan majorities approved the agreement in both letter and spirit, here we are again staring down a potential government shutdown we all thought we had avoided because there was some insistence here—some colleagues who are insisting on poisoning the appropriations bills with policy riders which they know are opposed and which would undermine the ability of the Federal Government to function.

Let's be clear. The policy riders we are discussing, the policy riders I am objecting to don't represent a good-faith policy debate. These are predominantly partisan political priorities that

Republicans are otherwise unwilling to bring to the floor of this Chamber because they know they aren't popular with the American people. For example, in my view, we shouldn't be using the appropriations process to try to dismantle or sideline the Environmental Protection Agency and put clean air, clean water, and climate action at risk. If the majority chooses to make divesting cuts to Planned Parenthood, which more than 8,000 residents of my home State of Delaware rely on for health care and family planning, I think my colleagues should bring it to the floor in a separate bill so the American people know that is the focus of the legislation.

I join my colleagues today to make it clear that we are not going to use the appropriations process to pass narrow ideological riders that would not otherwise have been considered on this floor and have not made it through the appropriate process.

As the ranking member of the Appropriations financial services subcommittee, I want to be clear that it is particularly unacceptable to me to use the appropriations process to roll back many of the critical Wall Street reforms put in place over 5 years ago in response to the financial crisis that was devastating to the economy, to families, and to businesses throughout Delaware and the country. If the majority wants to bring a bill to the floor that rolls back some of the key consumer protections put in place in the Dodd-Frank bill, then let's have that debate. Frankly, it is a debate we at times have been engaged in on large- and small-scale issues.

The problem for my colleagues is that they don't have enough support in the Senate to pass these changes in a stand-alone bill. That is why they have taken the troubling step of jamming a 200-page bill—an entire banking bill loaded with controversial riders—right into a must-pass, last-minute government funding bill.

I ask my colleagues—it is my hope and my expectation that many of my Republican colleagues would say that I give honest and thorough consideration to new policy proposals, even ones I am disinclined to agree with. I am open to discussing ways to improve existing reforms so we don't unfairly burden, for example, small community banks that weren't responsible for the financial crisis. No legislation is perfect, but compromising and improving is what authorizing bills and policymaking bills are all about. But the examples I referenced are a few of many areas that should not be jammed into an appropriations bill at the last minute without being fully and carefully vetted by the authorizing committee.

It would be difficult for me today to address all the different policy riders that are in the various pieces of the appropriations bills currently under consideration. They range from education, to health, labor, natural resources, environment, civil rights, justice, hous-

ing, immigration, voting rights, telecommunications, to name just a few.

Our budgets—how we spend the taxpayers' dollars—are a reflection of our priorities. But there is a substantial difference between using the appropriations process to support a specific program, department, or Federal activity and using it to sneak around the legislative process and to jam new, big changes into last-minute appropriations bills.

Instead of manufacturing another crisis here in the days ahead, instead of having to look over the cliff of a government shutdown, let's get back to regular order, fulfill our responsibility to responsibly fund the government, and separately engage in positive discussions about how we can make the policy changes we need to ensure that our economy is competitive, that our country is innovative, and that our society continues to benefit from the work we all do here together.

PAUL RYAN has barely had time to set up his new office and settle into his new role and we are already back in crisis mode, walking back an agreement that, as I said at the outset, a majority of this Congress supported and a majority of America cheered.

I urge my colleagues to put the middle class and the stability and future of our economy ahead of partisan politics. Let's negotiate a clean and honest, a clear omnibus spending bill that is free of poison pill policy riders that only serve to divide this body and to unite special interests who at times work against us.

With that, I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AQUADVANTAGE SALMON

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this afternoon to speak on an energy-related topic—one that I think the Presiding Officer and many will have interest in—and that is the issue of innovation within the energy sector.

Before I speak on energy, I wish to bring up an issue that has come about today with the announcement coming out of the Food and Drug Administration that they have approved an application for what they have called AquAdvantage salmon.

This is actually quite disturbing news to any of us who care about our wild species of salmon, our healthy wild stocks, and who are proponents of good amounts of fresh seafood in our diets, knowing that nutritionally it is a pretty extraordinary source of omega-3 fatty acids and good-for-you nutrients.