

Whereas many African Americans lived, toiled, and died in obscurity, never achieving the recognition they deserved, and yet paved the way for future generations to succeed;

Whereas African Americans continue to serve the United States at the highest levels of government and military;

Whereas the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass inspired the creation of Negro History Week, the precursor to Black History Month;

Whereas Black History Week represented the culmination of the efforts of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the "Father of Black History", to enhance knowledge of Black history through the Journal of Negro History, published by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, which was founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson and Jesse E. Moorland;

Whereas Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, dates back to 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson set aside a special period in February to recognize the heritage and achievement of Black people of the United States;

Whereas Dr. Carter G. Woodson stated: "We have a wonderful history behind us. . . . If you are unable to demonstrate to the world that you have this record, the world will say to you, 'You are not worthy to enjoy the blessings of democracy or anything else.'";

Whereas since the founding of the United States, the country imperfectly progressed towards noble goals; and

Whereas the history of the United States is the story of people regularly affirming high ideals, striving to reach such ideals but often failing, and then struggling to come to terms with the disappointment of such failure, before committing to trying again: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges that all people of the United States are the recipients of the wealth of history provided by Black culture;

(2) recognizes the importance of Black History Month as an opportunity to reflect on the complex history of the United States, while remaining hopeful and confident about the path ahead;

(3) acknowledges the significance of Black History Month as an important opportunity to recognize the tremendous contributions of African Americans to the history of the United States;

(4) encourages the celebration of Black History Month to provide a continuing opportunity for all people in the United States to learn from the past and understand the experiences that have shaped the United States; and

(5) agrees that, while the United States began as a divided nation, the United States must—

(A) honor the contribution of all pioneers in the United States who have helped to ensure the legacy of the great United States; and

(B) move forward with purpose, united tirelessly as "one Nation . . . indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 534

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 534) to prohibit funds from being used to carry out certain Executive actions

related to immigration and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 535

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 535) to promote energy efficiency.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 24; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the first hour be equally divided, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half. I further ask that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators MERKLEY and COONS for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this evening to speak about the impending shutdown this week of the Federal Department of Homeland Security. At a time when the folks I hear from in Delaware, and I suspect what all of the Members in this Chamber are hearing, as we return from a week spent in our home States, are concerns about our national security.

Whether it is the heinous acts of ISIS abroad, or the real threats of the weather and recent weather-related events here at home, a central concern all of us should share in the Senate here tonight is about keeping our country and our constituents safe. Yet shutting down the whole Department of Homeland Security later this week would show a reckless disregard for our national security by the Republican leader and some of the hard-line conservatives who are, sadly, setting this agenda.

In my view, we do not need to be here. The Democrats and Republicans working together on the Appropriations Committee negotiated a strong bipartisan Homeland Security funding bill months ago. It is a bill that if it got a vote before the full Senate would absolutely pass. It makes wide, needed, broad investments in strengthening all sorts of different organs of our government at the Federal, State, and local level that strengthen our homeland security.

Instead, the other party has insisted on attaching political provisions to the bill that would overturn the President's Executive action on immigration. I know I do not need to remind the Presiding Officer or any of our colleagues that we have already debated and passed comprehensive immigration reform in this Chamber which, if taken up by the House, would have made the President's action completely unnecessary.

I think we all agree that congressional action is the preferred path toward fixing our broken immigration system. If that is what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are really concerned about, then I am eager to discuss how we can fix our badly broken immigration system in a bipartisan manner by the preferred path of congressional action rather than Executive action.

But I think we should separate that debate over immigration and what is the right path toward a resolution of our broken system from a discussion about responsibly and sustainably funding our Department of Homeland Security. If we fail to fund Homeland

Security, it would have damaging consequences to our economy, to the security of our communities, and to our reputation around the world. At this time of heightened concern about our cohesion, about our unity, and about our security as a country, failing to fund the Federal Department of Homeland Security I think sends the worst possible message to our allies around the world about our capacity as a mature democracy of reaching responsible resolutions on difficult and divisive issues.

If the Department of Homeland Security shuts down this week, tens of thousands of its staff would be furloughed without pay. They include the FEMA disaster and preparedness staff, the very personnel who check the immigration status of new employees through E-Verify, critical security intelligence analysts, and the folks who run the domestic nuclear detection offices, just to name a few.

The list of these tens of thousands of Homeland Security employees and the vital functions they perform would take longer than the evening could take.

My own State of Delaware has the lowest mean elevation in the country. That means we are a really low-lying State. We are incredibly vulnerable to storms and to flooding, and we simply can't afford to have FEMA's staff suspended, furloughed, laid off.

Whether we shut down or just have a short-term funding bill, funding for Homeland Security grants can't go out. Some of the folks who watch this debate in the week ahead will have difficulty discerning between folks on my side who will advocate for a so-called clean bill and others who will advocate for a CR. This is where the difference really is: in the areas of grants for State and local emergency preparedness—the difference between actually moving forward the bipartisan bill that was worked through the Appropriations Committee in the last Congress and simply continuing by continuing resolution the previous year's authorization. That difference is \$1.5 billion for State and local emergency management all over this country.

In my community, which is part of the Greater Philadelphia area, we are about to welcome the Pope. Something like 2 million people are expected in the Greater Philadelphia area as we welcome His Holiness to Philadelphia for the first time in a long time.

I have heard from State and local law enforcement, first responders, emergency managers, and planners that they are counting on some of the grants from FEMA that are currently on hold, while they wait to discover the outcome of this week's debates, to prepare for that important, very large event. In my own home community, there are volunteer fire companies which even now are working on submitting grants. The SAFER Act and the fire grants act have become an important part of making sure that our local volunteer fire companies have the equipment they need, the training they need to keep our communities safe.

In Delaware the overwhelming majority of the crash response, the fire education, and the fire suppression are done by volunteer fire companies, which often have badly outdated equipment and insufficient funding. To sustain their training and their personnel, they need the grants that have been made available through FEMA and through the Department of Homeland Security over the last decade to upgrade and update their equipment, their materials, and their training. They have been vitally important. They have made a big difference in the fire service in my home State. There are grants to police departments that help ensure they have the tools, the training, and the equipment to be part of emergency preparedness and to keep our communities safe.

If we shut down the Department of Homeland Security, 130,000 other DHS workers will be compelled to remain at work but without pay. I think the idea that there are Americans who work to keep us safe at the border, at our airports, on our coasts and that we don't value them enough to ensure they will receive their pay for a hard day's work just goes against the grain of what we stand for as a country.

So are my colleagues really willing to send a message to everyone at Homeland Security that their work isn't important enough to our Nation to ensure that they can provide for their family? That is the message if the Department of Homeland Security shuts down. It hurts families, it hurts morale, it hurts our preparedness, and it hurts our safety.

I wish to say, as someone who is privileged to serve on the Foreign Relations Committee and regularly gets the chance to meet with and talk with leaders from around the world, it sends the message that our democracy isn't up to the task.

I know this isn't what my Republican friends want to do, and I urge us to come together and work in a way that will end this era of politics by crisis once and for all—no more shutdowns, no more manufactured crises, and no more demonstrating that we are better at stopping progress than at enacting progress.

Democrats are ready to work together with Republicans to pass a bipartisan, bicameral bill that we all know we can pass and that will fund the Department of Homeland Security and keep our country safe. I hope that after we—this afternoon—voted down for the fourth time a bill that seeks to repeal the President's actions on immigration, we can put aside that partisan issue and come together to find a bipartisan solution to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

We already know what that solution looks like. We just need to come together and give it a vote. In my view, this is too important to trivialize as part of the ongoing posturing and partisan games that for so long have dominated this Chamber.

I urge my colleagues to work with us. Fund Homeland Security and then let's

talk meaningfully in this Congress about how we can fix our broken immigration system together.

I know we are all eager to continue that conversation. First, we need to solve this challenge and make sure that our communities, our States, and our country are safe.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise tonight to urge Congress to quit playing political games with our national security. It is time to have a clean Homeland Security funding bill on the floor of the Senate to be debated.

We are only days away from a potential shutdown of the Homeland Security Department, and it is very clear that the reason is that Members of the House on Capitol Hill have decided they want to make a clear statement about certain policy statements. They want to have a policy rider that says young children who came to this country and know no other country need to be prioritized for deportation. Why? Well, I think that is just wrong.

But if Members of this body want to put that into a bill and want to put that on the floor of the House and want to put it on the floor of the Senate, I am quite ready to have that debate.

Yet another policy rider says that the President must no longer prioritize the deportation of those with criminal backgrounds. Now, I happen to think we should prioritize deportation of any individuals who have conducted criminal acts. If some of my colleagues want to have that policy debate, I am fine with that. Put it in a bill, bring it to the floor of the Senate, and let us have that debate. A vote will then be very clearly on that specific policy and people can have some accountability. The American people will have some transparency about what is being voted on. But do not put these policy riders into the middle of the funding bill and work to shut down Homeland Security. That is no way to run a country.

We live in a dangerous world. We lack for many things, but one thing we don't lack is security threats. It was less than 2 years ago that terrorists attacked us at the Boston Marathon. It was just weeks ago that we saw a horrific series of terrorist attacks on our friends in Paris. ISIL is a fierce and growing threat determined to wreak havoc. It is exactly at a time such as this that we should be working together on a bipartisan basis to fund and strengthen Homeland Security, not playing political games with the Nation's security, but here we are.

Is it more important, I ask my colleagues, to have a debate about deporting DREAMers than it is to protect Americans against terrorist threats? If someone feels it is more important, not only do I feel they are wrong, but I invite them to have that debate. Put that into a separate policy bill and have the courage to put it on the floor of the Senate as a separate policy bill. Do not compromise our national security by trying to shut down Homeland Security.

This is a misguided strategy, and the resulting fallout isn't just to national security. There are FEMA grants to disaster-stricken areas that will be stopped, local fire departments will be hampered, and thousands of essential public servants from Homeland Security to FEMA, to our terrific men and women in the Coast Guard will be forced to work without pay.

Just last week I visited a Coast Guard installation in Newport, OR. It is an installation that has advanced rescue helicopters. They have five helicopters that work in rotation to make sure one is in the Newport area and a second ready to back it up if it has troubles.

This is a port that has so much sea traffic. It is a deepwater port. It has commercial fishing, it has sports fishing, it has tourists who play on the rocks of the beach and get trapped by the tide, and it has recreational swimmers who get swept out by riptides. There is every kind of possible ocean-front disaster one could look for and so that rescue helicopter is very important.

One of the young men I was speaking to is a rescue swimmer, an extraordinary individual who does some of the scariest, most courageous work in the world. These folks are not paid very much. They have bills to meet, similar to all the rest of us. Is this any way to run a country, to say you have to keep

coming to work, but we are not going to send you a paycheck? To say to the thousands and thousands of young Americans who are working for our country in national security, "you are so important that you have to come to work whether or not we pay you," is just wrong—wrong that we should be so disorganized, so partisan as to compromise our national security.

Our folks who work in national security will be asked to continue working. They work in dangerous conditions that many of us could hardly imagine. They make sure our safety is improved. At a minimum, can't we just have a debate on the funding bill without these political games? They do their work and they feel a sense of duty. Let's have a sense of duty in doing our work. Let's put the Homeland Security appropriations bill on this floor and let's do so without partisan political riders. That game does no honor to our Nation nor to this institution. The public's opinion of this Chamber has fallen due to exactly these types of games. So let's end them.

There is bipartisan support for ending these types of political theatrics. One of my colleagues from Arizona said, "To attempt to use a spending bill in order to poke a finger in the President's eye is not a good move in my view."

My colleague from Illinois, who serves across the aisle in this Chamber, said:

The American people are pretty alarmed, as they should be, about security . . . the way to go forward is just fund the DHS. We ought to strip the bill of extraneous issues and make it about homeland security.

That is a sentiment I think virtually every citizen feels at this moment. Let's make it about homeland security. Let's make it about us having the honor to do our duty. Our job on this floor is to consider this appropriations

bill and not to load it down with favorite policy riders and political theatrics.

Every day that goes by puts us closer to this shutdown. There is no logic in careening from crisis to crisis, but some crises come about due to uncontrollable factors. This one is entirely under our control. This one is entirely under the control of the leadership of the House and the leadership of the Senate.

Earlier this evening I was on a phone call with many folks back home who serve in police departments and fire departments, in rural departments, rural emergency departments, and they were relaying the different types of grants they get that are so important to their communities. Some of them are search and rescue, some of them are disaster preparation, some are grants to fund the fire departments, and some for funding personnel. Nobody on the phone could understand why this Chamber is afraid to have a simple budget debate and an appropriations debate, a spending debate. They see no reason to load it down with politics that can be debated in separate policy bills.

So I say to the leadership of this Chamber: Let's get our act together. Put policy into policy bills and let's put the spending bill before this body in a clean fashion and proceed to protect our Nation's security, as we are charged to do.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:18 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, February 24, 2015, at 10 a.m.