

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

We have been trying to get the FDA to make good on their commitment to make sure that pregnant women and nursing mothers know and understand the guidelines out there in terms of what is safe to consume when it comes to fish because, again, when we are looking for that good, nutritious food source, it is pretty tough to beat Mother Nature. Yet, that is exactly what this approval from the FDA is trying to do, which is, effectively, not only trying to beat Mother Nature but messing with Mother Nature.

Again, as one who believes that the real thing is the best thing for our families, the best thing to serve at the dinner table, I find it very troubling. In fact, I am spitting mad today. I have calmed down a lot since I received this news this morning, but I can tell my colleagues that people back home are going to be mad about this for a long time.

For about 5 years now, the FDA has been considering this application for this genetically engineered salmon. Again, they are giving it a pretty nice name, calling it the AquAdvantage, that somehow or another this gives an advantage to the salmon. Well, it does. What it does is allow this genetically engineered fish—I don't even know that I want to call it a fish—this genetically engineered organism to grow twice as fast as any other salmon in the water.

So how does it get to grow twice as fast? Well, it doesn't happen naturally. It is not the way Mother Nature orders it. What they do is they start messing with it. This process, which has now been approved by the FDA, is a process that splices genetic material from a Chinook salmon, a king salmon, and it takes that genetic material and it integrates it with a pout fish and an Atlantic salmon. People might know about an Atlantic salmon, a farmed salmon. What is an ocean pout? Let me show my colleagues what an ocean pout is. An ocean pout is basically this eel-type of bottom fish. Those of my colleagues who know their salmon know about the Chinooks, the sockeyes, and the chums, and they know that this isn't anything close to a salmon, whether it is a wild Alaskan salmon or whether it is a farmed salmon. This is an eel. We are taking a splice from this, and we are taking a splice from an Atlantic salmon, and we are basically splicing this with a Chinook salmon. The resulting organism, this company claims, is going to grow to the size of an Alaskan king salmon in a shorter period of time than that found in nature. Freaky.

We call this combination “Frankenfish” because it is just not right. It is just not right. It disturbs me, quite honestly, that the FDA would sign off on the approval of a genetically engineered animal designed for human consumption. This is the first time ever.

The FDA is saying this is going to be safe: We are going to make sure it is

safe. We are going to make sure that it doesn't interbreed with the wild stocks, and thus perhaps destroy them. We are going to make sure that it doesn't mix with them so that it doesn't transmit disease. We are going to make sure that it is separated so that it doesn't eat up all of the wild sources available for our Alaskan salmon.

They are going to make sure, apparently by doing this, because they are saying that with this approval, these AquAdvantage salmon can only be raised in land-based, contained hatchery tanks in two specific facilities in Canada and in Panama. We should all feel safer, I guess, because it is all going to be in Canada and Panama. There are no other locations under this application in the United States or elsewhere that are authorized to do this. Somehow or other, the FDA says they are going to maintain regulatory oversight over the production and the facilities, and they are going to conduct inspections to confirm that adequate physical containment measures remain in place. They will be working with the Canadian and Panamanian governments to be conducting inspections. Really? Do I feel safer about making sure that our wild and healthy stocks are going to be not infiltrated by the Frankenfish, by these genetically engineered organisms designed for human consumption, designed to grow twice as fast to get to the size of a king salmon, so that a company can derive the benefit of selling more of this fish.

Well, I am saying FDA should never have approved this—never have approved this. The fact is that the Alaska delegation, as well as members of other delegations in this body and on the other side, have pounded their fists for quite some time against this measure through the FDA. They know full well how much we object to it. At 7:55 last night my assistant got an email from the FDA saying that commissioner would like to talk to me about some imminent news. By the time the morning came around, the imminent news was already made public. Alaskans were already aware that this approval from FDA had come forth. It was not only me; it is my understanding that the head of the agriculture appropriations subcommittee—I met with him yesterday—didn't get a heads-up about it. The nominee was before us yesterday in the HELP Committee, and I actually put two questions to him about seafood. There was no heads-up that this was coming our way, just kind of, boom, lay it on the table.

I have to tell my colleagues, we have made no bones about the fact that this is wrong not only for Alaska and our wild stocks, it is wrong for our salmon stocks around the country, and it is something I am going to continue to fight.

I am not sure as we deal with this news today if we can get the FDA to reverse this. I am going to keep working

on it. But at a bare minimum, people around this country need to know what they are serving their families when it comes to seafood. If this is going to be allowed into the markets, if it is going to be allowed on restaurant menus, then it needs to be labeled as such.

The FDA has said there will be draft guidance on voluntary labeling indicating whether food has or has not been derived from GE Atlantic salmon. So, basically, if you want to put a label on that says this is a fake fish, a fake salmon, you can go ahead, but you don't have to. It is only voluntary.

That is not good enough for this mom. That is not good enough for most who care about what their families are eating. So we are going to continue to press for mandatory labeling if the FDA is going to approve—wrongheadedly, in my mind—this genetically engineered fake fish for human consumption. They darn well better agree that labeling will be required because I am not going to eat it.

ENERGY INNOVATION

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, let me switch to a better topic, and that is one I know the Presiding Officer cares a great deal about; that is, the issue of energy and the importance of energy to our Nation's economy and to our overall health.

I have come to this floor many times to highlight what I believe are the shortsighted, anti-energy decisions that we have seen come from this administration. Whether we are talking about the Keystone XL Pipeline, more than 7 years of delay and the eventual rejection of that infrastructure, whether it is the burdensome rules coming out of the EPA that raise the energy costs or whether it is the actions from the Department of Interior that seek to halt resource development in Federal areas, this administration has rarely ever worked with us to promote responsible energy, mineral, and timber development.

In Alaska this ever-shifting Federal regulatory environment played a very key role in the recent decision by Shell to abandon 7 years of work and \$7 billion of investment in the offshore Arctic. It was just this week we received word that another company, looking again at low oil prices but seeing this same deteriorating regulatory environment, decided to follow suit, and they are seeking to return their leases in the offshore.

The Obama administration has also canceled offshore lease sales in the State. It has hamstrung projects in our National Petroleum Reserve, which we absolutely need if we are ever going to refill our Trans-Alaska Pipeline. It has placed half of the National Petroleum Reserve off-limits, even though it was specifically designated for development. Of course we all know the situation in ANWR. This administration is trying to lock away 10 billion barrels of oil in the nonwilderness portion of