

ethos as we continue to reinvigorate the debate and amendment process.

In the weeks and months ahead, new disagreements will surely arise. This is when civility and statesmanship are most needed. We must each overcome whatever instincts may drive us away from civil discourse and toward anger, bitterness, petulance, or self-promotion.

When this new Congress convened just over six weeks ago, I spoke of our collective duty to restore the Senate. I expressed my confidence that we could make the Senate work again by returning to regular order, promoting robust debate, and enabling an inclusive amendment process. We have made admirable progress over the last month. Our actions are backing up our rhetoric. Let us sustain this momentum.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

PRESIDENT'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, this afternoon the Senate voted to approve Dr. Carter's nomination as the next Secretary of Defense. I supported his nomination and appreciated the candor he displayed during both his confirmation hearing and in our private meeting.

I believe the many challenges facing our Nation require a fresh perspective and a strong analytical mind. I am confident Dr. Carter possesses both. Despite the fact the international landscape has changed dramatically over the past few years, the Obama administration has failed to modify its policies to meet the new challenges facing our Nation. In fact, top administration officials have emphasized in recent interviews their approach is not changing and instead offer Americans a laundry list of things they will continue to do. This is unacceptable.

I am very concerned this administration actually believes the correct course of action is to continue what we have been doing. In the Senate, the Armed Services Committee has held a number of hearings to examine the effectiveness of the current U.S. national security strategy.

Witnesses from across the political spectrum have merged on one point. In several key areas, U.S. national security strategy and our regional goals are either ambiguous or divorced from events on the ground. What is needed is a reevaluation, not a continuation.

In Syria, for example, President Obama called on Bashar al-Assad to step down 3 years ago. However, the President has failed to lay out a strat-

egy to accomplish his stated goal. After hundreds of thousands of Syrians have died, terrorist groups have seized control of about half of that country. Further, thanks to assistance provided by Iran and Russia, Assad has fortified his control over much of western Syria.

In response to all of this, President Obama has continued to call for a negotiated transfer of power without any articulation of how this would be accomplished. The President's goal was probably unlikely when it was first conceived, but now it is thoroughly unimaginable.

The Obama administration has also stated the United States intends to degrade and destroy ISIL. While I support this goal, I am concerned we have yet again failed to lay out a strategy to accomplish it.

Yesterday President Obama sent to Congress his authorization of military force. The decision to send young men and women to war is the most serious decision that elected officials will make. This deserves a serious, open, transparent debate that is worthy of the American people. I look forward to a robust committee process on this issue.

I am also eager to hear more from the President about the exact contours of his strategy, particularly when it comes to achieving very clear goals. What exactly do we hope to achieve? Simply stating our objective is to destroy ISIL doesn't reflect the complexities of actually realizing this goal.

The President has waged a campaign of airstrikes against this barbaric terrorist group, but we know airpower alone will not be sufficient to destroy ISIL. While the White House has proposed arming and training Syrian opposition fighters, this effort will take years to produce a force that is strong enough to dislodge ISIL from its strongholds in eastern Syria. What is more, it is unclear how the Syrian fighters—any of whom view Assad as the primary target—will be convinced to first fight ISIL. Questions about the extent to which the United States will provide opposition forces direct air support if they are attacked by ISIL or Assad—those questions remain unanswered. For these reasons, the President has been rightly criticized for not having a clear and effective strategy.

Again, I support the goal of destroying ISIL. But this is a multilayered problem. In Iraq, the administration seems to embrace a growing Iranian role, even though this puts our goal of maintaining a unified Iraq in even greater jeopardy.

With respect to Iran itself, the administration unequivocally states it will not allow that nation to develop a nuclear capability, but we hear reports repeatedly that are suggesting the U.S. negotiators are crafting an agreement that would accept its enrichment program and leave Iran as a threshold nuclear power 1 year away from a bomb, at most.

In Ukraine, the United States imposed sanctions on Russia in March for

its intervention. Since that time, Russia has continued to pour heavy weapons and fighters into that conflict. Clearly our policy is not working. We must acknowledge that as Putin continues to build momentum on the battlefield, the incentive for him to honor his diplomatic commitments and end the conflict diminishes.

Additional measures—including defensive weapons for the Ukrainians—are necessary, and they must be implemented. The international community and most Americans are understandably confused by the stark contrast between what they see and what they hear from the White House. They hear vague assertions, but they see no strategy. They hear a goal, but they see no discussion on how to achieve it. This damages our global credibility.

In a world where we rely heavily on partner nations to be our boots on the ground, we cannot afford to have our international allies wondering if we mean what we say.

Dr. Carter will have a lot on his plate in his new role. I hope his appointment will help encourage the strategic re-evaluation that is so desperately needed.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOKER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Mr. BOOKER pertaining to the introduction of S. 502 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. 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. LEE. Mr. President, I stand before this body this afternoon to encourage my colleagues—particularly my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—to take into account the need to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

The House of Representatives acted responsibly in passing legislation to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, and they did so acting more than 1 month in advance of the scheduled expiration of the existing funding stream for the Department of Homeland Security. This was a good move. It was likewise a good move of

the majority leader to bring up this bill for consideration nearly 1 month before the expiration of the existing funding. I applauded this effort and still do.

One of the reasons it was so important is it would help us avoid the cliff effect. What I mean by that is the dynamic that occurs every time we have a scheduled expiration of funding and the House and the Senate wait until the last minute, sometimes with only 1 or 2 days, sometimes with only 1 or 2 hours to spare before we act.

What this does is effectively shuts out the voices of most Members of the House and most Members of the Senate. It strips us of our right to offer improvements, amendments, to legislation before that legislation has a chance to become law.

Ultimately this enures to the advantage of just a few people, and it results in the effective disenfranchisement of so many people throughout America whose voices don't have an opportunity to be considered through their duly-elected Senators and Representatives.

That is why this time it was going to be different. That is why this time it was so great the House and the Senate acted early in bringing up this legislation.

Nevertheless, it has been 2 weeks since we brought up this bill, the bill passed by the House to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded. Two weeks, and we have cast vote after vote trying to get on the bill—just trying to consider the bill—and we have seen those efforts to get on the bill blocked by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Earlier today I heard colleagues on the other side of the aisle trying to explain their reasons for continuing to block consideration of this bill. I heard arguments that suggested that although they want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, they don't want to consider this bill because, as some of them have put it, they don't like everything the House of Representatives put into the bill. They don't like the provisions in the bill restricting the administration's ability to use those funds to carry out—to implement—the President's Executive orders issued in November of this last year, Executive orders that would have the effect of granting amnesty to millions of people currently inside the United States illegally.

Look, people are entitled to their opinions about how best we should proceed, how best we should deal with those who are currently inside the country illegally. There are a lot of opinions about this, and everyone is entitled to their own opinion. But Americans are overwhelmingly united behind the uncontroversial proposition that when Congress has established a law in a particular area, as it has with our immigration code, in order for that law to be changed, it needs to be changed by congressional action. The House needs to pass it, the Senate

needs to pass it, and the President needs to sign it into law.

As the President has acknowledged repeatedly, he lacks the authority to make those changes on his own. He lacks the authority to act unilaterally. He lacks the authority under our system to behave as if he were a government of one. Ours is not a government of one. In fact, our Founding Fathers, while they disagreed on a number of issues, they were united behind one core principle behind our 227-year-old governing document that has fostered the development of the greatest civilization the world has ever known. They were united behind the proposition that bad things happen when too much power gets consolidated into the hands of the few or, even worse, into the hands of one person.

That is why they put in place this system that would split the powers of government into three coequal branches, and within the legislative branch—which many of them tended to view as wielding potentially the most dangerous power—they split up that power into two bodies and then split up the power within each of those bodies so no one person and no one group of people could accumulate too much power.

They certainly never intended a system in which we would have a virtual monarch, albeit a monarch serving for a term of years who could by the stroke of a pen change the law according to his own will, change the law in order to suit his own political interests, change the law without going through Congress. Yet that is what has happened, which brings me back to arguments made today and over the last few days by my colleagues across the aisle. They say we are fine with funding the Department of Homeland Security, but we don't like all the provisions put in there by the House of Representatives. We don't like those provisions that would restrict the President's authority to spend money implementing the President's Executive amnesty program.

Again, Americans, regardless of how they feel about amnesty, as a matter of policy, are overwhelmingly of the opinion—and correctly so—that this is a decision that needs to be made by Congress and not the President of the United States.

Secondly, this is the kind of issue we deal with, with some regularity, within Congress.

Within the system as it has evolved, within the system as dictated by operation of the rules of the House of Representatives, typically—and for more than a century exclusively—it has been the role of the House of Representatives to initiate appropriations bills when we are trying to fund a government program that starts in the House, and that has been the case for well over a century. So they have the prerogative of starting a bill to fund the government, and that is what they did.

When it comes over here, if you don't like it, that is fine. This is a great

place to be if you don't like a bill as it starts out. The U.S. Senate has been called the world's greatest deliberative legislative body with good reason—because our rules, when properly followed, protect the right of every Member to make sure his or her views are adequately aired and protect and preserve the right of each and every Member to offer improvements to bills and offer amendments to make changes to legislation before it is put into law. Our rules are very clear on this.

It is unfortunate that in the last few years under the previous leadership those rights were trampled. Those rights were suppressed. We often didn't have those rights. We often had legislation that came up without a fair, open opportunity for each Member to offer amendments.

But we have moved on. We have a new majority leader, a majority leader who has, to his great credit, stood behind his commitment to protect the right of each Member to offer amendments to legislation. I thank him for that and encourage him to continue following this because it is good for this body. But because it is good for us and because our rules already provide for it and because we are following those rules now, as evidenced by the fact that we have now voted on more amendments on the floor in the form of a rollcall vote to pending legislation just in the last few weeks than we did in the entire last Congress, as evidenced by that, we don't need to fear the old order anymore. We don't need to fear the possibility of legislation coming into this body, and if we proceed to it, that that legislation will be without the opportunity to offer amendments.

So if Members don't like something in this bill, vote at least to proceed to it, vote at least to allow the debate to begin, but that, alas, is not what my colleagues across the aisle have chosen to do.

What they have chosen to do is to say: No. No, no, no. They are obstructing. They are obstructing the process as it was designed by the Constitution and as contemplated by the rules of the Senate and the rules of the House of Representatives.

They are saying, no, we will not consider this because we don't like some provisions of this bill. Yet they are also saying at the same time we want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded.

I agree with exactly half of that statement. I agree with them I think when they say they want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded. At least I will take that at face value. But if they truly do, then why on Earth would they not proceed to it? And if they don't like some of the other provisions, let them offer amendments. Let them change that.

At the end of the day, we have to come to terms with the fact that not all of us are going to like every part of every bill that comes over from the

House of Representatives. In fact, I dare say it hardly ever happens that any one Member of this body immediately, automatically feels great about every jot and title, about every section, every syllable, every paragraph of a bill that comes over from the House of Representatives.

That is exactly why we have the rules we do. That is exactly why parliamentary procedures, as they have evolved over the centuries, generally have as their central feature the protection of Members of any body such as this of the right to offer amendments, to offer helpful suggestions. But under our rules in the Senate, that cannot operate, it will not operate, it is not available, it doesn't exist unless we first vote to proceed to the bill.

So I invite my colleagues across the aisle—I challenge them—if they want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, vote to get on this bill. If they care about America's national security, there is a way to prove it. There is a way to prove they mean what they say when they say they want to keep it funded. Vote to get on this bill. It doesn't mean they have to agree with me, but it was not only acceptable but entirely appropriate and even necessary for the House to act to protect the constitutional order and to do so by restricting the President's ability to spend money to implement his Executive amnesty program.

People don't have to agree with me on that, but if Members want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, they can and they must and they will vote to proceed to this bill. Now we may disagree on what amendments you offer, but the Senate majority leader has repeated his offer, to make sure that we have an open amendment process, and we will.

In light of that, there is no excuse—there can be no excuse for my Democratic colleagues to continue to insist on the one hand that they care about our Nation's security and funding the Department of Homeland Security, while voting on the other hand against proceeding to this funding bill to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded. There is no excuse and there can be none.

It is most unfortunate that we have gone now 2 weeks without being able to proceed to this bill—2 weeks in which we could have offered amendments, 2 weeks in which my Democratic colleagues may well have succeeded in getting rid of some or perhaps all of the provisions they don't like added by the House of Representatives. They may have ended up with a piece of legislation that is exactly what they would have written had they started it over here, but they didn't do that.

Meanwhile, they have the audacity to accuse Republicans of causing this problem. This is something I don't understand. There are those among them who insist that Republicans did this very thing in the last Congress. Well, there were times when Republicans

voted in the last Congress not to proceed to something, but overwhelmingly—and if I recall correctly, perhaps entirely—when Republicans stopped their motion to proceed, when Republicans blocked cloture on a motion to proceed to the legislation, it was on the basis of a well-founded complaint that there would be no open amendment process. But there is no such argument to be made here. That argument has thankfully been taken off the table by our majority leader, who has thankfully opened up the Senate once again and made an amendment process possible.

Perhaps my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are still fearing the shadow cast by the previous leadership exercised in the previous Congress in the Senate that blocked out the amendment process, that made amendments impossible. If that is what they are afraid of, they have no need to fear. The Sun is now shining. The opportunity to offer up amendments and have those amendments considered has been restored to the Senate. There is no reason to be afraid. No reason to be afraid, of course, unless we somehow do the unthinkable—unless we continue to kick this can down the road farther and farther until we have no options left on the table.

We have just a few legislative days remaining between now and the time the existing funding for the Department of Homeland Security will expire. Our next vote has been scheduled on this, as I understand it, a week from Monday. I would implore each of my colleagues to reconsider their current strategy. Whether you like it or not, the way our system is set up is that the House of Representatives starts our spending bills. They have to pass spending bills first. If you don't like everything in the Homeland Security bill that the House passed—fine, vote to proceed to it and then change it. Change it back however you want. Propose amendments. I might not vote for all of them, I might not agree to all of them, but propose them. Have them aired out, have them considered by this body, by the American people, and let's have the debate, because our clock is ticking and our Nation's homeland security is too important for us to continue to put this off. But that is what we have been doing. That is what my colleagues who have been voting against cloture on the motion to proceed have been doing every time they voted no on this important issue.

The time has come for this body to accept the fact that a new day has dawned and we now have the ability once again to offer amendments, and because that opportunity now exists again, there is no reason to be afraid to move to legislation that has been passed by the House of Representatives to keep one of our government's important departments operating—no reason to fear whatsoever. In fact, if you are worried about what you should be fearful of, you should be fearful of not proceeding to this bill.

The next time we cast a vote on this, I encourage each of my colleagues to vote yes. Let's get on the bill and have an open, robust debate and whatever the outcome of that debate, we will get something passed. We will get it to the President, and we will make sure we keep this Department funded.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEE

RAMIRO GARZA, JR.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, here in Congress, as the Presiding Officer knows, we do a lot of oversight. Oversight is focused on what is going right as well as what is going wrong in our government. There is a lot of each, actually. That oversight is critically important work. It is sometimes overlooked, but critically important.

I think it is also important to stop and recognize where things are going right from time to time and the people who are doing the right thing. Following in the footsteps of one of our former colleagues here—I don't think the Presiding Officer ever had a chance to work with him, but Ted Kaufman was a Senator who served here for 2 years. He succeeded JOE BIDEN who went off to do some other job—Vice President, maybe that is what it is. And then, before Senator CHRIS COONS was elected 2 years later, Ted Kaufman was our Senator, a great guy. He used to be Senator BIDEN's chief of staff for 20 years or so.

Ted used to come to the floor pretty regularly and talk about different Federal employees who are doing exemplary work; people who had gone above and beyond to achieve the mission of solving problems and giving the U.S. taxpayer something to be proud of.

When somebody has a good idea, I like to steal it, and I think Ted Kaufman had a great idea. I have not really stolen it, but we have taken an idea and we have focused it a little bit, to focus on some of the people the Presiding Officer and I, along with Senator RON JOHNSON, met with this last weekend on the U.S. border with Mexico. I have decided to take the Ted Kaufman idea and focus it, put a spotlight on a number of employees within the Department of Homeland Security.

As many of us know, the Department of Homeland Security, which does important work—sometimes heroic work, dangerous work—they suffer from low morale, but it is filled with men and women who, frankly, deserve, I think, in many cases, a lot more credit than they receive.