

of nominees before we left for the State work period. Now our work continues. There are other vacancies to fill. There are nominees, for instance, for positions that are critical to recovery from Hurricane Harvey. We have to work together to get those nominees confirmed quickly, and we have to keep working together to fill other vacant positions in the Federal Government as well.

Another issue of extraordinary importance is tax reform. We will actually have another meeting at the White House today on that issue specifically. It is clear the President is very engaged on this issue. As he wrote in an op-ed over the weekend, “Our self-destructive tax code costs Americans millions of jobs, trillions of dollars and billions of hours spent on compliance and on paperwork. . . . We owe it to the American people to fix this broken system. American businesses want to prosper on our shores, and middle-class families are ready for more growth, more jobs, and higher pay.”

That is the aim of tax reform, and that is the message I hope the President will continue to take around the country, including his trip this week to North Dakota. In the meantime, work will continue among Members and committees in both Chambers to keep moving forward on this important issue.

In addition to these issues, I also look forward to tomorrow’s discussion about the national security challenge that is before us. Administration officials will be coming to Congress later that day to give a briefing on challenges like North Korea and Afghanistan. I am looking forward to that important meeting. These are complicated issues, and they will require smart responses from both the administration and from Congress.

Here in Congress, we will have an opportunity to address some of them soon as we work to pass related legislation such as the annual Defense authorization bill. The chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator McCAIN, will take the lead on that legislation. We have kept Senator McCAIN and his family in our thoughts over the State work period. We are glad to have him back with us. We know he will again manage this year’s legislation with skill and dedication.

There are obviously other important issues before us as well. There are many goals we share with the administration. There is a lot we want to get done, and we have three critically important things before us right now that we need to do quickly: pass disaster relief, prevent a default so those emergency resources can actually get to Americans who need them, and keep the government funded. Those are the three important things before us now.

We will continue working with the administration and our friends on both sides to accomplish those things.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### HURRICANE HARVEY DISASTER RELIEF AND OTHER ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, I welcome the Presiding Officer and every other Senator back from the district work period. As we all know, much has happened since we last were here.

North Korea has tested several ballistic missiles and reportedly tested a nuclear weapon, alarming well-meaning nations around the world.

In Charlottesville, neo-Nazis and White supremacists marched through the streets, reminding us we are not done fighting the darkest elements of American society—racism, bigotry, hate.

Right now, large parts of the fourth largest city in our country remain underwater. I extend my most heartfelt sympathies to the people of Houston and to those across parts of Texas and Louisiana who are just beginning a long road to recovery from Hurricane Harvey. Having lived through Hurricane Sandy in my home State of New York, I remember the agonies of families who lost their homes, lost their businesses, and, particularly in the first month, had a sense of helplessness about what had happened to them. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone in Houston.

We thank all the first responders and the rescue organizations—the police and fire departments—that are on the scene, as well as those everyday American heroes. Americans always rise to the occasion to lend a hand, such as the folks who drove to Houston with boats hooked to their cars to help rescue stranded families. In rough times, Americans pull together, and Congress will do its part to provide relief and aid to the people of Houston this month.

Needless to say, we have a busy work period ahead of us. In addition to a recovery package for Houston, we have to pass appropriations to keep the government open, raise the debt ceiling, protect the Dreamers, provide certainty on the cost-sharing program that helps keep healthcare premiums down, and much more. The to-do list is lengthy. Nearly all the items I mentioned will require votes from Senators from both sides of the aisle. The best way to tackle and ultimately pass legislation on those issues is for us to work in a bipartisan way this month.

Mr. President, on taxes, unfortunately, we are off to a very bad start because President Trump has scheduled a meeting on tax reform today with only Republican legislative leaders. Just as they did with healthcare, Republicans seem to be excluding Democrats from the legislative process from the very beginning.

The majority leader announced prior to the break that he would likely pursue changes to the Tax Code on reconciliation, meaning the Republicans would only need the votes of their own party. Now they are meeting about the issue without even inviting Democrats to join in preliminary discussions.

Very simply, if Republicans hope to avoid the same pitfalls that ultimately brought down their effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, they ought to abandon the misguided idea that one party can enact major changes to the Tax Code. An effort such as this requires two parties, and the result for the American people will be better if we all work together. The American people understand clearly that if Democrats were included in the debate, tax reform would be much more likely to help the middle class. If Republicans are the only ones in the room on tax reform, the vast majority of the benefits are likely to go to those at the very top. That is what the Republican Party has stood for for years.

Mr. President, on another matter, over the past 6 weeks, North Korea has repeatedly tested the resolve of the United States with the launch of several ballistic missiles. The rogue regime has threatened to launch a missile in close proximity to Guam, a U.S. territory, and has, in fact, fired a missile over the territory of our ally Japan.

The United States must respond to these increasingly bellicose actions with firmness and levelheadedness. The President of the United States has to lead the way. The President of the United States should be firm, level, and above all else, credible. The President’s words matter—especially on issues of national security—but thus far, President Trump has responded to North Korea with bluff and bluster, hyperbole and exaggerated language: “fire and fury like the world has never seen.” That is the kind of language we typically hear from the North Korean regime, not from the President of the United States.

The harsh fact is that because President Trump bluffs and blusters, he will be much less effective in dealing with North Korea in the long run. Foreign leaders—especially our allies—don’t know whether they can trust his words when there is so much hyperbole involved, and it undermines his ability to lead in a geopolitical crisis.

I urge the President to speak with caution, to speak with prudence, and to always speak credibly as well as strongly. It is paramount that North Korea understand the position of the United States and that when the President of the United States makes a statement, it believe we are prepared to act accordingly.

Mr. President, finally, on the DACA Program, today the administration announced it would terminate the program after a period of 6 months. Most Americans know how heartless this DACA decision is, ripping families

apart, telling people who worked so hard for years to become Americans that they now have to leave the country. These are folks who were brought here as children through no fault of their own. They may have known no other country but ours and have voluntarily registered themselves with the government in order to live, work, and give back to our great country. Make no mistake—they contribute greatly to our country. These hard-working people and their contributions are vital to our economy, vital to our communities, schools, and institutions, such as the military.

They are also vital to tens of thousands of businesses, small and large, that will be hurt if the administration's order stands. Ninety-one percent of DACA recipients are employed, paying taxes and paying into Social Security. A study by the Center for American Progress earlier this year found that ending DACA would drain \$433 billion from our national GDP over 10 years. Even the Libertarian Cato Institute estimated that ending DACA would cost employers nearly \$2 billion over 2 years. The human and economic toll of rescinding DACA will be far-reaching.

It is telling that Attorney General Sessions—not President Trump—made the announcement today that the administration would be ending DACA, and he did it without taking a single question. It shows that President Trump is not proud of what the administration has done today; otherwise he would have come forward himself. It shows that he is probably ashamed of this decision.

It was with unbelievable hypocrisy that both Attorney General Sessions and the White House Press Secretary said today that the decision was about upholding the rule of law. If this White House had such reverence for the rule of law, the President would not have fired Jim Comey or attacked the Federal judiciary for ruling against the travel ban or pardoned Sheriff Joe Arpaio for no reason other than he was a political ally.

Congress now has an ability and an obligation to act. Democrats will do everything we can to prevent President Trump's terribly wrong order from becoming reality.

I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

#### H.J. RES. 76

The PRESIDING OFFICER. For the information of the Senate, pursuant to

the order of August 3, 2017, the Senate received H.J. Res. 76 from the House of Representatives on August 4, 2017, and the joint resolution was passed, and the motion to reconsider was considered made and laid upon the table.

The Senator from Texas.

#### HURRICANE HARVEY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I just returned from Texas, where, as the world knows, Hurricane Harvey has devastated the gulf coast and now ranks among the costliest natural disasters in American history. Today I want to share with you what my State has experienced in the wake of this storm that has battered so many homes and broken so many hearts. The storm calamitously resulted in the loss of at least 60 lives, with probably more to come as the water recedes and as people's bodies are discovered. Of course, we mourn with those families who have lost loved ones.

You have seen the pictures, but let me describe what my fellow Texans have experienced firsthand. It started when Harvey ran into a patch of warm water in the Gulf of Mexico the week before last. As Harvey rumbled toward Texas, the ocean churned and the storm grew in size and strength. By the time it made landfall in the Coastal Bend region south of Houston, the hurricane was a Goliath—Category 4. The rain fell, the wind howled, and the water rose in towns like Rockport, Port Lavaca, and Aransas Pass. Streets became swamps, and homes filled up like bathtubs.

First were those smaller coastal communities that I just mentioned, but then one of the largest cities in the Nation, Houston, and nearby areas were hit. Third, let's not forget places like Port Arthur, Beaumont—where I was yesterday with Majority Leader McCARTHY from the House of Representatives and my other colleagues—as well as other parts of Jefferson and surrounding counties that were hit when the storm barreled east and then finally abated.

Five days and 50 inches of rainfall—every known record was shattered. The National Hurricane Center was awed by the storm that it called “relentless.” The Washington Post appropriately called it “merciless” because it was. Sunday, August 27, was the wettest day ever in Houston, where nearly a third of the yearly rainfall came in 24 hours. A third of our annual expected rainfall in Houston came in 24 hours. Not only that, we now know Harvey was the most extreme rain event in the history of the continental United States, a catastrophe so unheard of that it comes perhaps only once in 1,000 years. Let that sink in for a moment—a 1,000-year rain event.

The storm's intensity easily could have overwhelmed first responders. Medical, law enforcement, and rescue personnel easily could have said: You know, I am exhausted. I haven't slept

for days. I haven't been able to change my clothes. I can't do this anymore.

They could have easily said all of those things, but instead they kept wading into the water—the Harris County sheriff's water rescue team, the Texas National Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard, people like Sergeant Steve Perez, a 34-year veteran of the Houston Police Department who drowned in his patrol car during the storm. His wife told him not to go to work on that day, but Sergeant Perez's response was “We've got work to do.” He drove for over 2 hours trying to find a safe route to allow him to report for duty and to protect the community he loved. I hope Sergeant Perez's sacrifice will serve as an example to the rest of us to strive to serve others indiscriminately, no matter the potential cost.

Texas's neighbors could have easily stayed home too—after all, our friends in Louisiana learned tough lessons of their own from Hurricane Katrina—but they did not. They quickly mobilized. Calling themselves the Cajun Navy and the Cajun Coast Search and Rescue, they hitched their fishing boats to their pickup trucks and said: “GTT,” “gone to Texas”—gone to Texas to join the other rescuers, both uniformed and volunteers.

What did they all do?

They saved people who were floating on air mattresses, the few belongings they could carry that were stuffed into garbage bags, and people who were stranded on rooftops. They navigated around submerged trees and stop signs and cars, working with little to no sleep, dripping wet with sweat pouring from their faces, and smelling like the murky water that surrounded them. It seems that I heard about these stories over and over and over again during my trips to Corpus Christi, Rockport, Austin, and all around the State. These are the stories I heard in Houston, Beaumont, and other cities—all of them devastated, but in none of them was their spirit destroyed.

My State and our Nation have responded to this terrible natural disaster. As I did a small part in loading bags of ice and water and serving spaghetti to evacuees in Austin, I was struck by how many people—public officials, volunteers, businesses, and nonprofits, great and small—had offered and given their support, and I want to say that we are grateful to all of them.

In particular, Governor Greg Abbott's leadership has been critical. He and his team of emergency management personnel, led by Chief Nim Kidd, were well prepared in advance, and they moved swiftly following the state of emergency being declared in more than 50 of the 254 Texas counties. Yet it was not just State and local officials who acted with such dispatch. The Federal Government stepped up, too, starting with the President of the United States, who personally, along with the First Lady, made two trips to the affected region. He brought members of his Cabinet, who had previously called