

New Jersey a family-owned car dealership is giving each of its full-time employees a \$500 bonus and looking to create more jobs. In Florida, a family-owned cookie bakery is planning to immediately expense new equipment purchases, enabling them to develop specialized products and boost wages for their team. All told, more than 100 companies have announced intentions to deliver special bonuses, pay increases, or other benefits to employees as a result of tax reform. This in addition to the direct savings from tax cuts. Thanks to lower rates and bigger deductions, American workers will get to keep more of their paychecks.

These are just a few of the ways a growing economy can make life better for the American people. This is what happens when a Republican President and Republican majorities in Congress work to get Washington out of the way.

It is a shame that none of our Democratic colleagues in the House or the Senate—not one, not a single one—voted for tax reform—not a one. If they had their way, American businesses would not have had a 21st century tax code giving them a fairer fight with overseas competitors, American workers wouldn't have these bonuses and special benefits, and a typical family of four earning just over \$70,000 wouldn't be on track to keep \$2,000 more of their own money this year.

Fortunately, Republican majorities passed the bill anyway, and the American people are sure glad that we did.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we are inching ever closer to the government's spending deadline of January 19, when we will have to address a host of unresolved issues. We must lift the spending caps equally for defense and other domestic priorities, such as opioids, veterans, pensions. We must pass an aid package to give relief to disaster stricken areas of our country. We must pass the healthcare package that extends CHIP—children's health insurance—and community health centers.

Just this week, the CBO projected that CHIP will actually save the government money if it is extended for 10 years. We could ensure that kids continue to get quality health insurance for longer and save the government money if we extend it for 10 years. That is a no-brainer.

Of course, we must settle the fate of the Dreamers. A deal to pass DACA protection alongside a package of border security measures is finally within reach. As the immigration meeting at the White House showed, almost everyone in this body is interested in passing DACA protections into law.

Democrats are interested in effective, practical border security measures. We want what secures the border the most, not what sounds the best, not what was a political slogan in a campaign but what actually protects our border as drugs flow in and other things come across. We are working as hard as we can to find an agreement both sides can live with. The only folks who didn't get the memo were some House Republicans who continue to push hard-line immigration bills that are outside the scope of the negotiations. I am referring to Representative GOODLATTE's proposal, which is entirely counterproductive and completely unacceptable.

If Speaker RYAN is going to listen to the hard right in the House and coalesce behind Representative GOODLATTE's proposal on DACA, we will have no deal. Let the American people hear that. If Speaker RYAN is unable to resist Representative GOODLATTE's proposal—he has never been for Dream to begin with—we will have no deal.

If Speaker RYAN bends to the hard-right faction of his caucus—which is far away from what most Americans think; the hard right doesn't like Dreamers, and 70 percent of Americans do—and if they ask for immigration measures outside the scope of our negotiations, then so will we. Deal with chain migration outside of the scope of Dreamers? Let's deal with the 11 million who need a path to citizenship—a tough but fair path. We can play that game too. We can go beyond the confines of this deal, which has been Dreamers and border security, and then the whole thing won't happen.

There are people on my side who aren't going to want to make any compromises. I know that. There are people on both sides who won't want to make any compromises. As responsible leaders, we have to come to an agreement, and we can't make everybody happy. That is why we have a House and Senate. That is why we have legislators.

The whole reason we narrowed the scope of our negotiations is so that we could accomplish something for the Dreamers, rather than relitigating comprehensive immigration reform in such a compressed timeframe.

This body passed a very fine bill, in my opinion. It was really tough on the border. It was tough on benefits. It was tough on a path to citizenship. For the first time, for instance, green card holders had to learn English. That was in our bill that passed this body—led by Senator MCCAIN and myself and the Gang of 8—68 to 32. The House didn't dare take it up for the same reason they seem to have trouble today: The

hard right said no immigration reform. And we are stuck. That hurts everybody.

I am sure my good friend is hearing from farmers in his State, as I hear from farmers in mine, and businesspeople. We have to tighten up our borders. We have to make sure we have a rational system of immigration. We can't assure that every person who wants to come here comes here. We all agree with that. But that is comprehensive immigration reform, because we also believe that the 11 million here should be given a difficult but fair path to citizenship. We can't start litigating all of that.

Some of my friends on the other side of the aisle say: I have to have this provision outside DACA and border security. They are hurting the cause of getting something done.

If we can reach an agreement by the end of this week or over the weekend, we can pass it into law as part of a global deal on the budget by next Friday. I believe that is still the best way to resolve the issue. I am hopeful we can get this done. Any later than that, we won't have time to do it by the 19th.

Let me assure my colleagues, accept the majority leader in good faith and the Speaker in good faith—their intention is to put a bill on the floor in February or March. We have heard that before, and it never happens. So we feel passionately that we should get this done—both tighten up the border and help the Dreamers. We have to do it as part of the must-pass bill, and that must-pass bill is this global spending deal.

#### RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now a word on the Russia investigation. Over the past weeks, several events have shaken my confidence that our Republican colleagues are committed to an independent investigation in Congress and at the FBI.

A rightwing smear campaign is being waged to discredit the investigation and the investigator. Absurd attacks have been launched on Special Counsel Mueller, one of the finest men that I think we have ever come across in this body. I remember when he was FBI Director; everyone loved him. He is a man of utmost integrity. A Republican Congressman went so far as to suggest his investigation was a "coup" when that Member spoke on the floor of the House.

Here in the Senate, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee—I have great respect for him; we are the only two Charles E's in the Senate—referred Christopher Steele to the FBI and recommended criminal charges, even though Mr. Steele was a whistleblower—something that our chairman of Judiciary has always protected. He came to the FBI with concerns that Donald Trump was subject to blackmail. Any American would worry about that. The chairman took that action

unilaterally—that is, asking for criminal charges—without consulting with or providing notice to the minority. Yet he still expressed outrage when the ranking member of his committee released a transcript of his committee’s interview with the chairman of Fusion GPS even though that was what was in contention. There is a fundamental double standard here. You can’t complain, Mr. Chairman of Judiciary, about our side doing things unilaterally if you do them unilaterally. We want to work in a bipartisan way.

I applaud my friend, the senior Senator from California, for releasing that transcript. It contained information that was crucial for the American people to read and understand in order to judge for themselves the allegations my friends across the aisle have made. You make a serious allegation against someone but say no one can see the information? That is not fair. That is not how we work here in America.

Now, in the Foreign Relations Committee, my friend Senator CARDIN was compelled to release a minority report about Russia’s interference in foreign elections because the majority would not join him. Think about that. Senator CARDIN’s report showed something we already know to be true—no one disputes that; well, maybe a few—that Russia maliciously and persistently interferes in elections around the globe and will not cease without unified and strong countermeasures.

Senator CARDIN’s report is another compelling reason that the Senate act on election security legislation. Before we left for the holidays, Senators LANKFORD, KLOBUCHAR, HARRIS, and COLLINS introduced the Secure Elections Act. It is a good piece of legislation that would help shore up election security. Midterm elections are just around the corner, and, as Senator CARDIN’s report tells us, Russia will no doubt endeavor to sow confusion and chaos into our democracy once again. That is what they do. That is what Putin likes to do. We have to stop it. And making information public about it is very important. This should be a unifying, nonpartisan issue.

Why would the Republican majority on the Foreign Relations Committee refuse to join that report? It is because—in my judgment, at least—for partisan reasons, Republicans in Congress and some in some parts of the media—the conservative parts of the media—have sought to undermine the Russia investigation in countless ways. They have hidden behind secrecy and innuendo to cast aspersions on the investigation and erect roadblocks in its path. Their goal, it seems, is to discredit the investigation so that ultimately they can discredit any findings that are detrimental to their party or their President.

President Trump makes the strategy manifest, clear as day, almost every day on his Twitter feed. Yesterday, he tweeted that the Russia investigation was “the single greatest witch hunt in

American history.” That is a little self-centered. How about Salem? Those people were burned at the stake. And he wrote that “Republicans should finally take control.” That last line should send shivers down our spines, that “Republicans should finally take control.”

From the very beginning, this investigation has been about an issue most sensitive to our national interests—interference in our elections, the wellspring and pride of our wonderful and great and grand democracy. If ever there were an issue that transcends party, this is it. Yet here is the President of the United States imploring his party to “take control” of the investigation. You never thought you would hear a President say something like this. Frankly, you never thought you would hear such silence from the other side of the aisle when he does, but that is where we are. Republican lawmakers ought to shout down that kind of appeal. We all must commit to the essential truth of the matter, which is that the investigation into Russian interference in our election must remain as bipartisan and as nonpartisan as possible. The interests of the Nation are at stake. All of us—all of us—must choose country over party.

I yield the floor.

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#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

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#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

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#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

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#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Michael Lawrence Brown, of Georgia, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

#### NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Montana, like much of the United States, is suffering from the rise in human trafficking. I am grateful that Montana’s attorney general, Tim Fox, has taken this issue head-on. In fact, Montana has had three times as many human trafficking cases in 2017 as we had in 2015—a threefold increase. Unfortunately, this number will likely continue to rise in the coming

years, and online platforms are a driving force for it. Like so many things, the internet has tremendous power for good as well as for evil.

Having spent 12 years building a startup cloud computing business in my hometown of Bozeman—a business we grew to over 1,000 employees. We took the company public. This became a large, global business. I understand the power of the internet for good. But I also believe we must and can have better safeguards to protect our children, our families, and our neighbors from sex trafficking, while at the same time protecting innovation on the internet.

Unfortunately, a startup business—your business—has the potential to be used for terrible reasons without your awareness. Even more upsetting, it is also possible that online platforms do know that bad actors are using that platform and they do nothing about it. During my first hearing on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, we investigated one of these platforms: backpage.com.

Bad actors like backpage.com must be held accountable. That is why today, on Human Trafficking Awareness Day, I will be joining the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. This act strips protections for platforms that knowingly assist, support, or facilitate sex trafficking. We must take steps now to stop human trafficking and protect vulnerable members of our community. The Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act moves us closer to that goal.

I tip my hat and I am thankful to Senator PORTMAN for introducing this bill. I am thankful for the work of the Senate Commerce Committee to ensure that this legislation protects the millions of companies on the internet that are building our economy and creating high-paying jobs and doing so in good faith.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be added as a cosponsor for S. 1693, the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act.

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

Mr. DAINES. 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.

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

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business.

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

#### ECONOMIC GROWTH, REGULATORY RELIEF, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, on Tuesday of this week, I regained my previous held seat on the Senate Banking