

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now, on another matter, as we all know, Congress has until Friday to reach an agreement that ensures continued funding for the Federal Government. By now, it is clear we are not yet ready to move ahead with a major agreement on long-term funding for our Armed Forces, nor on our immigration policy. Serious, bipartisan talks are underway on these issues and other key priorities. Compromise solutions are not out of reach, but for now, Congress needs to keep the government running. There is no cause whatsoever for manufacturing a crisis and holding up funding for the vital services of the Federal Government.

What is more, the near-term solution that Congress must pass this week will not only provide uninterrupted government funding, it will also contain a 6-year reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. This is a Federal program that covers nearly 9 million children in low-income families. It ensures that economic hardship will not stand between struggling American families and medical coverage for their children. S-CHIP enjoys widespread, bipartisan support, with dedicated champions on both sides of the aisle.

The funding bill we will take up in the Senate will reauthorize the program for 6 years, even longer than the bipartisan compromise the Senate Finance Committee reached just last year. So Senators face a lot of hard decisions, but this is not one of them. A bill that prevents a government shutdown and funds S-CHIP for up to 6 years should be a simple choice for every Senator in this Chamber, and until very recently, our Democratic colleagues agreed. "No-brainer" was the exact phrase my colleague, the senior Senator from California, recently used on the Senate floor when discussing S-CHIP renewal.

The newest Member of this body, the junior Senator from Alabama, campaigned on this very issue. As Senator-elect, he insisted that his future colleagues should "stop playing political football with the health care of our children." He called it "absolutely unacceptable for partisan fighting to delay renewing funding for CHIP."

I hope my friends, the Democratic leaders, are listening to their own Members because recently some have intimated that Democrats will filibuster any funding bill whatsoever over the issue of illegal immigration. I find it difficult to believe that my Democratic colleagues would want to shut down the government for American citizens and vote down a 6-year reauthorization of health insurance for American children all over illegal immigration.

Bipartisan negotiations over the DACA issue and other issues in immigration policy are certainly important, and they are ongoing. Our responsibility is to continue those discussions,

not to jeopardize them by ginning up a manufactured crisis over an artificial deadline. We have until March, at least, to complete our ongoing negotiations on immigration. We have until Friday to fund the government.

I would urge my Democratic friends to honor their stated commitments to join in a bipartisan effort to keep the government funded and reauthorize S-CHIP for struggling families across our country.

TRIBUTE TO REB BROWNELL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now, finally, on an entirely different matter, I would like to say a few words about Reb Brownell, a key member of my team who is departing the Senate today.

Reb has served with distinction in my office for nearly 13 years. He began as an aide on foreign affairs, defense, and veterans issues. Since then, he has risen through the ranks, now serving as my personal office deputy chief of staff.

Reb is a tireless worker and a loyal public servant. He has been my point person on more important issues than I can name, including my support for democracy in Burma and research on prominent Kentucky leaders throughout history. I know he is especially proud of our work to help Dr. Noelle Hunter bring her daughter back to America.

I will miss more than Reb's fine work. I will miss him challenging my title as the biggest history buff in the office, and all his colleagues will miss Reb's genuine warmth, his quick wit and good humor, and his readiness to mentor young staffers. Of course, nobody is perfect. Reb is a diehard Michigan State fan. Fortunately, he never let it get in the way of serving the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

I am sorry to see Reb go. I thank him for his service, and I wish him and his wife Sandy every success in their future endeavors.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2311

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2311) to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, before I get into the substance of my remarks, let me just answer the majority leader. What leads to problems in this place? What leads to a government shutdown? It is one side deciding everything and then saying to the other side: You must go along.

The proposal has been sent over—here is what it doesn't do. It does not give help needed for our veterans who wait in line for service. It doesn't fight opioid addiction, the scourge of America. It doesn't help our pensioners. I would say to my friends on the other side of the aisle and our defense hawks over in the other body, it doesn't give defense what it needs either. It is a loser in terms of the things this country needs.

We could easily sit down and come to an agreement that would get the support of a majority of both sides, and it is the intransigence, frankly, of so many who say don't talk, don't negotiate, just do it our way or no way that has led to gridlock, that has led to the fact that the first year has been largely unsuccessful and leads to the partisanship America decries.

Democrats have shown, time and time again, we want to work in a bipartisan way, most recently illustrated by the proposal put together by my friend from Illinois, my friend from South Carolina, my friend from Arizona who is on the floor. We eagerly await his remarks, and I will try to be brief.

Leader MCCONNELL, in this instance, as in many others, says: Our way or no way. That is wrong. We will do everything we can to avoid a shutdown. We will do everything we can, but the needs of opioid addiction and helping the veterans and Social Security and rural infrastructure and defense and, of course, the Dreamers remain hanging out with this proposal. If, God forbid, there is a shutdown, it will fall on the majority leader's shoulders and the President's shoulders. We all know what the President has said. He wants a shutdown. So you can twist words and twist facts any way you want, but the truth is, this is a purely partisan effort—a purely partisan effort—and that is what leads to the trouble in this place.

Let me say a few more things.

Despite the leader being totally partisan on this issue, we have seen some rays, some sprouts of bipartisanship. In the House, Republican Congressman WILL HURD and Democratic Congressman AGUILAR have a proposal on immigration, on Dream, that garnered 20 Democrats and 20 Republicans. The Goodlatte proposal, the McCaul proposal, has not a single Democrat. I say

to the Acting President pro tempore, you have made a proposal that, in the words of LINDSEY GRAHAM, will not get a single Democratic vote. It can't pass. At the same time, the Senators from Illinois, New Jersey, Colorado, Arizona, South Carolina, and Colorado are painstakingly putting together a proposal where both sides give quite a bit.

So there are sprouts of bipartisanship—more than sprouts—that could save us from eyeball-to-eyeball and from a shutdown. My hope is that the President will understand it because the bill that was put together here in the Senate was painstakingly pieced together to meet what the President said he needed. It protects the Dreamers; includes President Trump's full budget request for border security—far more than I would want to do—including funding to build barriers along the southern border; deals with family reunification—they call it chain migration—for the Dreamers.

I know that some have said: Let's do it for the whole immigration bill, and let's talk about the 11 million, not just the Dreamers.

If you want to do comprehensive, let's do comprehensive, but first let's get DACA done.

And, of course, they even got rid of the diversity program, which, as the President noted, I was the author of and which has brought millions of people to this country who are working hard and are good citizens now.

So it is almost everything the President requested in his televised Tuesday meeting, which got such good reviews from one end of the country to the other.

This bill is certainly not how Democrats would have written the bill if we were in charge, and it is not how Republicans would have written the bill if they were the only party in America. If they were, they might go for the proposal from the Senator from Arkansas. But it is on the hard right. Seventy percent of America is for Dream and DACA—I think 80 percent now. Most Americans are for a comprehensive immigration bill that does all these things. So if we want to get something done, we ought to compromise in a bipartisan way.

For those on this side and in the other body who say we need defense, the way we are going to get it is through bipartisan compromise. This side does not object to increasing defense alongside of other needs that are just as important, in our judgment. A parent whose son or daughter died of opioid addiction because they couldn't get treatment doesn't think that opioid addiction should play second fiddle to any proposal.

The majority leader dismissed the urgency of solving the fate of Dreamers. He calls it a manufactured crisis. It was manufactured by the Republican Party. President Trump rescinded the DACA Program, not a Democrat. It was the majority leader's decision to kick the can down the road for months

while bipartisan majorities would have likely supported something close to the Dream Act. It was President Trump who turned his back on a bipartisan solution last week and used vulgarities to demean the ancestral homelands of so many Americans. And almost no American doubts that the President used those terms. Nobody doubts it—hardly anybody.

As I said yesterday, a very fair, bipartisan deal remains on the table. Senators DURBIN and GRAHAM will release the text of their legislation today. My Republican colleagues, I hope, will consider it. And I recommend we get on the bill, and then we can solve the problems that some on one side see—needs for defense—seen on both sides; some of the problems this side sees; some of the problems that side sees; and not do the kind of bill that leaves out or kicks the can down the road for many more problems.

I challenge President Trump: Step up to the plate and take yes for an answer. Democrats have met you halfway, Mr. President. You meet us halfway. The time for political posturing is running short.

Bipartisan groups of Senators and Congressmen are fervently working towards a deal. President Trump ought to get on board, or Congress will move forward without him.

CHINA TRADE POLICY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on one other issue—this is really in my craw—the New York Times reported that one of the fastest growing Chinese car companies is plotting ways to sell cars in America. According to the Times, by pursuing a partnership with Fiat Chrysler, the Chinese state-owned company GAC Automobiles hopes to enter the U.S. market through the backdoor. It would be the first Chinese car maker to sell in the United States. If they were to do so, they would face a 2.5-percent tariff here in the United States. Meanwhile, if a U.S. automaker sold cars in China, it would face a 25-percent tariff—10 times higher—and would have to compete with state-owned businesses and unfair regulations.

So while China prevents U.S. automakers from gaining a foothold in their country with prohibitive tariffs—what the Times called “the highest trade barriers by far of any major car market”—they are plotting ways to eat into our market. It is manifestly unfair and a perfect example of China's rapacious trading policies.

President Trump and his campaign won a lot of votes by promising over and over again that he would crack down on Chinese mercantilism, but once in office, unfortunately, like so many of his other promises and commitments to working Americans, he has not done it. And he has delayed trade enforcement against China time and time again. Even the studies he has commissioned have been delayed.

We need to get serious about these flagrant trade abuses before it is too late. Middle-class jobs and bedrock American industries are at stake.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

RAPID DNA ACT OF 2017

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 139, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 139, a bill to implement the use of Rapid DNA instruments to inform decisions about pretrial release or detention and their conditions, to solve and prevent violent crimes and other crimes, to exonerate the innocent, to prevent DNA analysis backlogs, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill.

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill, with McConnell amendment No. 1870 (to the House amendment to the bill), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 1871 (to amendment No. 1870), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

TRUTH AND DEMOCRACY

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, near the beginning of the document that made us free, our Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote: “We hold these truths to be self-evident.” So from our very beginnings, our freedom has been predicated on truth. The Founders were visionary in this regard, understanding well that good faith and shared facts between the governed and the government would be the very basis of this ongoing idea of America.

As the distinguished former Member of this body, Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, famously said, “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts.” During this past year, I am alarmed to say, Senator Moynihan's proposition has likely been tested more severely than at any time in our history. It is for that reason that I rise today to talk about the truth and the truth's relationship to democracy, for without truth and a principled fidelity to truth and to shared facts, our democracy will not last.

Mr. President, 2017 was a year which saw the truth—objective, empirical,