

of the United States—a moral authority that this country has taken generations to build, that helps us bring a light to the world and helps us economically in every other way, as the world has always looked up to America and our ideals.

Unfortunately, that moral authority is declining under President Trump's leadership—and declining rapidly. It may have reached the low point yesterday when President Trump, in tweet after tweet, offered a very poor representation of the United States to the world. More than that, President Trump's "foreign policy by tweet" is doing serious damage to the country. While we have serious issues to address abroad, President Trump seems happy with macho boasts and belligerent threats that get us nowhere. If any one of us were in a classroom with someone who behaved as President Trump has, we would ostracize them; we would straighten them out. We don't hear a peep from the vast majority of our Republican colleagues about this, many of whom are hawks.

We have serious issues to address abroad. President Trump's "foreign policy by tweet" will not advance our standing in the world. It will not reassure our allies or other nations that it is better to work with us than against us. What it will do—what it has already done, unfortunately, is unsettle our allies and embolden our adversaries. What it will do is cede leadership in the world to China, which is eagerly awaiting every opportunity to drive a wedge between our country and other countries around the world. Without a steady and reliable hand at the helm, our allies may be uncertain that they can continue to trust the United States to honor our commitments and maintain a steady course.

China and Russia are rushing to fill the void left by an unsteady United States. President Xi of China aspired to this position of being a world leader in his new year's speech when he said that China, not the United States, would be the "keeper of the international order" in 2018. If President Trump continues snubbing our allies, recklessly threatening other nations, and showing leadership on the world stage that can only be described as puerile, the world may look to Beijing, not Washington, for international leadership.

Again, I repeat: Where are our friends, the Republican hawks, who have been so concerned about America's leadership in the world, who have decried the fact that President Obama did not do enough for that leadership? If he were here, my dear friend, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, would typically stand up and speak about this, and hopefully he will be back soon to do so. But for the rest of my Republican friends, I would say with sincerity—not with partisanship, but out of love for the country and the leadership we have shown for decades and decades—that our Republican friends should, please,

tell the President: Stop tweeting; start leading.

We are almost through a calendar year of the Trump Presidency. President Trump can no longer be given the benefit of the doubt that comes with learning one of the toughest jobs in the world. My Republican colleagues should not be given a pass by the American people if they fail to speak out or take action against this behavior. Their silence, unfortunately—I have to say, I feel this sincerely—is complicity in the degradation of the Presidency and the power of this country.

The American people expect our President to represent the United States with dignity and strength. That is not what we saw yesterday. It is time we all start speaking out against it.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter of resignation from Lieutenant Governor SMITH to Governor Dayton be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATE OF MINNESOTA,
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR TINA SMITH,
Saint Paul, MN, December 28, 2017.

Hon. MARK DAYTON,
State Capitol,
Saint Paul, MN.

DEAR GOVERNOR DAYTON: Effective 11:59 p.m. January 2, 2018, I hereby resign the Office of Lieutenant Governor of the State of Minnesota. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the people of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

TINA SMITH,
Lt. Governor.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Illinois.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it has been less than 2 weeks since we convened in the Senate, and those of us who have returned to the floor of the Senate may not notice any change, but there is a significant change. If you take a close look, one desk has moved from that side of the aisle to this side

of the aisle. There are currently 49 Democratic Senators after the swearing in of our colleague, Senator DOUG JONES of Alabama. Now it is 49 to 51. It is almost as close a break as you can expect or even anticipate in a deliberative body.

It is an indication of more than just the acquisition of one additional Democratic Senator. We are moving closer and closer to parity, closer and closer to one another, and, I hope, closer and closer in solving problems. I think that was a message of the Alabama election; among other things, the American people want to see us work together. They have given us 49 and the Republicans 51. I think they expect that to be a signal that we should finally sit down and do something to solve the problems facing our great Nation. I feel that as I go home—of course, I run into my loyal Democratic friends who have their own political views, but the vast majority of people say: Can't you work together and solve something? Can't you do something for this Nation? I believe we can, and this month we must.

You see, on January 19 there is a deadline looming. It is only a couple of weeks away. On January 19, we have to make some very momentous, historic decisions about the rest of this year and beyond. One of those is where we will spend the taxpayers' dollars. How much will we spend on the defense of our Nation? How much will we spend on other agencies, which, I would add, also defend our Nation? That has to be decided by 60 votes. Do the math. As whip on the Democratic side, I have said that I learned basically all I needed to know about this job in the first grade. I learned how to count to 60.

On January 19, we need at least 60 Senators to agree on the spending program for this country moving forward, not just the Department of Defense but the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the Department of State, and so many other critically important agencies.

The second thing we need to do is long overdue. The fiscal year, the operative fiscal year for the Federal Government starts on October 1. We are a long way from October 1, 2017. We still don't have a budget. We still have not brought the appropriations bills to the floor of the Senate for consideration.

I am not going to be partisan about this. We failed as Democrats in bringing those appropriations to the floor in a timely manner as well. We have to do something about this process, but we certainly have to face the reality that we are steaming through this fiscal year without a budget. We have taken last year's budget and continued to live by last year's budget. Reflect, for a moment, if you did the same thing for your family. If you were determined to spend in January of 2018 exactly what you spent in 2017, you would think to yourself: That makes no sense. The utility bills are different. I may have a different mortgage payment. A lot of

things have changed. But we can't change until we pass a budget bill. That, too, is facing a January 19 deadline. Again, it will require 60 votes.

Here are two major issues—the caps on spending and the budget for our government, which need to be passed by January 19 on a bipartisan basis. It is time to come together and face not only those two overarching issues but the long litany of issues that Senator SCHUMER, the Democratic leader, raised in his opening remarks.

There are so many other elements—the Children's Health Insurance Program, affecting tens of thousands of kids in my State of Illinois. They told me when I was home: Senator, we are running out of money to provide basic medical care for kids across America. Why haven't you done your job to reauthorize this program, as well as the program for community care clinics? These clinics are critically important for healthcare for thousands of families in my State and across the Nation.

There is one more issue that I am going to raise, as I have so many times, standing in this particular place on the floor, and that is the Dream Act. The DREAM Act is a bill I introduced 16 years ago to give young people brought to the United States as infants and toddlers and children—they have grown up in this country, have no serious criminal issue they have been involved in, and have graduated from our schools—a chance for a future in America, the only country they have ever known. They are the Dreamers.

President Obama gave them a chance with an Executive order called DACA. He said: You can come forward, submit a \$500 filing fee, go through a criminal background check, and we may give you—it is our decision—2 years of temporary protection to stay in this country. You can work in this country, stay here without fear of deportation on a 2-year basis. So 780,000 young people stepped forward and did that and were approved. Now they are working across America, and 900 of them serve in the U.S. military. They are undocumented by legal standards, but they have sworn their loyalty to this country and are willing to die for this country. What more could we ask of a young person to prove their loyalty to that flag and to this Nation? Nine hundred of them are now protected by DACA.

Then President Trump announced on September 5 of last year that he was going to eliminate that program, eliminate that protection as of March 5 of this year. The clock is ticking; the days on the calendar are turning. There are 900 in our military; 20,000 are teachers across America in grade schools, elementary schools, and high schools—at all levels—and 20,000 of them protected by DACA will lose their ability to teach starting on March 5 of this year because of President Trump's decision and his announcement.

He challenged us. He said: Look, I don't like this Executive order by the previous President; now pass a law. Pass a law and do something about it.

He asked us to do that months ago, and we have done nothing—nothing. I believe that by January 19, we need to take this up as one of the critical issues on our agenda. It is absolutely essential.

Let me add as well that this President has been critical of immigration. I couldn't disagree with him more. He has taken an approach toward immigration that I believe denies the very basis and foundation of this great Nation.

I have said it before, and I say it with pride: I stand here on the floor of the U.S. Senate representing the great State of Illinois, the son of an immigrant to this country. My mother was brought here at the age of 2—she was a Dreamer in her era—and she grew up in America, raised a family, and had a son who was sworn in to the U.S. Senate. She lived long enough to see that. That is my story. That is my family's story. That is America's story. Sometimes I wonder if the President has heard that story or paid attention to it.

Immigration has been at the heart of who we are as Americans. The diversity of this great country, when it has come together in citizenship, has been a force to be reckoned with around the world throughout history. I still believe that as much this day as I have ever believed it.

I may not be able to convince the President, but President Obama and others did plead with him to think about these young people, these Dreamers, those protected by DACA. Do you know what President Trump said about the Dreamers? Do you know what he said in one of his famous—sometimes infamous—tweets? He said we should “show great heart.” “Show great heart,” President Trump said, to these young people.

That is why I am here today making this statement on the floor—it is not a long speech; I have spoken many times in the past—to plead with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, in this closely divided Senate, to get this job done before January 19—not just for the 780,000 who took advantage of President Obama's Executive order but for those who were eligible and afraid. There were many thousands who were eligible for this program but afraid to sign up for it, to turn themselves in to the government, and they held back. They are eligible. There is nothing to disqualify them otherwise. Let's give them the same opportunity to be part of the future of this great Nation. That is what I believe we can do and should do.

There are 49 Democrats and 51 Republicans—carefully divided. Can enough of us meet in that aisle to create a real majority, a bipartisan majority, to solve this? I am convinced we can, as Senator SCHUMER said earlier. Our Acting President pro tempore has weighed in on it, and I thank him for his efforts, his personal efforts, on this issue. We have had long meetings. Sometimes we agreed, sometimes we

didn't agree, but that is the nature of the Senate, the nature of compromise, and the nature of a process that the American people are begging us, Democrats and Republicans, to engage in, in a positive way by January 19 of this month.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, before the Democratic whip leaves the Chamber, I want to thank him for his leadership, his perspicacity, his determination on the issue of the Dreamers.

It is this Senator's hope that come January 19, when so many issues that were outlined by the Democratic leader all come to a head and have to be decided in order for the Government of the United States to stay open, that one of the issues that will be addressed will be allowing the Dreamers to stay in this country legally, the only country they have ever known. So many of us are grateful for Senator DURBIN's leadership on this issue.

We hope that in the spirit of unity, which has escaped this Capitol of the United States—that suddenly there will be a spirit of unity to do the right thing in a bipartisan way and that we will be joined by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle—now down to 51, as Senator DURBIN has pointed out. This should not be a partisan issue; this should be an issue of right or wrong for the Dreamers to be able to stay in the country that they know as their home.

I thank Senator DURBIN.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I would like to speak about net neutrality. If you don't know what that means, you really do when prompted because it means that when you turn on your phone, you go on the internet and you decide what you want to see, and what you want to see—or hear in the case of video—you have the right to have that access and to have it as speedily as any other content that is offered on the internet.

Entrepreneurs who are working out of the garage of their family home and who have a new idea and suddenly want to get it on the internet—because they are financially impaired since they are just starting out, they should have an opportunity, just as the big boys do, to get their ideas on the internet.

Within the obvious boundaries of what is appropriate in language, et cetera, you have a right to get the content that you want and to get that content unimpeded on these tablets we carry around in our pockets. That right to get that content is threatened, and it is threatened because the Federal Communications Commission, on a partisan vote of 3 to 2, has completely overturned the previous rules that had been set on a partisan vote the other way of 3 to 2.

At the end of the day, what it means is that those of us in this Chamber, led