

This week my colleagues will have ample opportunity to consider the legislation before us. In a few days I hope they will join me in voting to pass it.

TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, it has been a little over 6 months since the passage of tax reform delivered measurable relief to working families and job creators, 6 months since Republicans implemented a simpler 21st century framework to help unleash a new generation of success stories, and 6 months since updated tax brackets and withholding tables provided for some 90 percent of American wage earners to take home more pay.

Thanks to lower tax rates, the IRS is withholding less of workers' paychecks. Because we doubled the standard deduction, married couples will benefit from what amounts to a new zero-percent tax bracket for the first \$24,000 they earn. And parents are looking forward to the bigger child tax credit they can claim going forward—up to \$2,000 per qualifying child.

These tax cuts are just the shot in the arm our economy needed, and they are exactly what middle-class families and workers deserved. At least that is what Republicans believe.

Our Democratic colleagues seem to see things quite differently. They don't think that \$2,000—that is the average estimated tax cut this year for a family of four earning the median family income—seems like very much money, as far as they are concerned.

After all, every single Democrat voted against giving American families these tax cuts. They figured Washington knew how to spend the money better than the taxpayers who earned it. Of course, the bill became law without Democrats' help. Since then, they have set about trying to persuade middle-class families that getting to keep more of their own money is a terrible thing, so they should support Democrats' efforts to repeal tax reform.

I am glad I don't have to try and make that case. It looks like more take-home pay for workers is already beginning to have ripple effects throughout the U.S. economy. Fueled in part by our Republican policies, consumer confidence in 2018 reached its highest level since November of 2000.

Sure enough, just last month retail sales growth doubled the gains that experts had forecast and shot up at the fastest pace in half a year. Here is the L.A. Times headline: "Retail sales post sharp gains in May, signaling a surge in U.S. economic growth." That is the L.A. Times.

That is more take-home pay for American taxpayers, more prosperity for American retailers, more demand for American goods and services, and thus, more demand for American workers.

This is what we call a virtuous circle, and Republicans' commonsense agenda

is helping to make it happen. Our Democratic colleagues may want to put Washington's foot back on the brake by repealing tax reform and piling up more regulations, but they aren't just arguing with those of us across the aisle. They are arguing with the facts. They are arguing with the data. They are arguing with American families who are keeping more of their own money. They are arguing with the prosperity our agenda is already helping to unleash.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 6

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The leader is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6) to provide for opioid use disorder prevention, recovery, and treatment, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, on appropriations, the Senate is continuing the process.

I thank Chairman SHELBY, Ranking Member LEAHY, and Leader MCCONNELL for their work in helping move this process forward.

It has been a long time since the Senate has successfully processed appropriations through the regular order. It requires cooperation on the committee, cooperation amongst the committee staff, and cooperation here on the floor with the two leaders, and that is happening. If we are looking to work in a bipartisan way, this is, probably, the best sprout of bipartisanship that has bloomed in a long time in this body.

The fact that the parties are working together to prevent nongermane amendments that are intended just to create ruckus and the fact that even germane amendments that are regarded as poison pills are not being added to the bills here in the Senate

really bodes well for cooperation. I wish it were the same in the House, where it is strictly a partisan process. The fact that the Senate is working together on appropriations bodes well for future legislation, including one farm bill that some people have an interest in who are in this body—many of us, actually—including, of course, the senior Senator from the great State of Kansas.

I hope this appropriations process can continue this way—with bipartisanship, knocking out poison pill amendments, sticking together, and getting a good bill done. The fact that yesterday, I think there were—how many votes?—just a handful of votes against the first minibus of three of the Appropriations Committee's bills bodes well for the future.

I would also caution to say there may be some extraneous forces, some even down the other side of Pennsylvania Avenue, that might want to blow this whole thing up. If we can stick together, we can make this happen in a good way, for the good of the country, in terms of the specific bills and in terms of bringing us back together again to get things done.

That is the optimistic note of the morning. Maybe we will have more.

FAMILY SEPARATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on immigration, in the past few weeks, it has not been so optimistic. The Trump administration has created a humanitarian crisis at our southern border through its cruel family separation policy. An Executive order signed by the President last week has barely undone the damage. It largely leaves the original policy intact and raises a whole series of unresolved questions.

Those in the administration have a lot of questions to answer, and it is only they who can straighten this out. Legislation might be a good thing, but we all know the path to legislation is fraught with peril. Having legislation pass the House, pass the Senate, and be signed by the President hasn't happened in a while. In the meantime, while people grapple with legislation—and I encourage people to talk to one another—we have a lot of questions that the administration must answer: How many children are separated from their parents? Where are those children? Where are the parents? What kind of care are these kids getting? How are they holding up?

I saw on one of the TV shows this morning a little girl, who asked: Where is my mommy? Where is my mommy? She was a young girl who was, maybe, 4 years old.

That is not the America any of us—regardless of our party, regardless of our political philosophy—believe in. We see that in other countries that are much crueler and less democratic than we. So we need these questions answered by the administration quickly.

The second thing we need is a plan. The administration, the President, and

others have said that we are not going to break up families anymore even though he was the cause of breaking up the families. What is the plan to get them back together? What is the plan for the future? They now say they are going back to the way it was under Obama because they don't have the resources. What are the resources they need? At the same time, when Sarah Huckabee Sanders says that they don't have the resources, President Trump says: I don't want any more immigration judges. This administration is just contradictory and tied in a knot.

Compounding the problem is the President's ranting—that is what he is doing; I hate to say it—at these rallies when he says that Democrats want crime. Democrats want open borders. Well, Mr. President, I am the author, with JOHN MCCAIN—someone you have also belittled—of a bill that passed this body with 69 votes that put \$40 billion on the border. It would have been far more effective than any wall. We could do that now. We could do comprehensive reform now if some people would be for it on the other side and in the White House.

These rants—these hysterical, nasty, finger-pointing rants—don't help bring bipartisanship here. Yet we expect that of the President, as he has been highly partisan, but they don't help solve the problem. He just shoots from the hip. The different agencies, whether they be the Department of Justice and the Attorney General, the Secretary of HHS, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, don't know what to do because there are so many contradictory signals coming. Who suffers? These poor little children who are separated from their parents suffer.

Two days ago, Sunday, in New York, I called for a czar—a good czar—because, when you have different agencies in charge, you need the White House to direct it all. This President shoots from the hip and is more interested in nasty rhetoric than in solving problems, and nothing gets solved. A czar—some capable, level-headed person who has the President's blessing in the White House, who could help coordinate between Justice and HHS and Homeland Security and the other agencies that are involved—could help solve this problem.

Whether it goes for the czar or not, this administration needs to present a plan—ASAP—of how to unify the kids and how to deal with the border. It has no plan. It has a lot of contradictory language. Let's hope it can get there for the sake of humanity and for the sake of what this country has been all about for its beautiful 229 years.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on taxes, one of the chief arguments behind the Republican tax bill was the idea that giving corporations a substantial tax cut would compel companies to hire more workers, give raises, and expand operations.

After a few weeks of news about one-time annual bonuses petered out—and many of those were staged by CEOs sucking up to the President—we have started to get a look at how corporations are really using the profits from the Republican tax bill. What did Harley-Davidson, the iconic motorcycle company that President Trump talked about in his campaign and even afterward, do with their tax cuts? They cut domestic operations, announced a nearly \$700 million stock repurchasing program, and now are moving significant operations overseas. Why didn't Harley-Davidson take that tax break to help continue to employ workers here in America instead of a buyback so the wealthy CEOs and shareholders would get a lot of money? President Trump and Speaker RYAN have held up Harley-Davidson as a success story of their tax bill while they are cutting jobs in America and using the tax cuts for stock buybacks.

It is the same thing with Carrier. There was a great big hoopla with Carrier, but Carrier is cutting jobs and still employs loads of people overseas, even though they got a huge tax break. This tax break has helped the wealthy, the CEOs, the shareholders—most of whom are rich and one-third of whom are overseas—but not the workers and not more productivity in America.

Another one is Walmart. They are cited by the House as a positive example of the tax bill in action. Walmart laid off 1,000 employees in recent months and used the tax bill break for a \$4 billion buyback of its own stock.

This tax bill has proven to be a travesty. All the things that were promised aren't happening. I know our Republican colleagues. They talk to their wealthy businesspeople, and they think it is great. Talk to the average person. It has become unpopular again. Do you know why? It has sunk in that the money ain't going to them, and the big corporations that are getting these breaks are not benefiting them, by and large. Listen to this number: \$450 billion in stock buybacks have been announced. That doesn't employ a single worker. That doesn't raise the salary of a single worker. That doesn't bring new equipment to a company to make it more productive so they can compete better. An analysis was just done by JUST Capital, and 7 percent of the capital allocated by companies from the tax bill's savings has gone to employees, 57 percent to shareholders—close to eight times as much. We Democrats predicted that, and despite the initial hoopla after the bill, the American people are realizing it is happening.

It seems nearly every week, today with Harley-Davidson, there is a new example of corporate America taking a Republican tax cut and putting it to work—not for their employees, not for new equipment, not for new hires but for executives and shareholders. Let's not forget, 80 percent of the stock is held by 10 percent of the wealthiest people. One-third of the shares in

America are held by people overseas. As voters head to the polls this November, they should remember that Republicans spent over \$1.5 trillion of the taxpayers' money to give corporate America a handout while working America got left behind.

We Democrats need to fix that.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FARM BILL

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I rise as the Senate considers legislation on an issue that is critically important to our Nation—the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018—the farm bill.

The goal, the responsibility, the absolute requirement is to provide our farmers, ranchers, and growers, and everyone within America's agriculture and food value chain certainty and predictability, especially during these very difficult times. This is paramount, absolutely paramount to any other issues and concerns.

It is not an exaggeration to say our Nation's food and fiber capability, with regard to production, hangs in the balance with what we do on this legislation. Simply put, let's get this done.

Many of my colleagues have introduced legislation over the last year that addresses priorities and stakeholders in their States. The bill that passed the Agriculture Committee, with the help and partnership of my distinguished ranking member Senator STABENOW, passed with a strong bipartisan vote of 20 to 1 earlier this month. That bill addresses many of these concerns. In fact, the Ag Committee's bill includes this bill we are considering today, portions of 65 stand-alone bills, and an additional 73 amendments were adopted in the committee. That is called working together. That is called regular order.

Needless to say, we have work to include as many priorities from Members both on and off the Ag Committee, and we want to continue working with Members to address their concerns. Prepare your amendments and come work with Senator STABENOW and me.

We are endeavoring to craft a farm bill that meets the needs of producers across all regions, all crops. All of agriculture today is struggling, not just one or two commodities. We are indeed going through a very difficult time; what we call in farm country, a rough patch.

We must have a bill that works all across our great Nation. We must ensure that our voluntary conservation programs are keeping farmland in operation while protecting our agriculture lands and forests and other