

and we need to listen to what they have to say about what is going on. There was general agreement that when it comes to offering a path to citizenship, the President's proposal was surprisingly generous. Nobody expected the President to offer a pathway to citizenship for 1.8 million young adults. That was extraordinarily generous.

Right now, in the program that was created by President Obama, which will expire March 5, there are 690,000 DACA recipients. They are the people who signed up for this deferred action, not for a path to citizenship, not for legal status, but an agreement by the government that we are not going to try to deport them. They also get work permits during the pendency of their DACA status. This President has offered DACA recipients something President Obama never did—a pathway to citizenship for three times as many as are covered by the deferred action program.

The Hispanic leaders I spoke with also supported, in addition to that pillar of what the President proposed, additional border security measures. One spoke about the "collateral benefits" to border communities of new technology, personnel, and improved infrastructure. Jobs increase, restaurants and hotels benefit, communities are safer for the families and the children who live there.

They stress that when it comes to border security, we need to be thinking about it three-dimensionally. In other words, they said that we need to consider a system. I have heard the Secretary of Homeland Security refer to what the President has proposed as a wall system. It is not just a physical barrier; it is access roads, cameras, sensors, radars, aerostats, and other things to try to make sure our border is secure.

Ultimately, my conversation with these constituents was very constructive, but I had to be honest with them. I had to admit that I have been disappointed so far. I haven't heard much in the way of ideas from our Democratic colleagues, other than old proposals that will not become law. Even though they claim to support these young people, the DACA recipients, and even though they claim to support a pathway to citizenship for them, they have done nothing to respond to President Trump's very generous offer and the four pillars of his proposal. So far, they have indicated that they have little interest in negotiating.

The deadline set for those negotiations is February 8, just a couple of days from now. After that, we will be here on the Senate floor with an open and freewheeling debate and amendment process. But we want to achieve a solution that can become law, and so far, we haven't had a willing dance partner in our Democratic colleagues.

The President has made an extraordinary offer. I don't know whether it is because they don't want this President

to claim any credit for any accomplishment or whether they prefer to have a political issue that they want to take to the election in November or whether they are just willing to toy with the lives of these young people because they deem it politically expedient. Well, none of those are acceptable. And it is really puzzling. There is no reason why they shouldn't support closing loopholes for our illegal immigration problem and increasing security on the border.

I have heard many of our colleagues across the aisle say: Border security? No problem—until you start asking them to be specific about what that means, not only in terms of an authorization or plan, but what does that mean in terms of appropriations or money?

According to published reports, the Democratic leader, the Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER, offered the President \$25 billion toward border security—\$5 billion upfront and \$20 billion more in appropriations and authorization. Then, after they shut down the government, after the President made his proposal, he took that off the table. So far, we have heard nothing from our Democratic colleagues to respond to the President's generous, good-faith offer.

One thing we need to do for sure is to regain the public's confidence when it comes to immigration. We need to reclaim our legacy not only as a nation of immigrants, which we proudly are, but as a nation of laws. That is why people are so frustrated and emotional and angry about the status quo. That is one reason this President was elected. They thought he would bring an end to the lawlessness of our illegal immigration system. But in order to get this done, we have to be able to negotiate in good faith, and we have to be able to compromise, which leads me to wonder, again, whether our friends across the aisle want an issue they plan to take to the election in November or they actually want a solution.

Are they going to actually use these young DACA recipients as a means to accomplish their goal, which is to regain the majority in the House and the Senate after the November 2018 elections? I hope I am wrong, but I don't see any indication so far that I am.

As the President said in last week's State of the Union Message, the ultimate proposal should be one "where nobody gets everything they want, but where our country gets the critical reforms it needs." That is exactly right.

In my home State of Texas, nearly 124,000 DACA recipients are our neighbors. They are an important thread in the fabric of our communities. All of us feel sympathy for these young adults who are in limbo. I remain committed to finding a solution because, in our country, we don't penalize children for the mistakes their parents made. But as the President said last week, "Americans are dreamers, too," and part of their dream is to live in a coun-

try where the law is enforced and respected.

I support the President in his call for upholding the strong rule of law in this country, but the question for today is, Why hold everything else hostage for this unrelated immigration issue? And why, if our Democratic colleagues are willing to shut down the government over that unrelated immigration issue, aren't they willing to respond to the President's generous, good-faith offer to bring a solution to the problem? We need to know what their plans are. What is their proposal that can become law?

The clock is ticking. We know the ending date for this program is March 5. Ultimately, what we are dealing with is people's lives. What do our colleagues care most about? Do they care about political advantage or trying to preserve an issue that will be to their advantage in the upcoming election? Or do they actually care about these young DACA recipients, 690,000 of them, or the 1.8 million that President Trump has offered—an incredibly generous offer—as long as we can deal with these other issues like border security, chain migration, and the diversity lottery visa?

We are waiting for our Democratic colleagues to come to us with a good-faith proposal, but so far all we hear is crickets.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING CHRISTOPHER FOLEY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I wish to begin this afternoon by offering condolences to the family and friends of Christopher Foley of Louisa County, VA. Mr. Foley was killed last Wednesday when his truck collided with an Amtrak train carrying many of my fellow lawmakers to a conference in West Virginia. He was just 28 years old. He leaves behind his fiancée Adriana and Rylan, their 1-year-old son.

Our thoughts are with them especially, along with Christopher's family, his community, and his colleagues at Time Disposal. They and all those who were injured in the accident are in our prayers.

Our heartfelt thanks are with the first responders who rushed to the scene. It is too easy to take for granted

that our brave law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency personnel will be there for us on our worst days, forgetting that, for them, heroism and service are everyday realities. I would like to recognize some of our own colleagues who immediately sprang into action to assist the wounded. Senator CASSIDY and Congressmen WENSTRUP, BURGESS, ROE, and BUCSHON are all doctors by training, as are Senator CASSIDY's wife Laura and Congressman BUCSHON's wife Kathryn. All of them sprang into action and rushed to aid the victims, alongside our attending physician, Dr. Brian Monahan. Senator FLAKE and several others also hurried to help.

I thank all of them for their efforts when every moment counted, and I am proud to call them colleagues and friends.

FRA ADMINISTRATOR NOMINATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on a related matter, in the few days since last week's tragedy, yet another fatal train crash has already taken place. Two lives were lost yesterday when a passenger train and a freight train collided in South Carolina. Last December, three people were killed and scores were injured near Seattle when a passenger train jumped its tracks and crashed into a busy highway.

This worrying spate of accidents offers a sobering reminder that partisan obstruction has kept the Federal Railroad Administration, the top rail regulator, without an Administrator.

The President's nominee, Ronald Batory, has more than 40 years of rail experience. I know of no questions about his qualifications. He was reported out of committee by voice vote on August 2 of last year, meaning that this important safety regulator has now been sitting on the Senate calendar for 6 months—6 months. My Democratic colleagues are holding his nomination over a parochial issue that is completely unrelated to rail safety. This needs to come to an end.

The FRA Administrator is the Nation's top rail safety regulator. There is an urgent need and a highly qualified candidate. I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will put a stop to their partisan games on this front. We can and should confirm Mr. Batory today—today.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, our deadline to fund the Federal Government is this Thursday. Serious bipartisan negotiations continue on long-term spending levels, along with other important issues. I am optimistic that these talks will bear fruit.

In the meantime, as broader discussions continue, we have the opportunity to remove the uncertainty facing our all-volunteer Armed Forces.

Since the passage of the Budget Control Act, it has become increasingly ob-

vious that current funding levels are not sufficient for our Armed Forces to accomplish each of the missions and tasks that our Nation asks of them.

Secretary Mattis's new national defense strategy will require considerable new investment, and he has repeatedly pointed out that short-term continuing resolutions harm the readiness of our forces.

I am pleased that we are making real headway in our negotiations over spending caps and other important issues, but there is no reason why our warfighters need to continue to face uncertainty until all of the other issues are resolved.

Last week, a bipartisan majority in the House passed a bill that would fund our national defense through fiscal year 2018. Democrats and Republicans came together, voting to secure adequate, predictable, annual funding for our Armed Forces while we continue our productive negotiations on all these other subjects. The Senate will soon take up this House-passed bill.

I have recently heard many of my Democratic colleagues detail the harmful effects of short-term funding measures on our servicemembers. Soon, each one of us will have a chance to vote to give them the certainty they deserve while our other work continues.

TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on one final matter, in the State of the Union Address last week, President Trump detailed signs that our Nation's economy is thriving under the policies of his administration and this Republican Congress. Evidence keeps piling up that good things happen when the government takes its foot off the brake and gets out of the way of American workers and job creators.

Last week, UPS, the largest private employer in my hometown of Louisville, KY, announced that tax reform will enable them to invest \$12 billion in expanding their smart logistics network, funding employee pensions, and other capital improvements.

Their chairman and CEO had this to say:

We applaud President Trump and Congress for their bold action. . . . Tax reform is a tremendous catalyst.

On Thursday, another major American employer, Lowe's, announced that it will give bonuses of up to \$1,000 to more than a quarter of a million hourly employees and expand family friendly employment benefits, like adoption assistance and paid parental leave.

The very same day, the major pharmaceutical company Amgen, which houses a distribution facility in Louisville, announced that tax reform is causing them to shift more of their planned investments here to the United States, including the construction of a new "next-generation manufacturing plant" right here at home.

Already, our historic tax reform law is giving employers the flexibility to

invest more, expand more, hire more American workers, and give bonuses, pay raises, and new benefits to their employees, and, already, middle-class families across the country are seeing the benefits.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Andrei Iancu, of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I wish to speak on the nomination of Andrei Iancu to be Under Secretary of Commerce and Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Intellectual property is critical to our national economy because it encourages the innovation that improves lives and creates jobs. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office plays a critical role in fostering innovation by protecting intellectual property rights, so it is important that the office have strong and accountable leadership.

Mr. Iancu holds a B.S. and M.S. in engineering from the UCLA School of Engineering and a J.D. from the UCLA School of Law. He currently is the managing partner of the Los Angeles law firm Irell & Manella, where he has practiced intellectual property law since 1996. Mr. Iancu has represented both patent owners and accused infringers, large and small companies, and individuals in a large number of patent cases.

Mr. Iancu possesses strong legal qualifications, has a proven record in the field of intellectual property law, and is well respected in the intellectual property community. Last December, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved Mr. Iancu's nomination by a voice vote. I support Mr. Iancu's nomination, and I urge my colleagues to vote for him.