

Though majorities in both houses favored funding, cloture gave Senate Democrats the power to run out the clock toward a government shutdown and produce the impasse that we now face today.

Ironically, the political demographics of Senate elections allowed Senate Republicans to increase their majority, while voter frustration decimated their House colleagues.

The 115th Congress now passes into history as Democrats take control of the House and end any chance to fulfill the hopes of 2016. All that is left is Whittier's sad lament: "Of all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

END THE SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis in our country, but it is not at our southern border. There is a crisis mounting at every airport, every national park, in the homes of furloughed Federal employees and stop-work Federal contractors across this country, from Los Angeles through Kansas City to Baltimore. It is a crisis that is hurting the lives of countless Americans whose food won't be inspected, whose water may not be clean, whose flight may not be safe, and whose bills may not be paid. It is a crisis of the President's own making.

Right now, we are on the verge of the longest government shutdown in our Nation's history, a shameful display of what happens when the President governs solely to appeal to his political base, rather than on behalf of all Americans.

Why are we here, Mr. Speaker? Because the President has committed himself to a wall that many experts say is ineffective. It is ineffective; it is expensive; and it is downright absurd. It has become a vanity project that began as an applause line in a campaign speech in which then-candidate Trump deemed the entire migration of people from the south rapists and criminals.

It is clear, the wall is the only policy objective that matters to the President, and he is willing to say or do anything to get it. He will push hundreds of thousands of American families into suffering for his wall, and he has gone so far as to threaten us with a declaration of national emergency if he doesn't get his way, a declaration of national emergency not because we are in the middle of one, but, rather, as the President put it, because he can't make a deal.

What is this national emergency on the border that the President is so concerned and afraid of? The past 2 years have seen border crossings drop to a historic low. Most undocumented immigrants in this country are visa overstays.

Mr. Speaker, 0.1 percent of all Border Patrol arrests in 2018 were members of

MS-13. Yes, that is a problem that we are sadly and tragically familiar with in Maryland, but that doesn't make it a national emergency.

Most drugs smuggled through the southern border come through official ports of entry, not between them. And despite the President's false claims, there aren't thousands of terrorists coming across the border.

Customs and Border Protection, an agency in which the President has considerable confidence, said they encountered six people with names that are like those on the terrorist watch list. Last year, more suspected foreign terrorists were apprehended at the northern border than at our southern border.

Sure, we need strong border security, and not just at our southern border. But the President knows this isn't a national emergency but, perhaps, an alarm to his own political future.

What will hurt our security and create a real crisis is if he takes money away from the Armed Forces to fund the wall. If the President used funding from the military construction budget, facilities used by our men and women in uniform—like shipyards and aircraft hangars, ammunition supply points and training ranges, and childcare centers and family housing—those would continue to slide into disrepair. This would impact military readiness and the quality of life for our military families.

Or the President could decide to use money from infrastructure projects from the Army Corps of Engineers, projects meant to protect cities like Houston or Ellicott City in Maryland from flooding and would threaten tens of thousands of Americans who may find themselves in a real emergency during the next hurricane season.

The use of these authorities, like the deployment of our troops to the border, is irresponsible, unnecessary, and misguided.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have a crisis on the border. We have a crisis in the Oval Office. To President Trump, the wall, his symbol of division, matters more than substantial improvements to border security and true comprehensive immigration reform.

If President Trump wants to address the real crisis in our country, let's end this shutdown and pay the people who work for the people. Let's reduce our silent backlog, protect Dreamers, and fix our dysfunctional immigration system. We need real action and a bipartisan solution.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the small business development centers located throughout my district and

throughout the country. These development centers are Statewide, nationally accredited programs that provide one-on-one consulting, training, and information resources to empower new and existing small businesses.

They are a public-private partnership between the Small Business Administration, the Pennsylvania Department of Commerce and Economic Development, and universities and colleges across the Commonwealth.

Clarion University and Penn State both have fantastic small business development centers whose mission is to provide entrepreneurs with the knowledge needed to make smart decisions and to see their businesses grow and prosper.

Over the past few months, I have received many letters in support of small business development centers from constituents who have utilized these services to start or maintain a small business of their own.

Lisa from Smethport wrote that, after growing up working in her family's restaurant, it had always been a dream to operate her own restaurant. Through the help of the Clarion University Small Business Development Center, her dream became a reality.

Joseph from Punxsutawney worked with the center to help manage his business's financial records and receive a line of credit. He wrote that the information and advice they provided helped him make critical business decisions with confidence.

And Emily from Franklin recently opened up a charming bed and breakfast after working with the development center staff to write up a business plan and organize the financial aspects of her business. She hopes to continue working with the development center and said she truly feels as though they want her to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the stories I have received, and I thank all of my constituents that took the time to share their stories with me. The success stories of small business owners that work with development centers are endless. They have greatly helped economic progress in my district.

The Clarion University center helped start up 55 new businesses in 2017 and supported more than 500 constituents.

Nationally, small businesses make up 99.7 percent of U.S. employer firms. In 2018, there were more than 30 million small businesses that employed 58 million people.

The development center program, operated through the Small Business Administration, was allocated \$130 million for fiscal year 2018. Through the continued funding of small business development centers, paired with the passage of probusiness legislation like the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, entrepreneurship can continue to thrive in Pennsylvania and all across this country.

Mr. Speaker, that is something every American can applaud and that we should be proud of.

END GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, a TSA agent along with his wife had to sell plasma to make ends meet.

A Federal law enforcement employee just received an eviction notice after trying to explain the shutdown to his apartment manager. In a few days, he and his family will be kicked out of their apartment if they do not receive a paycheck in time to pay their rent.

A counselor at a Federal prison is already working under stressful conditions and not being paid. She and her coworkers wonder how they can make their Federal student loan payments when they aren't getting paychecks.

Members of the Coast Guard are working hard every day in dangerous conditions to keep our coastal communities safe, not knowing how they will pay their rent or other bills without their next paycheck.

Air traffic controllers work in a very complex field that requires concentration and dedication to keep the skies safe, and they are expected to do that without getting paid.

□ 1015

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because these Oregonians and hundreds of thousands of people across the country like them are suffering as a result of President Trump's government shutdown.

For 20 days, the President has held the American people hostage over his campaign slogan to build a wall along the southern border, a wall that he promised Mexico would pay for. In those 20 days, I have seen firsthand how harmful this shutdown has been for Oregonians.

I have spoken with individuals from Astoria, Sheridan, Portland, and beyond who are worried: How are they going to pay their rent? How are they going to afford childcare or continue to pay their student loans if their paycheck does not come through on Friday?

Missing even one paycheck can have catastrophic consequences. It is far too high a cost for these dedicated Federal employees to pay for a policy fight that they did not start and have no power to end. This is unconscionable.

Hardworking Oregonians should not lose their homes or be forced to sell plasma because the Federal Government is shut down, especially when they are continuing to report to work and protect our country without pay.

Since taking the majority last week, the House has taken swift action to reopen the government. We have passed bipartisan bills to fund government operations and pay workers who have been furloughed.

The American people have been held hostage long enough. It is past time for the President to abandon his ill-conceived border wall and reopen the Federal Government before more people are hurt.

U.S. POLICY IN SYRIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to read that President Trump has reflected on his initial instinct to pull our 2,000 soldiers out of eastern Syria based on his conclusion that ISIS is defeated, and, instead, he is ordering a withdrawal at a proper pace consistent with American objectives.

To meet our goals of a safe American homeland and progress towards regional stability, America must first develop a strategy to eliminate ISIS from northeast Syria along the lower Euphrates valley at the border of Syria and Iraq.

This plan must include a productive role for our partner and ally, the Kurds. It is not in America's interest to abandon our long friends, the Kurds, to Turkish treachery and annihilation.

Recent open-source data suggests there are 30,000 ISIS-related fighters in the lower Euphrates valley. With our allies, we must press this villainous band to its inglorious end.

Our leaving with no plan will squander our immense success in cutting off funding and winning back hard-fought territorial gains from the occupation of ISIS.

Second, America must block Iran. A key here is a small base and deconfliction zone at al-Tanf, a small force of 200 anchors that base along the key highway between Damascus and Baghdad. Not only is this a strategic imperative, Mr. Speaker, but 50,000 refugees are tenuously housed in this deconfliction zone at Rukban. Withdraw, and death awaits them.

Neighboring Jordan can take no more. We must ensure that an allied force remains at al-Tanf, blocking the Iranian-planned autobahn being considered from Tehran to Damascus. Withdraw, Mr. President, and you will leave Israel fully encircled by its greatest enemy, the Ayatollah in Tehran.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, America must achieve peace and stability in Syria. Our small elite presence, our supply lines, and our air superiority offer pressure on the murderous regime in Damascus to reach a settlement to return Syria to peace and return millions of refugees to their towns and ancestral homes.

Leave, Mr. President, and you will squander the great moral victory of your strategic strikes against Assad from his illegal use of chemical weapons and barrel bombs.

Your early decisive actions made our friends, villagers huddling in fear and from the Euphrates to Idlib, shout with joy. "America is back," they shouted.

Leave, Mr. President, with no plan and no strategy, and they will hang their heads as they did during President Obama's shameful abandonment.

Mr. Speaker, this unfortunate chapter unfolding in the tragedy known as Syria foreshadows an unflattering

flashback to a time long ago when Great Britain abandoned a role of stability in the Holy Land and India.

In 1948, Churchill rose in the House to oppose Prime Minister Atlee's own unplanned precipitous withdrawal from the Holy Land, saying:

A time limit imposed—a kind of guillotine—will certainly prevent the full, fair, and reasonable discussion of the great, complicated issues that are involved.

Indeed, as Churchill foresaw, mayhem, terror, and destruction were the result of Britain's precipitous withdrawal.

It is said that history doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme. Mr. President, let's not repeat this historical mistake nor let our actions even result in a rhyme.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, we know the President doesn't like to read, but I think perhaps his acting chief of staff did.

There was something called the Maginot Line the French built between World War I and World War II, an impenetrable defense against the German invasion. Unfortunately, the Germans went around it.

Here we are in the 21st century. The President wants \$5.7 billion to build a wall along part of the Mexican border. Now, his own acting chief of staff, when he was a Member of Congress and perhaps speaking more freely, said:

You go under, you go around, you go through. What they need is more manpower and more technology.

That is Mick Mulvaney, well, saying something different now, I guess, because he wants to keep his job. But the point is, he had an honest opinion then, and that is the way it will work.

Here are a few things:

You can go over walls and fences—oh, by the way, we just had a demonstration today that the steel slats the President now wants can be cut with a handsaw.

Tunnels, drugs come through that way and people are smuggled in that way.

Oh, they are using the squad copters. You can buy those pretty cheap—oh, and then some more primitive device over here.

But, actually, the flood of drugs coming into the United States comes in right here, legal border crossings.

A couple of problems with that right now:

First off, the people who are manning the border crossings aren't getting paid.

Secondly, they don't have enough technology or the capability of inspecting more than 10 percent of the vehicles that come through. So for the cartels: "Hey, what the heck. We just lost a semi." What do they care? Pocket change. "Couple of hundred thousand