bragged about: fencing with spaced slats that allowed visibility, made with reinforced steel.

They are the same kinds of barriers that Customs and Border Protection experts have told us actually produce real results. You could call them walls; you could call them fences; you could call them steel slats, but what they really are is effective. That is what they are. Call them what you will, but they are effective.

According to the Government Accountability Office, after the outdated fencing in Nogales was replaced by this particular steel slat structure, the Border Patrol reported a significant drop in violent encounters with illegal immigrants. The Border Patrol is not on either side of this debate. They are just giving us the facts—just the facts.

During the 2 years leading up to the 2011 construction, 376 assaults on Border Patrol agents were recorded in the Nogales station. In the 2 years after—after—the bollard fence went up, the number of assaults fell to 71. That is 376 down to 71. That is a decline of 81 percent after the wall or fence or steel slats—whatever you choose to call it.

We have seen big success in other sectors as well. The Trump administration reports that in four border sectors where physical barriers were recently built or upgraded, illegal traffic dropped by—listen to this—90 percent—90 percent.

It is a fact that physical barriers are effective, as Democratic Senators used to understand perfectly well when there was a different occupant in the White House and, indeed, used to say publicly. They used to say that they are an essential ingredient in a balanced strategy for securing our border.

That was then, and this is now.

So why the tale of two completely Democratic Parties? Why does the Speaker of the House feel compelled to denounce as ''immoral'' the very kind of structures that her own party leaders recently praised as essential? Why do my Democratic colleagues and why does the Democratic leader feel the need to prolong this partial shutdown to avoid getting more of the same investments he used to vote for? What is the reason for this bizarre about-face?

Well, even these very Democrats are finding it difficult to invent a good excuse. On Tuesday, the distinguished House majority leader, Mr. HOYER, was asked by reporters how there is any real daylight between border security construction projects that Democrats have supported in the past and the ones they are now trying to block. Here is what majority leader HOYER said to those reporters. This is an honest man. ''I don't have an answer that I think is a really good answer.'' ''I don't have an answer that I think is a really good answer.'' That is the majority leader of the House of Representatives. Well, the reason is because there isn't a good answer. There is no credible answer to this massive flip-flop.

We all know what the real reason is. My Democratic colleagues are operating purely on political spite directed at the President of the United States. Why else would they rather have a partial government shutdown drag on for nearly 3 weeks than get more of what they used to vote for and brag about? Why else would they plug their ears and refuse to listen to the experts out on the ground who do this kind of work, like President Obama's own former Border Patrol Chief? Here is what he says: ''I cannot think of a legitimate argument why anyone would not support the wall as part of a multilayered border security issue.''

Remember, the proposal we are talking about today would represent one-tenth of 1 percent of Federal spending for this year—one one-thousandth.

With a straight face, Democrats are trying to convince the country that the Federal Government simply cannot reopen, that they simply cannot negotiate with the President because the sky would come crashing down if we invest one one-thousandth of Federal spending in proven border security solutions—proven border security solutions, by the way, that their own party used to support and that President Obama's Border Patrol Chief and other security experts continue to support.

Let's call it what it is—a flip-flop that is not based on principle or on evidence but solely on the fact that President Trump is the occupant of the White House.

So Republicans support the President's commonsense request. The experts on the ground who actually risk their own safety to secure our Nation support it. Even the 2006 versions of President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and the Democratic leader would have supported it, but today's Democrats now say that the same fencing and barriers that were A-OK when President Obama was in the White House are now ''immoral''—''immoral''—because President Trump is the one making the requests.

This is not how you make serious policy. Partisan tantrums are no way to govern. My Democratic colleagues need to get serious about their responsibilities, seek treatment for their brand-new partisan allergy, seek some treatment for their brand-new party allergy to border security, sit down with the President, and negotiate a solution that works for everyone. That is the only way to move the country forward.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today is the 20th day of the Trump shutdown. Tomorrow, it will tie the record for the longest shutdown in American history, and 800,000 Federal workers will miss a paycheck—TSA agents and Border Patrol, air traffic controllers and food safety inspectors, veterans, and FEMA aides, and more. Many Federal employees—particularly, GS–3s and GS–4s and GS–5s—live paycheck to paycheck. Who is going to make the next mortgage payment for them? Who is going to put food on the table? And what on Earth do these employees and their agencies have to do with disagreements here over security down on our southern border?

The President is treating these hard-working Americans as nothing short of leverage—pawns in his political gambit to extract $5 billion from American taxpayers to fund a border wall that he promised Mexico would pay for. This is ridiculous and cruel, and it needs to end now—right now.

The Democratic position is very simple. Let's separate our disagreements over border security from the government shutdown, reopen all the government agencies unrelated to border security, and let's continue to work to resolve our differences. Do not hold all of these workers as hostages, as pawns, as leverage.

That is why Democrats have passed the House legislation to reopen government that was drafted and supported by Senate Republicans. We Democrats are not trying to push down the throats of Republicans something they don't support or they can't swallow. Four of the bills in this package passed the Senate 92 to 6. The other two came through committee. They didn't get to the floor. They passed 31 to 0 and 30 to 1. There is nothing—I repeat, nothing—contained in the legislation that Senate Republicans oppose.

So why aren't we voting on it? Because Leader MCCONNELL is hiding behind President Trump, saying he will not bring to the floor a bill to reopen the government unless the President says OK.

Now, for the past 3 weeks, we have tried to get the President to ''yes.'' We have gone around and around and around with the White House and made little progress. Congressional leaders have now been to the White House three separate times for negotiations. Each time, the President has been intransigent and uncompromising. He refuses to back down from his position that the price to reopen the government is $5 billion of taxpayer money for a wall that he promised Mexico would pay for.

On multiple occasions, he has refused our request to reopen unrelated parts of the government and continue negotiations on border security, revealing that he is holding the American people hostage as leverage, and he seems to be—in his words—''proud'' of it. After only a short time into yesterday's meeting, the President got up, said ''bye-bye,'' and left. Does that sound like someone who is working to solve this impasse?

Allies of the President pointed out that he passed out candy to start the meeting. With all due respect, President Trump, we don't need candy. Federal workers need their paychecks.

The Congress—the Senate in particular—can no longer wait for this President to see the light of reason. We gave it a good-faith effort. Staffers worked over the weekend. Speaker PELOSI and I have gone over to the White House whenever we have been asked, but the President is simply not budging.

A few weeks back, we all thought that the President, realizing he doesn't control the House, would come around and support a true compromise before hundreds of thousands of Federal workers would miss their paychecks. Clearly, that was wrong.

We need intervention, and Leader MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans have a responsibility not simply to wait for the President but to intervene. Leader MCCONNELL has voted for every single one of the six appropriation bills Democrats passed through the House. He voted for all six of them in committee, and he voted for four of them again on the floor, because two didn't get to the floor. There is nothing that he or his party truly opposes in this legislation.

They are refusing to vote on it because the President has bullied them into his hostage-taking gambit. I know that is not where most of my friends on the other side want to be. I don't even believe it is where my friend Leader MCCONNELL wants to be. Just listen to Leader MCCONNELL from last year:

> Well I'm in favor of border security. There are some places along the border where [a wall is] probably not the best way to secure the border.

Here is Leader MCCONNELL in 2014:

> Remember me? I am the guy that gets us out of shutdowns . . . it's a failed policy.

Fast-forward to today, and Leader MCCONNELL—''the guy that gets us out of shutdowns''—is aiding and abetting the blockade against reopening the government over a policy he doesn't fully support.

In a moment, my friends Senators CARDIN and VAN HOLLEN will give the Senate a chance to do the right thing by asking this Chamber to vote on the six appropriations bills already supported by Senate Republicans and a short-term continuing resolution for Homeland Security.

Frankly, even if President Trump doesn't support this legislation, his intransigence has forced our hand and hurt America. We need to move forward, and Leader MCCONNELL should allow the vote to happen.

I yield to the Senator from Maryland.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, as Leader SCHUMER has pointed out, starting today, 800,000 Federal workers are going to be missing their paychecks. In this region, there are 140,000. Senator VAN HOLLEN and I, representing Maryland, and Senators WARNER and KAINE, representing Virginia, have made the point of what this is going to mean for families in our communities.

This shutdown is outrageous and dangerous—caused by President Trump. Workers are not going to be receiving their paychecks and are going to be at risk. Our whole country is at risk. Let me put this in perspective, if I might. It is like AT&T, General Motors, Apple, Lockheed Martin, Google, and ExxonMobil laying off their entire workforce at one time. That is the impact we have now with 800,000 workers not receiving their paychecks. Kevin Hassett, who is the Chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, points out that this will cause a $1.2 billion-per-week hit on our economy.

America is being held hostage by President Trump—held hostage over his desire to have a wall built. It is not about border security. We have already appropriated funds for border security, and we are prepared to continue to protect our borders. This is about President Trump and his wall. We should open government and work together for the American people.

There are seven appropriations bills that have not yet been acted upon. With six of those appropriations bills, there is no controversy. They have nothing to do with the border wall. They have nothing to do with homeland security. These are six appropriations bills that this body has already acted on in one way or the other. They include Financial Services and General Government, Agriculture, Interior and Environment, and Transportation-HUD. Those four appropriations bills passed this body by a vote of 92 to 6. Then, there are State-Foreign Operations, which passed the Appropriations Committee unanimously, and Commerce-Justice-Science, which passed by a vote of 30 to 1.

These six appropriations bills have already been acted on under Republican leadership in a bipartisan manner in this body. That is exactly what H.R. 21, which is pending before this body, incorporates. It is not a Democratic effort; it is to reaffirm what this body has already done and allow these six appropriations bills to pass and for those workers and those Agencies to be fully operable without the hostage-taking by the President of the United States.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 21

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 5, H.R. 21, making appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, there is a lot of important business the Senate could be tackling. We have typically done that during these government shutdowns. The last thing we need to do right now is to trade pointless—absolutely pointless—show votes back and forth across the aisle.

Just a few days ago, very recently—not years ago—before the latest shifts in political winds, my good friend the Democratic leader completely agreed with me on this. In fact, he and I made an explicit commitment to several of our Members on this very point. We announced it here on the floor. We agreed that we wouldn't waste the Senate's time on show votes related to government funding until a global agreement was reached that could pass the House, pass the Senate, and which the President could sign.

Here is how the Democratic leader himself stated his position, and remember, this was very recently: In order for an agreement to be reached, all four congressional leaders must sign off and the President must endorse it and say he will sign it. That is how you make a law. Most importantly, the President must publicly support and say he will sign our agreement before it gets a vote in either Chamber—before it gets a vote in either Chamber.

That was my good friend the Democratic leader just recently. I intend to keep my word, and I intend to hold him to his.

Yesterday, the White House made clear that the President opposes piecemeal appropriations that neglect border security and would veto them, so obviously that isn't going to become law. This proposal flunks the Democratic leader's own test of a few days ago.

Look, the political stunts are not going to get us anywhere. Senate Democrats should stop blocking the Senate from taking up other urgent matters, like the pending bills concerning Israel and the Syrian civil war. In previous government shutdowns, the Senate has done business. The Senate hasn't been shut down. That is what we ought to be doing and actually at the same time negotiate with the President on border security because nothing else is going to get a solution. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, if I could, very briefly.

I am extremely disappointed. I can assure you, the majority leader, this is not a show vote issue with 800,000 Federal workers being denied their paychecks. The last time I checked the Constitution, we are a coequal branch of government, and we should act as a coequal branch of government and pass legislation that is overwhelmingly supported by this body.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, colleagues on the Democratic side of