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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Redeemer, thank You for Your abundant mercy and grace. You continue to do for us more than we can ask or imagine.

Guide the steps of our Senators. May they look to You to bring them to Your desired destination, as You surround them with the shield of Your divine favor.

Eternal King, help us all to never forget how Your sustaining grace has kept us in the past. May the memories of Your loving providence in our history infuse us with the spirit of optimism for all of our tomorrows.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as recently as a few days ago, our government funding discussions seemed to be in a pretty good place. Bipartisan, bicameral negotiations on finishing out the year's appropriations process seemed to be right on track. We ap-

peared headed toward a compromise result that would have provided much needed investments in border security and completed our remaining appropriations bill to fully fund the government.

Last week, the Democratic leader seemed confident that "we worked out a plan to refund the government, deal with border security in a way that would be acceptable to all sides. That's working pretty well." Just this past Friday, the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, Senator LEAHY, suggested that "we're 95 to 98 percent done."

But then over the weekend, we heard that the talks had suddenly hit a snag. The bipartisan momentum had stalled. What went wrong? Here is what happened. The House Democrats decided to add a poison pill demand into the conversations at the eleventh hour. It is a new demand. It is really extreme—a hard, statutory cap on the number of illegal immigrants who could be detained by the Federal Government. This would result in the release of thousands of criminal aliens and our inability to detain thousands more criminal aliens whom our Federal and State law enforcement authorities will apprehend.

This is a poison pill that no administration—not this one, not the previous one—would or should ever accept. Imagine the absurdity of this. House Democrats want to set a limit on how many criminal aliens our government can detain. This is a limit that is not based on any aspect of reality, such as how many criminal aliens there actually are or what crimes they have committed; it is just an arbitrary number a couple of lawmakers have pulled out of thin air. The consequence of such an arbitrary limit is obvious: Thousands of criminal aliens would simply be released into the interior of our country, both immediately and then on a rolling basis into the future.

The National Sheriffs' Association explained this in a letter to Chairman

SHELBY and Senator LEAHY. Here is what the sheriffs had to say:

Capping the number of detention beds . . . not only jeopardizes the integrity of the immigration system, but would cripple ICE's ability to detain criminal aliens and other aliens who pose a risk to public safety or are a flight risk. . . . In order to meet the cap tentatively proposed by Congress, ICE would be compelled to release thousands of aliens from custody.

That is what the National Sheriffs' Association had to say about it—released, just like that, right out into the United States of America. It is hard to believe this is where some Democrats are—a get-out-of-jail-free card for criminals because the radical left doesn't like U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. Let me say that again. It is a get-out-of-jail-free card for criminals because the radical left doesn't like U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement.

It is hard to believe the "Abolish ICE" fringe among House Democrats actually thinks enforcing our laws is wrong. It is hard to believe a group of House Democrats see kneecapping American law enforcement as a higher priority than keeping the government open. But it would be even harder to believe that leading Democrats would be open to this craziness and would let this last-minute poison pill scuttle the entire appropriations process.

Just last year, when the Democratic leader was highlighting productive, bipartisan work on this appropriations process, he said: "Both sides have worked to avoid poison pill riders. That has meant steady progress." Ranking Member LEAHY celebrated that through last year's committee process, "We avoided new poison pill riders." So I hope my Democratic colleagues are able to talk some sense into their side.

Some House Democrats are risking a second partial government shutdown by calling for this absurd, last-minute poison pill. No administration of any party would sign a bill that forced them to release criminal aliens into

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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the interior of the United States. No administration would accept this poison pill forcing the release of criminals now and on a rolling basis going forward.

I understand that the four leaders on Appropriations in both Chambers will be meeting in just a few minutes. I would implore my friends across the aisle: Untangle yourselves from the most extreme far-left voices out on the fringe. Do not let this radical fringe and its absurd demand prevent you from taking yes for an answer. Don't let them torpedo all of this bipartisan work.

This provision would, rightly, be a total nonstarter with the White House—with any White House, not just this one. It would erase our progress and kick us back to square one. It is a total poison pill, pure and simple.

The American people are not clamoring for more aliens with criminal backgrounds to be roaming at large in their communities. I never heard anybody ask for that. And they certainly are not so eager for that outcome that they want another partial shutdown in order to achieve it.

My Democratic colleagues in this Chamber need to see this stunt for what it is, bring their side back to the table, and finish our work for the American people.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 47, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 47) to provide for the management of the natural resources of the United States, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Murkowski/Manchin modified amendment No. 111, in the nature of a substitute.

Murkowski amendment No. 112 (to amendment No. 111), to modify the authorization period for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation Program.

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 6, H.J. Res. 1.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 6, H.J. Res. 1, a bill making further continuing appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2019, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for no more than 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

S. 47

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, Chairman MURKOWSKI and I have been working with the majority leader and minority leader to resolve the few remaining issues on our bill, which is the land management bill we have before us.

I would like to thank all Senators for their cooperation and for the work they have put in to get this to this point. I believe we are making good progress.

We will vote on the motion to invoke cloture at 5:30. I will be joining Chairman MURKOWSKI in voting yes on cloture, and I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

I understand that Senator LEE, my dear friend from Utah, may want a vote on his amendment to exempt Utah from the Antiquities Act. I have talked to Senator LEE many times about his concerns with national monuments in his State. While I respect his views, I will oppose any amendment that threatens the success of this lands bill. At this point, any amendment would threaten the success of the bill.

This bill is truly a great piece of legislation for our country. This package includes numerous important provisions that will enhance conservation, recreation, and hunting, fishing, and shooting opportunities for sportsmen on Federal lands.

In my view, one of the most important provisions in the bill is the permanent—I repeat, the permanent—reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I have long supported the permanent reauthorization of the LWCF, which has played a crucial role in making my State all the more wild and wonderful. In fact, since 1965, \$243 million of LWCF funds have been spent to enhance recreation and conservation in West Virginia alone.

LWCF funds have been used to provide public access and protect many of West Virginia's most popular recreation sites, including the Dolly Sods Wilderness in the Monongahela National Forest, as well as every access point on the Lower Gauley River in the Gauley River National Recreation Area. As you can see on this chart, LWCF funds have protected 57,000 acres in the Gauley River and the New River Gorge.

While LWCF funds are used to protect important Federal conservation and recreation lands, the program also

provides essential funding to States to enhance State and local park and outdoor recreational opportunities. These are not free giveaways to States but, rather, they are matching grants that result in increased recreational opportunities at the State and local levels.

This is Ritter Park in Huntington, WV. Ritter Park offers miles of walking trails along an area called Fourpole Creek. Ritter Park also has numerous tennis courts, playground facilities, and an amphitheater that is used by the community for small events, such as concerts and plays. The rose garden, which you can see here, is a wonderful place to spend some time, and in 2012, Ritter Park was named as one of the “Great Public Spaces” by the American Planning Association. Over the years, more than \$625,000 in State Land and Water Conservation funds has been spent on improvements at Ritter Park.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund also provides other important financial assistance to States, including funding for the Forest Legacy Program, which helps to protect working forests on private lands; the American Battlefield Protection Program, which helps to protect Civil War and Revolutionary War battlefield sites on State and private lands; and grants to protect endangered species' habitats on non-Federal lands.

On the Federal side, LWCF funds have been used to safeguard some of our Nation's iconic public lands. Here you can see just a few examples of areas where LWCF funds have been used to ensure that we can set aside these areas for future generations and help our land management Agencies follow their conservation missions as directed by Congress.

LWCF funds help to complete the protection of and provide important public access to areas set aside by Congress in recognition of their national significance, including lands managed by the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Forest Service.

In West Virginia, we have the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, which is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Canaan was established in 1994 and was the 500th wildlife refuge to be established. Since 1994, every single acre of the 16,613-acre area was acquired using LWCF funds. As one can see here, the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge is a truly beautiful place that would not have been possible had we not had the LWCF. Permanent reauthorization of the LWCF will ensure States and Federal land management Agencies will continue to protect and conserve nationally significant lands for future generations—all without relying on taxpayer dollars. It is past time for Congress to permanently reauthorize the LWCF.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of the many pieces of legislation in this package. It is another reason we need to pass this bill without