

So to the majority leader, I will just say, we should not be contracting out our constitutional responsibilities to any President—certainly not a President who said he is proud to shut down the Government of the United States. There is nothing to be proud of in denying important services and leaving 800,000 people without a paycheck. I don't think any of us should be proud of that, and we shouldn't be contracting out our responsibilities to the President of the United States.

We should vote on these measures we have already voted for. Senator CARDIN just asked us to vote on this at the Senate desk. It has been supported in various ways by a bipartisan majority right here in the U.S. Senate.

I have in my hand H.J. Res. 1. This is also on the Senate calendar. It is identical, with respect to the Department of Homeland Security, to the measure this Senate passed just a few weeks ago.

Let's reopen the Department of Homeland Security at current funding levels until February 8. In fact, if I recall, that was the majority leader's legislation. We passed it overwhelmingly on a bipartisan vote.

The House, 1 week ago, as their first order of business, passed this bill and the bill Senator CARDIN asked us to vote on.

This bill to open the Department of Homeland Security, as we negotiate the issue of border security—and there is no dispute over whether we need border security. Of course we need secure borders. The issue is over the most effective and smart way to accomplish that.

So now this bill is right back in our possession. It is on the calendar. The question is, Why are our colleagues on the Republican side refusing to allow a vote on the very bill they proposed in this body just a few weeks ago, and how can you justify to the American people that you are not going to vote on something you yourself proposed as the first order of business in the U.S. Senate, when people are losing those services, losing public safety protections, and 800,000 Federal employees are not being paid?

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
H.J. RES. 1

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 6, H.J. Res. 1, making further continuing appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security. I further ask that the joint resolution 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?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I will not prolong this because I know a lot of my Democratic colleagues on the floor may want to speak, but there are two shutdowns going on here. The first one related to the government can only be solved with a Presidential signature, supportive of the Speaker of the House and supportive of at least 10 of our Democratic colleagues—or 7 on the other side. In other words, there has to be a deal, an agreement.

There is a second shutdown going on that, as far as my research can discover, is rather unprecedented. The Senate itself is being shut down because of the refusal of our colleagues on the other side to do business in the Senate during this period. There is no precedent for that. There is no reason for that. We are all here.

The bill they are refusing to let us get on relates to Israel, our great friend Israel, and addresses the atrocities that have been occurring in Syria.

I am having a hard time understanding why the Senate should be shut down as well as the government. We are all here. In fact, attendance looks pretty good, and I don't know why we can't process bills that the vast majority of us support.

I had hoped to pass all of these bills at the end of last session. We had some last-minute objections—and I will say on our side—and so we were unable to do it, but the vast majority of the Members of the Senate do want to process these bills.

So I would hope, no matter how you view the government shutdown, that there is no real significant reason to shut down the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. We are clearly not shut down. We are all here.

I would say to the majority leader, if you go to a lot of Federal Agencies right now, no one is there. They are shut down. They can't do the work of the American people, which is why the FDA is no longer doing important food inspections on seafood. It is why the EPA is not able to inspect major polluters to protect the public health. We are open.

All we are saying is, we want our first order of business to be to also open the eight of nine Federal Departments that have nothing to do with a wall or border security. The EPA's work has nothing to do with a wall. The work the FDA does on food inspection has nothing to do with a wall. So pass the measures that have already been agreed to in the U.S. Senate on a bipartisan basis. Open those eight of nine Departments at funding levels the Senate supported to the end of the fiscal year. Then, with the Department of Homeland Security, do exactly what the majority leader proposed right here and which we supported just a few weeks ago so we can work with the President. I mean, he walked out the other day, but we would like to work with the President to resolve that.

What we are saying is, we are open, and we want to focus on the urgent business of reopening the rest of the Federal Government, both to provide the American people with the services they paid for and to make sure Federal employees don't go without paychecks.

I will tell you, your phones will all be ringing off the hook tomorrow when Federal employees begin to miss that first paycheck. I will tell you, GS-2s, GS-3s in the Federal Government, they are one paycheck away from not being able to pay their bills.

On top of that, you have small businesses all over the country—I have heard from my Republican colleagues, small businesses that contract with the Federal Government, they are being squeezed. One in the State of Maryland, nonprofit small business, laid off 173 people just yesterday. The Federal contractors' employees? They are not coming to work. They are shut out, and they are not getting paid.

So this is having an increasingly harmful effect every day on people throughout the country, and we have it in our power today to vote on bills we have already voted for in the U.S. Senate on a bipartisan basis to reopen.

We should not be accomplices to the shutdown the President said he would be proud of. We should say today, we are proud to cast our first vote, as the House did, to reopen the Federal Government and get people back to work.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S.1) to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, now, President Trump is right about one thing. There is a crisis in America, and I want the President to know I agree with him, but I would note it is not fictitious hordes of illegal immigrants crashing into our southern border. That is nothing more than the imaginary invasion of a President obsessed with constructing a wasteful monument to himself; the obsession of a President who, long before the Trump shutdown, began resorting to misinformation and stoking fear among the American people for political gain.

There is a crisis in America, but it is not the crisis the President wants us to believe. It is a crisis at the kitchen table of Americans.

Hundreds of thousands of American families are preparing to miss their first paycheck through no fault of their own. These families are trying to figure out how they are going to make ends meet, how they will pay their mortgage or heating bills or, God forbid, whether they can afford both food for their table and medicine for their children next week. That is not fiction. That is a real choice in America today. That is the crisis in America.

These are the adjustments President Trump has glibly said our country's public servants are "willing" to make on behalf of his wasteful border wall; incidentally, a wall the President repeatedly promised—gave his word—that Mexico would pay for.

I have been privileged to be here for a long time, but in my 44 years in the U.S. Senate, I have never seen something so tone deaf from a President of the United States of either party. Even during his address to the Nation on Tuesday night—which was more of an exercise in data-distorting demagoguery than informing the American people—President Trump refused to acknowledge the real pain the Trump shutdown is causing.

Dozens of Vermonters have contacted my office to share how they are suffering under the Trump shutdown. These Vermonters are urging the President and my Republican colleagues in the Senate to stop playing politics with their lives and reopen the Federal Government. These are not just people who are Federal employees; these are people who have contracts with the Federal Government. These are people who have to rely on the Federal Government being open.

I will give you one example. Like many Americans affected by the Trump shutdown, one of the Vermonters who contacted my office is a veteran. He spent more than two decades serving his country in the Navy. He is now a Federal employee in charge of more than a dozen people who are coming to him with questions he cannot answer.

He writes:

I have run out of words to tell the 15 employees who work for me when asked how they are supposed to provide food, heat, and electricity for their families here in Vermont.

Keep in mind, the weather in Vermont is projected to drop well below zero this weekend with enough snow to close down all of Washington.

This Navy veteran continues:

We are real people, with real families, and real bills. Creditors do not "understand" [as the President claimed they would]. They want their money.

Try to explain to the bank why you cannot pay your mortgage this month. Go to the bank and say: Well, the President of the United States is throwing a tantrum, and he is holding

my paycheck hostage. Try explaining that to the bank. Try explaining that to your children.

Another Vermonter wrote to me expressing concern for his 88-year-old aunt. She recently moved to a new nursing home to be closer to the family. Because the phones at the Treasury Department are going unanswered, approval for the transfer of his aunt's benefits from one facility to another has been delayed. Thankfully, we heard that the transfer had been approved just this morning, but that doesn't detract from the uncertainty and the anxiety caused for this family.

The new home allowed her to stay while we in Washington were sorting out this mess caused by President Trump, but the bills are piling up, and the delays are placing a burden on what is a small local nursing home that has to pay its bills, including when it is 5 below zero.

The Vermonter said in his letter: "To be sure, we do not believe that capitulation to the Republican demand for the Wall is the answer; yet, the toll on the people of holding the government hostage to such outrageous demands must not be ignored."

Finally, today, let me share the story of a Vermonter who wrote to me about her sister. Her sister joined the U.S. Forest Service. In the wake of the recent hurricanes and typhoons, she used a government credit card issued in her name, following orders to travel with the service to assist in the aftermath of these disasters. But now the bills for her official travel—travel she was ordered to take by the Federal Government—are due. Guess what. There is no one at the Forest Service to pay them. She is now stuck with more than \$5,500 in government bills in her name for carrying out her duties for the Federal Government. Now she has to pay them or risk damaging her own financial record.

In her letter to me, she writes:

This, though, is one very small story in a flood of credit disasters, unpaid mortgages, Christmas debts, anxieties, and uncertainties among government employees affected by the shutdown.

I'm writing you to suggest that this kind of government shutdown should not be on the negotiation table, because it holds out the possibility that the suffering of the American people can be used as political leverage. There are other ways.

I agree. This is just a handful of stories from my small State of Vermont. Think of the fear and anxiety today of American families as they sit around the kitchen table trying to figure out what to do when the check does not arrive tomorrow. Think about the impact this has on the talented young student who is thinking about taking a pay cut to work for their government out of a sense of duty. Think about the morale of the American people who serve this country when the President of the United States says that their livelihoods are worth risking over his border wall—and I say "border wall" on purpose. If this were about border secu-

rity, the men and women who protect our borders and patrol our coastlines would be receiving their paychecks, not forced to be pawns in the President's political game.

Think about that. If this were really about border security, these people protecting us would be paid. The great irony of the Trump shutdown is that it has made our borders less safe, not more safe. Today, 88 percent of the Department of Homeland Security, including 54,000 Customs and Border Patrol agents are working without pay. At our airports, where the overwhelming majority of the "suspected terrorists" President Trump's wall is meant to stop are actually intercepted—keep that in mind. He keeps talking about all of the suspected terrorists. They are not coming across the border. They are being stopped at the airports. So what has happened at our airports? More than 51,000 TSA agents at our airports are working without pay. Morale is so low that many just stopped showing up for work, leading to longer wait times and straining security measures.

(Mr. SULLIVAN assumed the Chair.)

Take another area. More than 42,000 members of our Coast Guard—and the Coast Guard is an effective investment in securing our borders and stopping the flow of drugs. But 42,000 members of our Coast Guard are working without pay as I stand here today. The Coast Guard are deployed along the coasts of the distinguished Presiding Officer's State and are deployed in my State.

What does President Trump say to all of this? Nothing. It has been widely reported that instead of sitting down and negotiating with Democrats, President Trump simply stood up and walked out of the room like a bully yesterday, tweeting shortly afterwards, "bye-bye."

Does anybody think he hadn't planned to do this before he went there? This is what you do on so-called reality TV. Well, this is not reality TV; this is reality. He should try to act Presidential.

There is a real crisis in our country. It is a crisis at the kitchen table as families struggle over how they will make it through the next week. It is a crisis of morale as dedicated men and women who serve our country debate whether to stop serving our country and look instead for a career where they cannot be used as a political pawn. It is a crisis of confidence in the young men and women, doubting a career in public service, and it is a crisis of leadership when the President simply walks away so that he can send another tweet. This is a crisis created by one man, President Trump.

We have bipartisan bills before us that could reopen the government. We have passed them in this body before by an overwhelming veto-proof majority. Well, I would call upon our Republican leader to bring up these bipartisan bills to reopen the government. It

is time for Republicans and Democrats to join together to tell the President to put a stop to this self-inflicted wound on this great country, and he needs to hear it from both Democrats and Republicans. I implore Leader McCONNELL: Bring up H.R. 21 and H.J. Res. 1. Send them to the President. Send them to the President. Show the rest of the world that the United States is a great country and can act like a great country, not act like a pawn in a temper tantrum.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank my colleague the Senator from Connecticut for giving me a chance to very briefly—less than 1 minute—add my voice as well.

I echo what my friend the Senator from Vermont has said. I want to commend the leadership of my friends the Senators from Maryland, Mr. CARDIN and Mr. VAN HOLLEN. The Commonwealth of Virginia is experiencing the same kinds of challenges and crisis that Maryland is. We have a disproportionate number of Federal employees, and I think we underestimate what is going to happen when these employees don't get their paychecks on Friday—that coming on top of countless number of contractors. I have small business contractors who have had to shut down their business because they can't make the payroll. Even reopening the government will not mean those businesses will come back into operation.

I simply wanted—I am sorry the majority leader is not here. The majority leader keeps saying, you know, that we are powerless in this body to do anything, that the only way we can pass any legislation is if the President agrees.

I do not want to overstate the case, but I would simply refer the majority leader to article I, section 7, clause 2 of our Constitution, which gives this body, if it reaches a two-thirds vote, the ability to override a Presidential veto and make the legislation, which has already passed this body by a 96 to 2 vote. If those same votes stand by the legislation that we all agreed to before Christmas—if it was a good idea before Christmas to reopen the government and continue the debate on national security on a separate path, how is it not a good idea today, when Federal employees are going without their pay?

So the majority leader's unwillingness to allow us to vote, to have our voices be heard—and if that vote would in any way appear close to where this same body voted before Christmas, we would have a solution to this crisis. I simply wanted to point that out.

I know the majority leader knows our laws and knows our Constitution, but I find it a little bit rich when he says that we have no ability at all to weigh in on this process and he refuses to take any action that will not meet with the agreement of this President.

The Constitution of the United States gives the Senate the ability to

have their voices heard. We have already voted in margins that would well exceed the veto requirements laid out by the Constitution. I hope he will give us the right to vote and let us have our voices heard and potentially be able to have the government of the United States reopened.

With that, I thank my colleagues for giving me the chance to add that small item to the debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was happy to yield to the Senator from Virginia because I know this issue of the government shutdown is particularly acute in Virginia and in the State of Maryland, but we feel it all across the United States of America.

Just a few minutes ago, I was on the phone with Dr. Scott Gottlieb of the Food and Drug Administration, and I asked him: What is the impact of the Trump shutdown on the Food and Drug Administration? Dr. Gottlieb was very explicit. He said that the area that was hardest hit was food safety.

Food safety is a responsibility that was assumed by the Federal Government over 100 years ago after publication of the novel "The Jungle" by Upton Sinclair. We decided to create a Federal Agency with the responsibility of inspecting food so that people across America would not suffer foodborne illness or worse.

We have a great Agency, and it does a great job when it is fully funded operationally, but the fact is, over 40 million Americans will end up with a food illness in any given year, and over 3,000 will die. The responsibility of this Agency is not some bureaucratic function; it is quite literally a life-and-death responsibility.

I asked Dr. Gottlieb: What does the government shutdown do to the Food and Drug Administration when it comes to food safety? He said: We have had to suspend operations at the highest risk food operations.

I asked him for an illustration, and he said: For example, the facilities that make baby food, high-risk food inspection responsibilities at the FDA. He said: We decided we had to call back 150 employees to make sure that we resume inspections at these high-risk facilities, such as those that make baby food.

Thank goodness.

He told me he has a problem. Here is the problem. The people he is going to call back are in the lower income categories of Federal employees. Many of them are making a decent wage, but only a decent wage, and, certainly, they are not wealthy by any stretch, nor do they have savings to turn to.

He said: I have to call back these folks who are literally out of work because of the government shutdown—some of whom have applied for unemployment compensation—and tell them they have to come to work. Commissioner Gottlieb said: When I declare them essential, that is the law. They

have to return to work and come here for no pay.

We have an important responsibility of the government, food safety, which is now being ignored—or I should say diminished—because of the shutdown, and as they try to resume some part of it, Commissioner Gottlieb has the awful responsibility of trying to pick those employees who will be hurt the least if they are called back to work.

This is America. This is the U.S.A. This is a great country, perhaps one of the greatest in the history of the world, and this is where we stand when it comes to making certain that baby food is safe for American families across the United States. Now we have to pick and choose those who will be asked to come to work for nothing to perform that function.

That is not the only area that he mentioned. He went on to talk about areas that are not covered by user fees. You see, some of the pharmaceutical companies and medical device companies actually pay for inspections. As long as user fees are coming in, the inspections continue. But it doesn't apply to every aspect when it comes to medicine. For example, when it comes to compounding medicines, which is done at the State level, primarily, the Federal Government has a responsibility in some areas to make sure that those medicines are safe. Do you recall a few years ago, in the State of Massachusetts, when the compounding standards were lax and innocent people died because the injections they were given were not sterile? Those are exactly the responsibilities of the Food and Drug Administration. They are the responsibilities that are not being met as they are supposed to be met today because of this government shutdown.

If you think this is just about a lot of bureaucrats who are not showing up to work and are sitting by some swimming pool, you are dead wrong. These are people who are doing important things for America and keeping us safe in the process.

There is also one other thing I want to mention to you. If you are in the midst of a clinical trial to approve a new drug—an important drug for someone whose life depends on it—the clinical trials continue through the government shutdown. But if you completed your trials and you want to make an application to sell this drug in America, you are stopped cold by this government shutdown. Commissioner Gottlieb says we can't process these. Those potential lifesaving drugs have to sit on the shelf because of the government shutdown, which this President has proudly declared he believes is in the best interest of America. Tell that to the families who are waiting for that drug. Tell that to the people who labored for years to get it ready for market—that they just have to wait until the President is ready to move.

I was there yesterday. I was at the meeting of the leaders with the President, Vice President, and members of

his Cabinet. It was not a long meeting. I think it lasted 17 minutes. The President came in and distributed candy bars to the people who were in attendance, and then started his speech. It basically came down to this: Unless you are prepared to give me this wall, I will keep the government shut down. That is what he said. When we made it clear that the government shutdown should not be a bargaining chip in this process, the President stood up after 17 minutes, and said: This is a total waste, turned, and, in a fit of pique, left the room. To me, that was a sad moment in the history of this country, when the Chief Executive of the U.S. Government, a man who was elected to manage and lead our government, has voluntarily shut down important and critical functions of that government for a political purpose. He is not serving the American people as he was elected to serve.

The victims, of course, will not be the President and his family, nor many of the people who were in that room. It will be the 800,000 Federal employees who are victims of the shutdown. It will be half of them who are showing up for work today with no pay and will not receive a paycheck over the weekend.

Many of us will travel home over the weekend and go through an airport. We will go through the TSA inspection, as all passengers do, to make sure we travel safely on airplanes. It is tough to look those TSA agents in the eye because we know what is happening. Many of them, barely making enough money to get by—paycheck to paycheck—will not receive a paycheck this weekend. I called a group of them together at the O'Hare Airport on Tuesday. We held a press conference. I asked them to explain what this means to you. They talked about being unable to come up with the money to pay for gasoline to drive back and forth to work 39 miles each way. They talked about the difficulties the families are going to face when it comes to daycare for their children. What are they going to do with their kids if they are coming to work for no pay and they can't pay the daycare service? For those who have mortgage and rental payments, some real consequences can follow. If you fail to make that mortgage payment on a timely basis, you may face an increase on the interest rate on your mortgage, and you may even face a downgrade on your credit rating.

That is the real world for people who don't live in the White House. That is the real world for the victims of this prideful shutdown, which President Trump believes is in the best interest of this country. He is wrong. It is in the best interest of this country to open this government. It is in the best interest of Democrats and Republicans to sit down together and work out our differences when it comes to border security. We are all dedicated to border security. We just see it differently. We have to find middle ground to come to a conclusion on this important issue.

The last point I want to make is this. I am concerned that the majority leader—the Republican leader, Senator McCONNELL—has made it clear that he is waiting for a permission slip from President Trump to be the leader of the Senate. We are a separate and proud branch of government. We are given authority under this Constitution which the President does not have. We do not wait for a permission slip from him to exercise that constitutional authority. The votes to pass these appropriations bills, I believe, are on the floor of the Senate today, and that is what has led Senator McCONNELL to the conclusion that he wouldn't dare call the bill. I think there are enough Republican Senators who have spoken to me privately who are ready to step forward and say: End this mindless shutdown. They are ready to vote for the spending bills. Will it reach 67 to override a Presidential veto? It just might do that. But let's test it by being the Senate under the Constitution, not by waiting for a permission slip from President Trump to exercise the constitutional responsibilities which each of us swore to uphold when we became Members of this important body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, the Senator from Illinois is absolutely right. The votes are there to pass these six bills. The majority leader, in effect, is acting as a buffer for the President. He is not serving this body because he knows that his own Members would vote for it and vote to reopen the government. That is because they are hearing the American people tell them, as they are telling us: Reopen the government.

That was the message that Senator SCHUMER delivered. It is simple, direct, and it is true. The American people want the government reopened. They know we have disagreements all the time. We disagree about policy and politics, proposals and legislation, but we don't shut down the government simply because we disagree. The government continues to do its work and serve the American people even as we have disagreements.

Our friends on the other side, the Republican leadership, are complicit in this shutdown by refusing to permit us to do our duty and our work, which is to consider and pass legislation that will keep the government serving the people of the United States. If the President vetoes those bills, there may well be enough votes here to override them. That is our job as well.

The reason the American people want us to reopen the government is that they know the crisis here is one that Donald Trump has made himself. It is a manufactured crisis involving dedicated public servants who are missing paychecks, taxpayers denied critical government services, economic hardship for small businesses, and low-in-

come Americans. It is a crisis that is spreading.

It is not a crisis at the border in security that the President, supposedly, is witnessing as we speak here. There is a humanitarian crisis at the border, which is also of Donald Trump's making, but the broader crisis throughout this country will affect our economy, our education system, our transportation, and the real security of this country, which is our ability to help each other.

I have looked at those folks in the face, most recently the day before yesterday, at Foodshare, our food bank in Connecticut, which will soon be unable to meet the challenges and needs of the food insecure in Connecticut because the Commodities Distribution Program will be crippled. Their cost and transportation and storage will be overwhelming and unmet. Children and seniors will begin to go hungry because their reserves will be exhausted by the end of this month.

I have spoken to the Coast Guard members who will be unpaid. Alone among our military services—unfairly, unfortunately, unacceptably—they will be unpaid. We know in Connecticut the value of our Coast Guard as a military branch of our government. We are home, proudly, to the Coast Guard Academy, with over 2,000 Active-Duty servicemembers, cadets, and civilian employees who are feeling the direct effect of this Trump shutdown.

In reality, it is a Trump lockout, not a shutdown. He is locking out so many dedicated workers of our Federal Government. But the Coast Guard is continuing to work. It is the only branch of the military that isn't guaranteed pay during this Trump shutdown because, by a quirk of history, it is now part of the Department of Homeland Security, not the Pentagon. These Active-Duty Coast Guard members based in New Haven and New London and across the country are continuing to protect our Nation's security, continuing to rescue Americans at sea, continuing to interdict drugs that threaten our Nation, and they are going unpaid.

That is why a bipartisan group of Senators—and I want to thank Senators THUNE, CANTWELL, and others—have introduced legislation to pay them during this Trump shutdown and any other shutdown going forward. I call on the Senate leadership to immediately approve this bill and allow it for a vote. Our military members in the Coast Guard deserve better, but so do all of the homeowners of this Nation who are seeking mortgages and must put those efforts on hold, so do the community development block grant projects that create jobs and economic growth, and so do law enforcement, essential to our security, who are going untrained.

Food safety inspections have been suspended. Housing safety inspections, like the ones at Barbour Garden in Connecticut and Infield apartments, have stalled.

Breweries, like many in Connecticut—and I am hoping to visit a number tomorrow—are unable to deliver their products to market and onto store shelves.

The National Parks have been left unsupervised.

Last week, the Hartford Courant highlighted the story of Bryan Krampovitis. He is a resident of West Haven and an air traffic controller at Bradley International Airport. A number of traffic controllers are here in Washington, DC, and they will be outside this building later today. He is continuing the work, but he told the Hartford Courant:

I'm a single father of my daughter, and she relies on me to be her sole provider. I have a home and mortgage. It's a hard time to be in. I'm forced to continue to go to work or face the possibility of losing my job.

If the Federal Government is still closed at the time of his next scheduled pay, he will receive “a zero dollar paycheck.”

Like him, so many of these Federal workers are living paycheck to paycheck, and they will be without that paycheck. The effect, though, will be on Americans as a whole.

The President continues to divide us with rhetoric that is distorted and divisive, with misleading, malign mendacity. I am reminded of the sign I saw on TV: “Stop truth decay.” The President should stop truth decay as he visits the border today. He should recognize that there is no crisis, insecurity at the border; that it is manufactured by him. The idea that drugs are imported across the border is correct, but it is at the ports of entry. The idea that terrorists are coming across the border is factually absurd. In fact, the 3,700 figure the President broached has been completely debunked. The idea that the wall will be effective or practical has been abandoned by members of his own administration who have recognized that a wall from sea to shining sea is simply impossible and impractical.

So we are left with a vanity problem—an applause line in the President’s campaign—that has become a wall to progress. It is a wall to progress only in the President’s mind, as everybody in this body knows there is a path forward to reopen the government. That is what the American people want—to reopen the government, to adopt the bills that are necessary for these agencies to go back to work, and to reopen the Department of Homeland Security as well while we debate those disagreements we have and do our jobs.

The Congress must do its job and send to the President the bills that are necessary to reopen the government and save America from this manufactured, unnecessary, unacceptable crisis that has come to us and our country from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

MS. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, many Federal workers in Nevada and

across this country will miss their first paychecks tomorrow due to this shutdown. Our President’s govern-by-chaos approach has pulled the rug out from hundreds of thousands of Federal workers and contractors across the country who are currently furloughed or who are being forced to work without pay, including over 3,000 of them in my home State of Nevada. It is outrageous.

I have heard from many Federal workers in Nevada who didn’t sign up to live in constant fear that their paychecks would be held for political gain. They didn’t sign up to wonder if they will be able to pay their rent on time, cover childcare costs for their young children, or put food on the tables for their families. They certainly didn’t sign up to be used as pawns in this President’s political game. They signed up to serve the American people, and they deserve the certainty of a functioning government and steady paychecks. Instead, hard-working Nevadans are writing and calling me to say they are worried about paying their bills, supporting their children, and keeping up with their mortgage payments.

One Nevadan who is currently working without pay told me he and his colleagues are struggling to pay for the gas to drive to their unpaid jobs.

Another Nevadan is a mother who told me that her son, who is newly enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard, is now facing eviction just 1 month after reporting for duty.

A Las Vegas government contractor who is working to help the Department of Justice reduce its immigration court case backlog told me how discouraged he and his colleagues are that this shutdown is hurting the very people who are trying to help fix our immigration system.

Nevada’s veterans, park rangers, and TSA agents have also all contacted my office and asked for an end to this senseless shutdown so they can continue to provide for themselves and their families.

This is one of the major impacts on Nevada, but it is not the only major disruption we are seeing.

At our national parks and monuments, there is overflowing trash, which threatens the wildlife and public safety because the park rangers and maintenance staff have been furloughed.

In Nevada’s Tribal communities, lapses in funding threaten to close the doors of health clinics, food pantries, and childcare centers.

The Small Business Administration has stopped processing loans that help Nevada’s small businesses and job creators thrive. Over 7,850 Nevada seniors who are enrolled in nutritional food programs and over 437,000 Nevadans who receive SNAP benefits are at risk of losing access to the food assistance that keeps them and their families healthy.

Real people, families, and communities are hurting. These are the people

who do an honest day’s work. They do an honest day’s work, and they expect steady paychecks and a government to be led by a President who cares about their needs and their families’ safety.

The solution to this is simple. Reopen the government and stop holding Federal workers hostage for political gain. They are not leverage. These are hard-working people who are committed to going to work every single day, if that is what they are told to do, to make sure our services run and that we are protected, for they are standing guard even though they are not getting paid.

As we go on about our day, I ask every single one of us, if you see them, to thank them. They are actually going to work and are not getting paid and can’t pay their rent. For those who are furloughed and staying home, they are still struggling in the same way.

That is why I support what my colleagues have done in introducing legislation that provides the backpay that will be necessary to protect these families and make sure they get paid, legislation so we may look out for them and ensure that their credit does not get dinged because of a government shutdown they had no control over. Don’t forget, there are going to be thousands of workers out there who will never get paid because they are contract workers, and we should be doing everything in this Congress to ensure that they are getting the support they need. People are having to look for second jobs, and some can’t even look for second jobs because the Federal jobs they have don’t even allow them to look for second jobs.

This is outrageous. This whole process is outrageous. There is a simple answer to all of this, and we know it. It is doing our jobs. I came to this Congress as a U.S. Senator. I believe in article I. I believe we are a coequal branch of government. We should not be abdicating to the executive branch. We should be doing our jobs. We know we can pass legislation that opens this government. We have already done it. We did it in the last session of Congress. There are many, in a bipartisan way, who want to do this. Let’s just do our jobs. Let’s show the rest of the country that this branch of government can govern and protect everyone.

It is very simple because I know, if we were to get together, pass these bills, and send them over to the President, then he would make his decision. If he were to decide to veto it, then we would override that veto. That is the process. That is the process our Founders and our Framers set up so no one branch of government could control. I hate to see the leadership here abdicating our role to another branch of government.

It is time for us to come together. Let’s open this government. Let’s do it now, and let’s show these Federal workers they are not political pawns, that they are not leverage. Let’s show them the respect and dignity they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor to discuss the ways in which this pointless shutdown has done real harm to American workers and families. I appreciate the words of my colleague from Nevada as she explained how devastating this has been in her State.

We are now in day 20, and the stories are flooding in, in the calls to my office, as to how this political gamesmanship from the White House is harming the American people.

The Washington Post estimates that 6,100 Federal workers in Minnesota have been affected by the shutdown. This includes 1,700 who work for the Department of Agriculture—right when the farm bill has passed. We have many small dairy farmers in Minnesota for whom we had worked so hard to get this bill passed. Now they need to understand it, and they need to figure out what programs to sign up for, but they have no one to talk to. These aren't big milking operations. These are places with a couple of dozen cows, with 50 cows, and they have no one to talk to. As I said, the Washington Post has cited 6,100 Federal workers. Some of these employees are furloughed and are forced to stay away from work. Others are forced to work without pay. Here are a few of their stories.

Sandy Parr works as a food service supervisor and nurse at the Federal Medical Center Rochester in Rochester, MN. She has been asked to work 60-hour shifts during the shutdown and to fill in for dozens of absent colleagues—all without being paid. She told one of our newspapers that she may soon be forced to choose between groceries and medication for her 14-year-old son who has autism.

Celia Hahn is a transportation security officer at our airport, the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. It is a major airport, a hub. She told our local newspaper that she has canceled her plans to sign up her twin 9-year-old boys for a soccer clinic. If the shutdown drags on, she will have to call her mortgage lender to negotiate payments, which is a step many of her colleagues have already had to take.

It goes from the small—a soccer signup that might not seem that important, but anyone who is a parent knows it is a really important thing for kids—to the big, are you going to be able to afford your house? Then it goes to the even bigger as you look at a major airport that has lines and people who are working without pay and where you have law enforcement on the frontline, whether it is Homeland Security or whether they are FBI agents who are going to be working without pay.

Of course, my State is by no means unique in being hurt by this shutdown. I have heard the stories from so many of my colleagues.

Senator Kaine told us about Alan, a veteran and civil servant in Yorktown.

He has had to work without pay since the shutdown began. His emergency savings are exhausted, and he is behind in his bills.

Senator DURBIN of Illinois talked about a Transportation Security Administration worker, a TSA worker, who fears the impact of missing a mortgage or a rent payment. The man told the Senator that if he can't make one of those payments on time, it will hurt his credit rating, which could affect the interest rates he will pay on loans and mortgages for the rest of his life.

These are real people with real-world problems.

Senator HEINRICH of New Mexico told the story of Nicholas, a firefighter. If the shutdown isn't resolved, he told the Senator, he will not be able to support his family.

On Tuesday night, I joined Senator SHAHEEN, who talked about how furloughs have slowed down the work at the Office of National Drug Control Policy and about how the continued delays in funding will pull the rug out from first responders who rely on this funding.

Senator WARNER of Virginia talked about the shutdown's impact on Federal contractors, including custodians, cafeteria workers, and security guards who work as Federal contractors who will never see backpay for the shutdown unless we do something about it.

This is what is happening.

The public IRS office is closed. That is in my State. A woman is trying to make a payment for taxes due and is concerned about the interest and penalties because of the time it will take to process her payment by mail.

The Neighborhood Development Center in St. Paul, MN, a community lender, has two projects awaiting construction funding from the SBA, the Small Business Administration. That is shutdown.

A young man needs his tax transcripts for a late enrollment in college. With the IRS not providing this service, he will not be able to attend the first day of his classes.

A woman who was the victim of identity theft in my State was trying to report it to the IRS but to no avail.

These are basic services that our constituents are being forced to go without. These are promises we made to our constituents and to the men and women who serve the public as Federal employees. It is time for the President to end this pointless shutdown and reopen the government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to talk for a few minutes today about America's foreign policy, I want to talk about interests, and I want to talk about values.

As you know, Congress is about to consider our foreign policy priorities in the Middle East. As we do that, I want

to draw attention to some of our most vital allies in the Middle East. These allies have stood by America and we have stood by them for decades, through thick and thin. As a result, American interests in the Middle East have been protected, and their people have been protected as well. I am talking about the Syrian Kurds. I am talking about Israel. I am talking about Jordan.

In my judgment, America must now stand by the Syrian Kurds, Israel, and Jordan—all of whom have paid a heavy price for the destabilization in Syria over the past 5 years—to make sure that this fight stays won.

Once the Senate turns our attention to S. 1—and we will eventually—I plan to offer an amendment to S. 1 that will allow the U.S. military to defend the Kurds in Syria, if need be. It would give the President the authority to use the U.S. Armed Forces as he deems fit to keep our promise and to protect our allies. That is all my amendment would do. It wouldn't require anything, but it would give the President of the United States the authority to protect one of our allies in the Middle East—the Syrian Kurds—because, after all, the Kurds contributed mightily to the fight against ISIS, and we owe them. We owe them some peace of mind as we draw down our presence in the region.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces—better known as SDF—have been another set of boots on the ground in our fight against ISIS. In the words of former Secretary Mattis, Kurdish fighters “shredded” ISIS. We couldn't have done it without them. With the help of coalition supplies, weapons, and airstrikes, the SDF—the Syrian Kurds—have been able to recapture large parts of both northern Syria and eastern Syria from ISIS's iron grip. That is just a fact. Four years ago, there were nearly 100,000 ISIS fighters. Thanks to our Kurdish allies and others, including American blood and treasure, those numbers have now dwindled to just 5,000.

Today, ISIS has surrendered 99 percent of its territory. Let me say that again. Today, ISIS has surrendered 99 percent of its territory, including its former capital of Raqqa. To put that accomplishment in perspective, in January 2015, ISIS controlled more than 34,000 square miles of Syria and Iraq. Thirty-four thousand square miles of Syria and Iraq was ISIS-controlled territory. The world looks a lot different today. Less than 3 weeks ago, the so-called caliphate—the ISIS caliphate—withdrew from their last major urban stronghold in Syria. They are now being held to a small sliver of territory on the eastern border with Iraq, near the Euphrates River.

I think it is plain to see that the Syrian Kurds have been indispensable in our fight against the Islamic State. Today, the SDF—the Syrian Kurds—control nearly a quarter of Syria. That land no longer belongs to ISIS. That land is being lived in peacefully by the

Syrian Kurds. It doesn't belong to Russia, and it doesn't belong to Iran. It is land where the Kurds know they will be free from persecution and slaughter.

There are 30 million Kurds in the world, as the Presiding Officer well knows. They are living in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. In each country, the Syrian Kurds have been subjected to discrimination, massacres, forced relocation, and countless other human rights violations.

The Kurdish people are one of the largest, if not the largest ethnic minority in the world that doesn't have a state or a country to call its own. After World War I, when Western interests carved up the Middle East, the Kurds were left without a state, despite President Woodrow Wilson's argument that this would be—and indeed is—unfair.

The truth is that the Kurds in the world today, no matter where they are, are not completely safe anywhere. The Turkish Defense Minister made that clear just this last December when he said that when the time comes—when the time comes, the Turkish Defense Minister said, the Kurds "will be buried in the ditches they dug. No one should doubt this." That is a direct quote.

Just last week, Secretary of State Pompeo said that "ensuring that the Turks don't slaughter the Kurds [and] the protection of religious minorities there in Syria" are "still part of the American mission set." Secretary Pompeo is a wise man.

Our troops there in the region who stand beside our Kurdish friends do more than simply offer supplies and logistical support to the Kurds; they are a visible sign of our solidarity in the fight against Islamic terrorism. Without assurances of our support, the Kurds will be left to fend for themselves. Without the Kurds, we cannot be certain who will step in to fill the power vacuum in the areas of Syria that they currently control. We just cannot. We can only guess, and the answers aren't good.

The threat of U.S. military force has been a major deterrent for the reemergence of jihadists like ISIS and al-Qaida. We know that. Our presence has held back Assad, Turkey, Russia, and Iran from gaining stronger footholds in the area. If the Kurds are vulnerable to attack from Turkey or Syrian rebels, I fear they may turn to our enemies for protection. Even if the Kurds didn't, they can't fight off Turkish troops and pursue the remnants of ISIS at the same time. For America to abandon the Kurds in Syria now would compromise the security of our allies, would compromise the security of Israel and Jordan, and would risk exposing the region to more turmoil.

I think it was the late, great Ambassador George Kennan, writing, of course, during the Cold War, who said: "If the policies and actions of the U.S. government are to be made to conform to moral standards"—not self-interest, to moral standards—"those standards

are going to have to be America's own, founded on traditional American principles of justice and propriety." The Ambassador was correct.

As I read his words, as I have read his words, and as I have studied his words, I thought long and hard about what he meant by "American principles of justice and propriety." If justice is getting what you deserve, as C.S. Lewis said, and propriety is doing what is right, as I think most of us believe, then we should give the President the authority to protect the Kurdish people. That is what my amendment would do. We have to do it because they are our friends. We also have to do it because it is the right thing to do for America's interests and for the Middle East peace process.

Once we take up the bill, I want to urge my colleagues in the Senate to consider my amendment and to help me make sure that American foreign policy continues to have that important moral component. Standing with our friends in the face of evil despots and dictators is just as important today as it was during the Cold War.

I understand President Trump's decision with respect to Syria. I understand his concern about mission creep. I understand his concern about America's failure in our efforts at nation building. I think all of the American people are frustrated with the Middle East. All of us want a prosperous America, but all of us in America want a prosperous world. And we have been disappointed time and again by totalitarian governments in the Middle East.

I don't want any of my remarks today to be construed as critical of the President's decision with respect to Syria. Frankly, I don't know whether he is right. I am still listening to both sides. I know this: American foreign policy never has been and never should be based solely on self-interest. Certainly, self-interest is part of it, but American foreign policy also has to have a moral component. Morality in this case dictates that if we withdraw from Syria, we do not allow our Kurdish allies in Syria to be butchered and gutted like a fish.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, today and for the last 19 days, men and women across the country are being hurt by a government shutdown that President Trump said he was proud to cause for the wall. I rise today on behalf of Minnesotans, on behalf of more than 4,790 hard-working Federal employees and low-wage contractors going without pay in Minnesota right

now, and I rise today on behalf of the taxpayers of our country who just want the government to work for them.

Since I became a Senator, just a little over a year ago, the government has been closed three times over the President's obsession with building an expensive, ineffective wall on our southern border. I am all for border security, but we need to focus on real solutions, not symbols.

So let us start with the facts. In my home State of Minnesota, the Federal Government employs about 32,000 people as food safety inspectors, prison guards, postal workers, and more. Of this total number, the Center for American Progress estimates that 4,790 people are impacted by the shutdown today in Minnesota and are furloughed or working without pay. Over 750 of these workers have already filed for unemployment benefits, and hundreds more are being forced to make tough decisions about how to cover basic expenses, feed their children, and take care of their families.

A couple of days ago, I asked Minnesotans how they are being hurt by this shutdown because I wanted to understand how this is affecting people in their everyday lives. In just the last 48 hours, I have heard from Minnesota farmers who can't cash checks because the Farm Service Agency offices are shut down and Tribal law enforcement officers who are working without pay.

I have heard from air traffic controllers in Minnesota who came by my office earlier this week with dozens of handwritten letters full of stories. The letters I am about to read come from these air traffic controllers, and I really want to thank them for sharing their stories. These are public servants who have dedicated their careers to making our airports safe.

Tomorrow, January 11, marks the first day when these folks—Americans who show up at work every day to protect us—will miss their first paycheck. What is going to happen to these families? How will they be able to cover their credit card bills, their childcare payments, their mortgages? These are the questions that are keeping them up at night.

I wanted to share some of their stories with you today so that those of us in Congress and the President can keep these people uppermost in our minds and the human impact of what is a wasteful and increasingly harmful shutdown.

The first story comes from Michael, in Rochester, MN. Michael writes:

My wife stays at home to care for our 3 year old daughter. She is also currently obtaining a master's degree in education so she can be a teacher when our daughter finally goes to school.

I am the sole income in my home. Needless to say, the prospect of not receiving a paycheck in a week has us wondering how we will make mortgage payments, buy food, etc. We are more fortunate than some of my coworkers, however. Many of them are wondering how they will pay for day care while they continue to go to work as unpaid, essential employees.

The next letter is from Jonathan, from Lino Lakes, MN. This is what Jonathan wrote:

For the last two weeks, air traffic controllers have remained on the job, dedicated to the safety of every flight. But we don't know when we will receive our next paycheck. My wife is due with our fourth child in two weeks and this uncertainty only adds to an already stressful situation.

Here is another one from Mike, from Minnetonka, MN. He is describing the impact of the shutdown on his family's future.

I am a father to twin four-year-old boys (Jax and Finn) and had to close their college fund account in order to pay bills through the end of the month. The shutdown has also prevented me from training and certifying on my last few positions to receive a \$5,000 pay raise. These hardships are going to affect my family for years to come. The replenishment of my boys' college fund alone could take years as a single income family.

Mike goes on to say:

This is going to have a lasting negative impact on me and my family. Please help stop the shutdown to lessen the already great impact it has had on me and my family. My kids' future and our current financial hardship depends on it.

Next is Christopher, from Dundas, MN. He writes:

As a cancer survivor, I have a huge stack of medical bills on structured and negotiated payments. My colleagues and I have suffered the sudden loss of our income due to this shut down. It will be very hard to meet all of my financial obligations.

Finally, I want to share this really heartbreak note that I received from a brand-new father, Joe, from Lakeville, MN. Joe enclosed two photos of his beautiful brand-new baby boy, Oliver. Here is a picture of Oliver. This is the picture Joe sent to me. This is what he wrote:

This is a picture of my son, Oliver. He was born on New Year's Eve, 10 weeks early. The only local hospital to take babies born before 32 weeks is not in network for our insurance. I cannot change our insurance with this qualifying life event because those government services are closed due to the shutdown.

Further, because there is no paid leave during a shutdown, I am spending my days in the NICU on unpaid furlough status. I don't know when I'll be able to change my insurance, or when I'll get paid again. I take solace in what matters most: Oliver is getting a little stronger and a little closer to home every day.

Joe closed by saying:

Please do what you can to reopen the government and leave us with one less worry.

President Trump and my Republican colleagues, listen to these stories and think about the consequences of this reckless and increasingly harmful shutdown.

The Senate could put an end to this right now. We could take up and pass the bipartisan bills passed by the House—bills that have already passed the Senate, bills that would help baby Oliver and his dad Joe and the hundreds of thousands of other people around the country who never asked and don't deserve to be pawns in this fight. It is our job to do this.

Colleagues, we can do this. I don't just sit in this Chamber and say whether my vote is what the President wants me to do. I think about what Minnesotans want me to do. We must reopen government.

I know, colleagues, that each of you has thousands of families with stories like this in your State and I know that you are hearing them. Let's resolve this. Let's end this shutdown now and not let American families down.

To the Minnesotans who are speaking up and sharing your stories, I want to thank you, and I want to tell you to keep it up. You deserve to be heard by our President, and you deserve a government that works for you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, yesterday President Trump and Republican leaders once again tried to sit down with Democrats to break the impasse over border security funding and fully reopen the government. Yet, again, Democrats proved unwilling to offer any serious solution or agree to work with the President in any way.

When the President asked Speaker PELOSI yesterday if she would be willing to commit to funding the border wall if the government was reopened, she said no—no.

Democrats are saying that we need to end this partial shutdown and reopen the Federal Government. I completely agree with that, but it is Democrats who are standing in the way of that happening. Instead of seriously trying to resolve this shutdown, they are holding show votes in the House and trying to score political points.

The administration made an offer on Sunday. Yet 4 days later, Democrats have yet to respond. If they really want to reopen the government, they will sit down and negotiate in good faith with the President to arrive at a solution that both parties can support and that the President will sign.

I have to ask: When did securing our borders become immoral?

It used to be that Members of both parties recognized that border security was a basic obligation of our government and that we had a duty to ensure that our borders were protected and that dangerous individuals or goods were not entering our country, but apparently—apparently—Democrats don't agree with that anymore.

According to Speaker PELOSI, building barriers to protect our border is “immoral.” That is right—“immoral.” According to the Speaker of the House, protecting our border with barriers to prevent illegal entry is “immoral.”

Contrary to what Democrats would like people to believe, border security isn't an issue dreamed up by hard-hearted Republicans to oppress various groups of people. Border security is a national security imperative—something that both parties recognized, until recently. No country can be secure if dangerous individuals can creep

across its borders unchecked and unobserved.

Democrats talk about border barriers as if they are meant to prevent anyone from entering our country. That is just false. America is a land of immigrants, and we will always welcome new faces to America with open arms. In fact, I, like many others in this Chamber, am the grandson of immigrants who came through Ellis Island. My grandparents obviously came and settled in South Dakota, but we have to make sure that individuals who are coming to this country are coming here legally and that we know who they are and why they are coming. We do that by enforcing our laws and by securing our borders—with physical barriers, Border Patrol agents, and technology—so that individuals can't cross our borders illegally and undetected.

Leaving our borders open to any criminal, drug dealer, or human trafficker who wants to sneak across isn't compassion. It is an abdication of our responsibility.

Right now, we are facing a security and humanitarian crisis along our border. Tens of thousands of individuals try to cross our southern border illegally each month. That is a serious security problem. It is also a humanitarian problem. Individuals attempting the journey to come here illegally are vulnerable to exploitation, to illness, and to abuse. One out of every three women attempting the journey to the United States is sexually assaulted. A staggering 70 percent of individuals become victims of violence along their way. Illness and other medical issues are a serious problem. By failing to discourage illegal immigration, we are perpetuating this humanitarian crisis.

The inadequate state of our border security—both around barriers and through our ports of entry—also allows other problems to flourish, like the flow of illegal drugs pouring into the country. Every week in this country, 300 Americans die from heroin. Ninety percent of the heroin supply—90 percent—flows across our southern border.

Democrats will say it doesn't come across, that it comes through ports of entry. A lot of it does come through ports of entry—that is part of our borders—and the President in his proposal has advanced measures that would also deal with those drugs coming through our ports of entry. But the fact of the matter is, we have to secure our border, and that requires a whole range of measures as a part of that solution.

Democrats didn't always think that securing our borders was immoral. In fact, in 2006, the Democratic leader and the ranking member on the Senate Judiciary Committee voted for legislation to authorize a border fence. They were joined in their vote by then-Senator Biden, then-Senator Clinton, and then-Senator Obama. In 2013, every Senate Democrat, bar none, supported legislation requiring the completion of a 700-mile fence along our southern border. This legislation would have

provided \$46 billion for border security and \$8 billion specifically for a physical barrier.

As recently as last February, nearly every Senate Democrat—46 out of 49—supported \$25 billion for border security—just last February.

In 2009, the Senate Democratic leader said in a speech: “Any immigration solution must recognize that we must do as much as we can to gain operational control of our borders as soon as possible.”

Let me repeat that. In 2009, the Democratic leader said: “Any immigration solution must recognize that we must do as much as we can to gain control of our borders as soon as possible.”

Then he went on to discuss progress that had been made on our border security between 2005 and 2009, including “construction of 630 miles of border fence that create a significant barrier to illegal immigration on our southern land border.”

That is right. In 2009, the Democratic leader not only didn’t oppose border fences; he was praising them for their effectiveness.

So what has changed? The need to secure our borders certainly hasn’t changed. Everybody says: Is it a crisis or isn’t it a crisis? I would say that having 300 people a day dying from heroin in this country is a crisis, particularly given the fact that 90 percent of that heroin is coming across our southern border. That strikes me as a crisis.

The President has changed, and that, more than anything else, is the thing that has changed the minds of a lot of Democrats in the Senate because we used to have a President Democrats like; now we have one they don’t like and, in many cases, they are openly hostile to.

For Democrats opposing this President and catering to the far-left, anti-border-security wing of their party seem to be more important than addressing the security and humanitarian crisis we are facing at our border.

I venture to say that deep down, a lot of Democrats still realize we need to secure our borders. I think many realize how important the physical structure—some sort of barrier—is in making sure that the border is secure. Certainly, those who protect our border would tell you that, and certainly those who have observed what has happened over the past 20 or 30 years—a border fence has been built in certain areas of our southern border—would tell you that has been very effective.

I think it is important for us to listen to the experts and allow the opinions of the experts to shape the policies we put in place. I think what the experts have been telling us is that, yes, we need a comprehensive solution, one that includes a physical barrier, one that includes technology, one that includes manpower—all of which this President, his team, have been willing to negotiate but none of which the Democrats in the Senate or the House have been willing to sit down at the table and be a partner in working out.

With their partial shutdown now into its 20th day, I hope they will soon end this political theater and fulfill their obligations to keep Americans safe.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. I thank the Presiding Officer for recognition.

Madam President, look, we have heard a lot about the shutdown today. We have heard a lot about the impacts on families and on businesses and on our society in general. We heard a speech recently on the floor of the Senate on how Democrats don’t want border security, which cannot be further from the truth.

The fact is, last year, we appropriated \$21 billion for border security. That was in 2017. For 2018, it was \$21.5 billion. The truth is, everybody I know of who serves in this body, whether a Democrat or Republican, wants to make sure our borders are secure.

Unfortunately, the President—or fortunately, however you want to look at it—came in with his budget request last year to the Homeland Security Subcommittee of Appropriations, on which I serve as ranking member, and asked for \$1.6 billion for a wall. Guess what that subcommittee did, and guess what the Appropriations Committee did. We gave him \$1.6 billion for that wall. The Senate didn’t pass that bill, I might add. Sometime later, the President came in and said: No, I want \$5 billion for a wall. And now it is \$5.7 billion for a wall.

We asked for a report on how this money was going to be spent, and they sent us a report on how the \$1.6 billion was going to be spent, with no comparative analysis on how technology or manpower or anything else to secure that border might work more beneficially to keep our borders secure and be more cost-effective for the American taxpayer.

What did the President do? Twenty-five times he said: I am going to shut down the government.

Guess what. The government is shut down. It doesn’t take a genius to do that. We have heard the stories—and they will continue, especially after tomorrow when working folks will not get their paycheck—of the impacts on this country, on average Americans, who could lose their homes, their autos, not be able to send their kids to school, and not be able to afford healthcare. The list goes on and on.

I ask: Is this how you make America great again? Is this how it is done? It is not working.

Senator CARDIN came to the floor a bit ago, and he said: I want to put up not show bills; I want to put up Republican bills that this body has already passed and that the House passed this last week so that the Senate would do their job and hopefully reopen the government. I think there are enough votes to do it. I think there are enough votes to override a veto.

The majority leader’s response was: No, we are not going to do this; we want to take up a bill on Israel.

I am telling you, I am a big supporter of Israel, but I took an oath of office to protect this country first, and we are turning our back on this country.

We can continue to have the debate about the best way to secure the border, but it should not be done by holding the American people hostage. It should be done by having a debate in this body—the most deliberative body in the world, I was told before I got here. I got to serve with great Senators, got to serve with Robert C. Byrd, Richard Lugar, Kennedy, and Baucus. The list goes on and on. We don’t debate. We don’t even vote. In fact, we don’t even live up to the Constitution’s goals for us, its requirements for us—whatever you want to call them.

We are a coequal branch of government. We shouldn’t be allowing—as Senator DURBIN said, asking for a permission slip from the President to be able to do our business. Bring the bills to the floor to open this government, and vote on it. If they go down, they go down. I think they will pass. If the President vetoes them, bring them back for a veto override. It is as simple as that.

I wonder what the forefathers would think today if they saw this body—a shell of its former self. And it is not due to the rules; it is due to the fact that we have leadership that will not live up to the obligation of this body as set up to begin with.

We have work to do here. We have a lot of work to do, and that work starts with opening the Government of the United States. If we don’t do it or if we say we are only going to do it with permission from the President, then we all ought to hold our heads in shame.

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

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

MR. LANKFORD. Madam President, we are in day 20 of a government shutdown. It is exceptionally avoidable, but it is also exceptionally painful and distracting to the American people.

At the USDA, the Farm Service Agency loans have stopped.

TSA employees are working without pay. If we can’t get this resolved by tomorrow, they will miss a paycheck, but they will still be at work.

Home lending programs have halted.

For the FAA, new air traffic controllers are not being trained. We still have air traffic controllers in the tower who are working now—by tomorrow, without pay coming in—but new training has stopped. That means a year from now, when we need to have those new air traffic controllers take their spot in that tower, there won’t be someone in that tower because we have halted the training at this point.

IRS taxpayer advocate services are closed.

Indian Health Service is being stretched.

At the Bureau of Indian Affairs, most employees have been furloughed.

The Department of Commerce and many others have been affected.

While this doesn't affect most Agencies in the Federal Government, it affects a lot, and it affects real lives and real people. Let me give some examples from just my State of Oklahoma.

There is a technology company in Tulsa that will have to begin furloughing employees because it is a contractor for the Federal workforce.

Those folks who are selling their cattle right now and who have a relationship with Farm Service can't cash that check because they can't get a second cosigner for the check, and that definitely affects them.

A Federal worker contacted us and said that she is a contractor, and as of a couple days from now, she is not going to be able to pay her son's tuition so he can go back to college, because it will be too far a stretch.

The food banks in my State have already started stocking up and reaching out to Federal employees who may not get a check starting tomorrow and may be stretched and need some additional assistance, many of them for the first time ever.

We have a family in the Norman area, south of Oklahoma City, who typically handles the contract for housing for students who are coming to the FAA, to the academy. Well, obviously those academy students have all gone home, and they are losing \$5,000 a week due to the shutdown and the lack of housing for those folks. And it is not just empty facilities; employees who are contractors there are now being furloughed.

See, this affects real lives and real people. This was an exceptionally avoidable shutdown. Months and months ago, the President of the United States announced publicly and repetitively that he was not going to sign a funding bill at the end of the year that does not add additional border security. Over and over again, in public speeches and in private conversations on this Hill, the President repeated over and over: I am not going to sign a funding bill unless it adds additional border security.

For some reason, half of this Hill ignored it and said: He is just kidding. He is not just kidding. He sees the issue of border security—as I do, by the way, as well—as being a serious issue that has been talked about for decades but has not been addressed. Now all of these families are being impacted because half of this Hill said they thought the President was kidding.

We should be able to do basic border security. This used to not be a partisan issue. It was just a decade ago that this body voted to add 650 miles of additional fencing along the border between Mexico and the United States

because at that time, a decade ago, this body said: There is a serious issue with border security. We should add fencing to the border.

Outspoken liberals like Senator Clinton and Senator Obama voted to add fencing to the border in 2006 and said that is the right thing to do. But suddenly now, a decade and a couple years later, it is a partisan issue and we can't allow President Trump to have additional fencing. It seems very odd to me. This seems like a personal attack on the President rather than a realization of where we have been as a country for a long time. We should have basic border security.

For the President to be actually very malleable on this—shockingly so, to some people—he stepped out and said: I want \$5.7 billion for a wall or for fencing or for steel barriers or whatever you want to call it. We need some additional barriers on it.

To negotiate during the Christmas time period and to be stuck because the White House makes an offer to Senator SCHUMER, and Senator SCHUMER's response apparently was, we will wait to negotiate this after NANCY PELOSI becomes speaker—so for 10 days we sat with no negotiations going because we had to wait until there was a Speaker PELOSI.

Now Speaker PELOSI steps up and says: We are going to do nothing on this. And the President says: No, we need to do something. And suddenly something that the American people saw as obvious—why wouldn't we do basic things for border security—has suddenly become political and controversial.

The President, even in his speaking earlier this week from the Oval Office, started by saying we should do additional technology at the border. I fully agree. In fact, just in the last 2 years, the Department of Homeland Security has added 31 new fixed surveillance tower units to the southern border, has added 50 mobile surveillance systems to the southern border, and has added ground sensors and tunnel detection capabilities to the southern border. Those are all technology aspects of helping the southern border. The President stepped up and said we need to do more in that area.

He said we need to add additional agents, which, again, has not been a partisan issue in the past.

He said we need to add additional immigration judges, which, again, has not been controversial. We have 800,000 people waiting in immigration courts to get due process right now. Many of them will wait 3 years or more just to get to a court. That is because we have too few judges handling the many immigration cases that are out there. It should be common sense to say “Let's add additional judges so people can get to due process faster,” but suddenly that has become controversial.

The President said we need to add a steel barrier. Now, I am fully aware he has talked about a wall in the past, and

he said wall, wall, wall over and over, and some people have this picture that it is going to be the Berlin Wall, complete with graffiti on the side of it. That is not what DHS is putting up, nor what they have put up. They put up these big steel slats because the Customs and Border Patrol folks don't want a solid wall. They need to be able to see through it to see whether there is a threat coming to them.

Has it made a difference? It has absolutely made a difference. Some of my team were down at the border in San Diego just a month ago. They visited with the Customs and Border Patrol folks there. They stated that the old fencing that is there—and there is some very old fencing in that area—that old fencing had more than a dozen penetrations through it a day—a day. It was meaningless. But the new fencing that they are putting up, these big steel slats, that steel barrier has one person a month. So it moved from 10 to 12 a day to 1 a month. That is a pretty big difference. That is helping manage our border. That is why fencing actually does work.

I am fully aware of folks saying, if you put up a 30-foot fence you get a 31-foot ladder, but what happens is, when you have to climb a 31-foot ladder, you have to slow down in the process, and it gives time for the Border Patrol to be able to interdict. That is what a fence is about, to say: You can't cross here easily. You have to slow down through the process—and we can interdict folks.

This is a completely avoidable and, quite frankly, very recognizable problem. We should not have a government shutdown happening right now. Interestingly enough, some of my Democratic colleagues I have spoken with over the last 2 days were quietly whispering in these hallways: I hope the President will just declare a national emergency so the fencing can get built, and we can say we fought it, rather than actually bringing a piece of legislation here to solve it.

There are real families and real lives getting affected by this. Let's resolve this. This is not a big number. This is not a complicated issue. We can come to common agreement on basic border security to protect our communities and our cities. We should have the ability for individuals to come into the United States to work. We have always been that way.

Interestingly enough, I remind people all the time that the 5,000 people coming from the migrant caravan from Honduras are camped out 250 yards from the largest legal border crossing in the world, the San Ysidro crossing. We have 5,000 people who are trying to illegally cross the border literally 250 yards from where 100,000 people a day cross legally every single day, but the cameras are all focused on the 5,000 people trying to cross illegally, not turning the camera 90 degrees to focus in on the 100,000 people a day who filled out the forms and did it right and are

coming into our country. We are still a country with open immigration, and we should be; we just ask people to do it the right way. I don't think it is that unreasonable.

So how do we get out of this? The most basic way to get out of this is just to do what we talked about for months—let's sit down and figure out how to do border security—just the simple process of that. Some of my colleagues have said the President needs to open the government, and then we will talk about border security. That will be the same argument we have had for a couple of years now, where they say: Some other time, some another time. The President said, after months and months, this is the time to talk about this. So let's resolve it as quickly as we possibly can.

Let's not complicate it. I have heard people say: Let's add all these additional things to the conversation and make the deal bigger. Making the deal bigger just slows down the process even more. Federal employees and all these families need answers right now. Let's not continue to try to make this a bigger and bigger argument that stretches out longer and longer in debate. Let's solve the issue we have in front of us right now and keep debating the other issues.

Finally, let's get a permanent resolution to this issue of government shutdowns. It has been interesting to me to see the media comparing this shutdown to the one that happened during the Jimmy Carter Presidency or the Clinton Presidency or the three that happened during the Reagan Presidency or those that happened in the Bush Presidency. This is a bad habit Congress is in. There were 16 of us who met this last year, from April all the way through December—eight Democrats and eight Republicans, half from the House and half from the Senate—to try to resolve the budget process. Many of us spoke up, myself included, over and over again, saying that this is a broken budgeting process, saying we have to end the government shutdowns. By the time we got to the middle of December, that group of 16 could not come to a resolution to address this problem. Well, how about now? Are we willing to admit now that there is a problem with budgeting?

Here was one of the solutions I brought to that committee. I think it is straightforward. The simple solution is, if you get to the end of the budget year and if we don't have things resolved at that point, go into a continuing resolution; that is, continue to fund the government, hold the Agencies and employees harmless, but Members of Congress have to stay in Washington, DC, and the Cabinet and the White House have to stay in Washington, DC—no travel for anyone. We have to be here.

If you want to hit Members of Congress where it hurts, don't let anyone go home for the weekend to see their families. We have families we want to

see, too, but we shouldn't be able to walk away when there is still work to be done. The greatest pressure point we can have in this body is that we would have to stay in continuous session until the negotiations are finished. Make everyone stay here.

That may sound overly simplistic, but when I bring that up to other Members of Congress, they are like: Whoa. That is too much. Really? Everyone needs to stay here, keep the negotiations—from the House, the Senate, the Cabinet of the White House, and the White House staff itself.

The second measure we can take is, each week, through any kind of fight that goes on to get the budgeting done, cut everyone's budget in the House, Senate, and White House's operating budget 5 percent that week. Now, again, holding all the Agencies harmless, but for those who are doing the negotiations, they start feeling the pressure. Not only can you not travel, you can't see your families. You have to stay in continuous session, but your budget is getting cut every week by 5 percent, each week until it gets resolved. Again, the pressure is on the people it should be on, holding harmless the American people who aren't in the middle of this fight in the process. There are ways to solve this—simple, commonsense ways—and I will continue to bring those up again and again because when this shutdown is complete, there will be a fight over another one coming. In the meantime, we need to try to end this loop we are in that destabilizes our system.

Let's do border security. Let's not fight over, "OK. Let's open up the government, and we will talk about it later." Everyone knows that really will not happen. Everyone knows that game. Let's resolve what all the American people know needs to be resolved—basic, functional, real commonsense security, not putting up a big wall across the whole border. No one wants to see a 2,000-mile-long wall. It is not even needed, but in areas where there is a city on both sides of the border, and you literally cross the border within seconds unless there is a barrier there, it makes sense to have a barrier in those locations. It makes sense to put technology in other areas to be able to monitor folks who are illegally crossing the border in other areas. We can do this in a commonsense way. We can do this quickly. Let's get it resolved.

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

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

S.1

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, in a few minutes here—in 45 minutes or so—the

Senate is going to vote to decide whether we want to begin debate on the bill that is before us, S. 1, Strengthening America's Security in the Middle East Act of 2019. I remind everybody of why we began with this bill.

I don't know what the number is, but I would say the overwhelming majority of the Members of the Senate did not agree when the President decided to pull us out of Syria for various different reasons. Everybody was asking us: Well, why don't you guys do something about it? As you know, it is difficult. The Congress cannot order the President to take military action. It can authorize it, it can fund it, and it can defund it, but it cannot compel it. That is the role of the Commander in Chief. There are some things we can do. However, because there are things we were concerned about with his decision, there are things we can do to sort of deal with the consequences of what, I believe, would be a mistake, and this bill endeavors to do that.

We went through and said: Let's find some bills that would help our allies in the region—Israel, Jordan—and that deal with the human rights catastrophe in Syria. Let's find things that are bipartisan and have widespread support so that we are not starting with something controversial. Then let's put it all together in one bill so that the country will be able to see that the Senate is engaged in the foreign policy of this country and is acting out its constitutional role as a check and balance on the Executive.

That is what we did. No good deed goes unpunished, though, because as that bill was filed, apparently, the Democratic leader and others in the leadership asked their Members to vote against even beginning debate on a bill that an overwhelming number of them supported, that a majority of the Democrats supported. They asked them to vote not to proceed on the bill, and the argument is because of the government shutdown.

I still don't know how it makes any sense to respond to a government shutdown by shutting down the Senate. In essence, why did we even come up here this week? It appears they are not making any progress on the negotiations, and we are not moving on any bills or legislation. I don't know if it gives people any comfort to know that at least the Senate is shut down too. I don't know how that fixes the government shutdown situation. This should be a place that can walk and chew gum at the same time, meaning a place that works on solving and ending this shutdown, which is bad for everybody, that works on securing our borders, which is something we need to do for our country, but that also works on dealing with something like this, especially as timely as the decision is that was just made last month and the threats that are facing our allies in the region. That is what this bill is about.

We are going to have another vote here for the second time this week. So

that everybody understands, this vote is not even in favor of or against the bill; it is just to the question of whether we can start debate on this bill. I hope a few more Democrats will join us so that we can get the 60 votes we need just to begin debating the bill. If you still want to make your point at the end of the day, then go ahead and vote against it or whatever. I hope you don't, but let's at least begin debate on it. We will see what happens here in about 30 minutes. My sense is that we still won't have the votes to do that, and it is unfortunate.

I do want to address two things that have been brought up with regard to this bill—one thing that has been brought up and one element of the bill that I hope will change people's minds in terms of beginning the debate on it.

First, let me talk about a provision in this bill that deals with BDS. BDS—boycott, divestment and sanctions—is an international effort to wage economic war on Israel in order to punish it for its supposed treatment of Palestinians. It boycotts companies that do business in Israel until they cut ties. It boycotts or pressures banks and investment firms until they divest of any investments that help Israel. It then asks governments to impose sanctions on Israel. That is BDS.

Some people support it. There are two newly elected Members of the House who openly support it. I assume that is their right. I think they are wrong, but that is their right. The vast majority of people do not support it.

What has happened across America is that there are States and counties and cities that have decided they don't support BDS. It is not illegal and we are not going to make it illegal if you want to be a company that participates in BDS. Yet we—the government, the cities, and the States—are not going to buy services or goods from any company that is boycotting Israel. All this bill does is protect them from lawsuits if they make that decision.

The argument against this has been—and I have seen this now in numerous statements from those on the other side of the aisle—that it infringes on the First Amendment rights of individuals. I don't know what bill does that, but it isn't this one.

To begin with, this bill doesn't even apply to individuals. Individuals can do whatever they want. If you don't want to buy stock in a company that does business in Israel, I think it is shortsighted, but no one is stopping you from doing that. If you want to divest your investments from companies that do business in Israel, no one is stopping you from doing that. If you don't want to shop at or buy from companies that do business with Israel, that is not illegal. This doesn't apply to any individuals.

By the way, it doesn't even make it illegal for companies to make that decision. This is not banning participating in BDS. You have every right to support it. You are wrong, but you

have every right to support it. You have every right to carry it out if you are a company or an individual.

This bill does not apply to individuals. Any time people say they are protecting the individual First Amendment rights of Americans by opposing this legislation, I don't know what they are talking about because this does not apply to individuals.

All this says is to go ahead and do it. If you, company X, want to boycott Israel or divest investments from Israel, you can, but the people who disagree with you can boycott and divest from you. You see, free speech is a two-way street. If you want to proclaim something or say something, you have every right to do it, but the people who disagree with you have a right to do that as well. If there is a First Amendment right to companies to boycott or divest from Israel, then there has to be a First Amendment right to boycott or divest from those companies.

If you oppose this bill, then you are in favor of shielding from counter-boycotts anyone who decides to take these actions. That is what you are for, which is de facto support for BDS, because what you are basically saying is to go ahead and boycott Israel and divest from Israel, but no one can do that to you. That is not what the First Amendment is. The First Amendment protects your right to speech, and it protects from government infringement an individual's right to speak. It does not protect you from people who disagree with you. It does not protect you from people who speak out against you. So if you are a boycotter, you yourself can be boycotted. If you are a divestor, people can divest from you. I am talking about the elected representatives of our cities and counties. If the members of that community do not agree with that decision, they can vote them out of office.

Why does a city or a county have to be forced to buy products from companies that are undertaking a foreign policy action, which is what this is? This is not an effort to influence domestic policy; this is an effort to influence the policies of a foreign country. Why should a city or a county be forced by law to have to do business with those that a city or a county or a State disagrees with? That is all this bill is.

When people go around talking about how this infringes on the First Amendment rights of individuals, it is just not honest. It is just not true. This doesn't even apply to individuals. In fact, the bill says very clearly in writing—right there—that nothing under this act shall be construed to infringe upon the First Amendment rights of any American.

As they continue to say that, just know that this bill only applies to cities, counties, and States being able to not buy things from companies. This doesn't give you the right to fire an employee who posts a pro-BDS thing on Facebook. This doesn't give you the right to refuse to sell a home to or pro-

vide housing for or discriminate in any way against individuals who support BDS. This doesn't give anyone the right to put you in jail for supporting BDS. It doesn't do anything to infringe on anyone's First Amendment right. All it does is protect the First Amendment right to be against BDS and to do to the boycotters what the boycotters are doing to Israel. It is a two-way street. Those are the facts. If you are hiding behind that in order to oppose this bill, you are not being frank about what the bill does.

The second part of this bill that I wanted to talk about today shouldn't be controversial at all because we are all now painfully familiar with the grave humanitarian crisis we have seen in Syria. I would say and most would agree that what we have seen over the last 8 years of this conflict is the worst humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War. It began as anti-government protests, but it led to the fighting for political freedoms that has now escalated into a bloody civil war with a bunch of foreign fighters flowing in. It is a mess of all kinds of different groups from foreign countries and of radical jihadists.

Caught in the middle are innocent people who have been bombed and gassed. In fact, this administration has had to take action to punish militarily the Assad regime for dropping chlorine bombs and chemical weapons on civilian populations. We have seen these images of children, babies, and everyday people—bakers and plumbers and small business owners and professionals—who 1 minute were walking around and the next minute were choking to death because their own government, with the support of Russia and Iran, dropped chemical weapons on their communities and killed countless people.

Not only is this sort of activity horrifying, it is a war crime. It is a war crime to deliberately target civilian populations, and it is particularly cruel to do it with a gruesome form of death—that is, death by chemical weapon. That is what we have seen.

That is what we have seen supported, by the way, by Vladimir Putin. He knows for a fact what they are doing and doesn't care. He gives them cover, and he makes up these ridiculous stories about how it is the opposition that has done it. Everyone knows who has done it. There is zero doubt about it. That is why they don't allow inspectors to go in and find evidence and point it out. But it is abundantly clear who is doing it, and they have done it.

Even as this administration is deciding to pull out, the prospects grow and the likelihood grows every day that the people who have made these decisions will never be held accountable for what they have done. These war criminals—these savages—will never be held accountable for what they have done if trends continue the way they are going. This bill tries to address that.

The now chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, the Senator from

Idaho, Mr. RISCH, filed a bill last year, called the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, that is now included in this bill. I believe he will be here shortly to speak about it. It is called the Caesar bill—it has nothing to do with Rome—because it is named after a Syrian military defector. It is named after someone who was in the Syrian military whose code name was “Caesar” who smuggled out tens of thousands of pictures of what was going on inside of Syria, the images of the thousands of people who were killed while being detained in Syria. They were images of the torture, of the brutalization of women and innocent men and even sometimes children by the Assad regime and by those who supported them.

The pictures show the true face of what we are dealing with here—the face of an evil and criminal regime, a regime that needs to be held to account. All those who support them and are allowing them to do it should also be held accountable.

What Senator RISCH’s bill does is it provides the Trump administration new legal authority to bring some accountability for the people who have done this.

First, it requires a determination and a report by the Treasury on whether the Central Bank of Syria is a financial institution of primary money laundering concern. Why does that matter? Because they are using that bank to clean and launder money to fund their operations, to remain in power, and, ultimately, to gas and kill their own people.

The other thing it does is it imposes new sanctions on anyone who does business with or who provides financing to the Government of Syria, including Syrian intelligence and security services, or the Central Bank of Syria; who provides aircraft or spare aircraft parts that are used for military purposes in Syria; who does business with transportation or telecom sectors controlled by the Syrian Government; or who supports Syria’s energy industry.

These aren’t just about punishing them. It is about hurting them in their pocketbooks so they can’t afford to put those planes up there to drop these bombs on innocent people. It gives the administration the authority to do this.

By the way, this bill also requires the administration to brief Congress. You hear them talking about holding the administration accountable and conducting oversight. This bill requires them to come before us and tell us what their plan is to deliver humanitarian aid.

By the way, I want to know how we are going to deliver humanitarian aid if there is no U.S. presence on the ground and the only people left are the Russians, the Turks, the Iranians, and the Assad regime. It would be interesting to be briefed on that plan with us not there, but it requires them to come forward and either tell us what their plan is or admit that there isn’t a plan because we are not there anymore.

That is what this bill does. I would love for everyone here to support it, but before you can even vote for it, we have to start debate on it through the rules of the Senate. In about 15 minutes, we are going to vote on this thing, and there are going to be people who vote against even starting a debate on it, and the argument is that it is because of the shutdown.

I hope people reconsider. I don’t understand the logic of it, but when you talk about the threats that are facing Israel, which the overwhelming majority of the Senators here say they are strong supporters of, and when you talk about the importance of Jordan and our alliance with Israel, something that every single person here basically agrees with, for the most part, and when you talk about these horrifying war crimes for which there should be some accountability, which I believe everybody here was outraged by, how does stopping a bill or refusing to move on to debating a bill that deals with those things help end the shutdown? It doesn’t. It makes no sense, but, apparently, that is what some are willing to do.

They probably aren’t watching at this point. They are probably off at their caucus lunches or doing something else, but I hope that over the last 48 hours, some of my colleagues on the Democratic side have thought about it and have said to themselves that it really doesn’t make any sense to deal with the government shutdown by shutting down the Senate.

I hope they will reconsider and vote differently this time. If they don’t, then, I am just not sure how we can explain to people why it is that we will not agree to even begin debate on something almost all of us agree on for reasons completely unrelated to it. In essence, that is what happened earlier this week and what could potentially happen here very shortly.

I actually, oftentimes, wonder what must go through the minds of visitors to the Capitol. I understand most people in America aren’t watching this. Very few people probably are. I wonder. You come up here, and these groups from Close Up were here. It is a great organization. It brings high school kids up here. You try to explain to normal, regular human beings that there is a bill that 90 of the 100 Senators support, but we are not even going to be able to debate it because they are voting against debating it. They would look at you like you have three heads and say: What are you talking about? They support the bill, but they don’t want to have a debate on the bill yet? Why? Because of the government shutdown. Well, what does that have to do with it?

There are no other aspects in our lives where we would do that. I have never heard that in my life. I have never heard someone say: I am not going to work today because I am upset that my favorite team lost the game yesterday, or I am not paying my

bills this month because I don’t like the fact that they charged me too much for changing my tires. If you did that in any part of your life, people would think you were crazy. Yet that is what is happening here.

What kind of leverage is this—that you are going to hold up a bill we all agree on as leverage to force us to negotiate? The Democratic leader and the Democratic Members know that in order for a bill to become law, it needs the support of the House, which their party controls, 60 Senators, which they can keep us from getting, and the President who will sign it. They know full well that this has nothing to do with that, but, nonetheless, a majority of them seem to be prepared to vote against even debating it.

I don’t know how to explain that. I certainly don’t know how to explain it to high school students up here visiting from Close Up or to anyone else, for that matter, but that is what happened earlier this week, and that is what might happen today here in a few minutes.

I hope I am wrong. I hope people have reconsidered because, honestly, this is an issue that deserves our earnest attention.

I will close with this. Please do not go around saying that Congress needs to do more to hold the administration accountable or to conduct oversight of our administration policy, when we started this Congress trying to do that and you decided to keep us from doing it for some other reason. Don’t say that Congress needs to be more involved in the foreign policy of the United States, when this is exactly what we are trying to do here today and you will not let us for reasons unrelated to it.

This country needs a strong Senate more than ever before, not one that is shut down. I hope people will change their minds so we can get to work on this right now.

The Senate should be able to walk, chew gum, write, and read at the same time—or a lot of us. There are 100 people here. We should be able to do multiple things at the same time. We do it all the time.

You don’t need to shut down the Senate, and you don’t need to stop debate on this bill to solve the government shutdown. One has nothing to do with the other. Everyone knows that. Americans understand that. Normal people recognize that.

Let’s act normal. Let’s stop being weird about these things, and let’s move on something like this and get the debate going, even as we work on the government shutdown and on border security.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MR. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today, again, to discuss S. 1 and to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this.

We had a vote just the other day on this, and it has been reconsidered. All Republicans voted for it. Four of our friends on the other side of the aisle also voted with us on this, and I would urge a few more to do so. If that happens, we will actually pass this package of bills, which is so important.

These have been kicked around for some time. The substance of these bills have near—although not complete—unanimous approval of this body. Indeed, Members of this body have voted for these, both in committee and on the floor, individually in the past, but they have not gotten across the finish line because we ran out of time in the last Congress.

Essentially, it is a package of three bills that support our friends. One, of course, supports Israel. One supports Jordan, one of our best friends in the Middle East. And, lastly, one of the bills refreshes and strengthens the sanctions against Bashar al-Assad and his government in Syria.

These should pass. You might ask yourself: Well, what is going on here? Why are we having these party-line votes on this? Well, my friends on the other side of the aisle have said: We are not going to vote on anything while the government is shut down, and we should be focused on this. I would remind my friends that there are a lot of us around here who are veterans of the 2013 Obama-Harry Reid shutdown.

During that shutdown, the U.S. Senate continued to do its job, continued to consider resolutions, continued to pass bills, and continued to do confirmations, as it was required to do.

That is what we have here today—something that we should be doing that reinforces our friends in the Middle East. Particularly with times being somewhat tumultuous there, it is important that we support our friends in the Middle East, and it is important that we put these sanctions on the people of Syria.

I would also remind my friends on the other side of the aisle that they are forcing a vote on the Treasury regulations surrounding Mr. Deripaska, the Russian person who has had sanctions placed on him and who has gone through the process of getting them removed. My friends on the other side are requiring that we debate and then vote on those, which is a good thing to do. First of all, there are some issues that need to be aired there, and, secondly, it is important that we have the process for reviewing actions by the Treasury Department under the sanctions legislation in the past. It is good that we do that. But to say “We can’t do this, but we can do that” because they want to do it really doesn’t make sense. They also want to do this. I think if we had a straight-up vote on this, I would suspect the Democrats would vote unanimously to do this.

This is just the wrong way to do business. We are the U.S. Senate. We are open for business. We are doing business. In the last shutdown, we did business, and there is no reason we can’t do this.

MR. PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 1, S. 1, a bill to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Rick Scott, Mitt Romney, Cory Gardner, Marco Rubio, John Thune, Chuck Grassley, Todd Young, John Barrasso, Deb Fischer, Lindsey Graham, Johnny Isakson, James E. Risch, John Boozman.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1, a bill to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

MR. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) would have voted “yea.”

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (MR. CASSIDY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 2 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Braun	Cotton
Barrasso	Burr	Cramer
Blackburn	Capito	Crapo
Blunt	Cassidy	Daines
Boozman	Collins	Enzi

Ernst	Lankford	Rubio
Fischer	Lee	Sasse
Gardner	Manchin	Scott (FL)
Graham	McConnell	Scott (SC)
Grassley	McSally	Shelby
Hawley	Menendez	Sinema
Hoeven	Murkowski	Sullivan
Hyde-Smith	Paul	Thune
Inhofe	Portman	Tillis
Isakson	Risch	Toomey
Johnson	Roberts	Wicker
Jones	Romney	Young
Kennedy	Rounds	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Harris	Sanders
Bennet	Hassan	Schatz
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schumer
Booker	Hirono	Shaheen
Brown	Kaine	Smith
Cantwell	King	Stabenow
Cardin	Klobuchar	Tester
Carper	Leahy	Udall
Casey	Markey	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Peters	
Feinstein	Reed	Wyden
Gillibrand	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—4

Cornyn	Moran
Cruz	Perdue

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 43. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

CLOTURE MOTION

MR. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 1, S. 1, a bill to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

Todd Young, Mike Rounds, Richard C. Shelby, James E. Risch, Mike Lee, Josh Hawley, John Boozman, Shelley Moore Capito, Mike Crapo, Tim Scott, Cory Gardner, Roy Blunt, Steve Daines, Marco Rubio, Rob Portman, John Barrasso, Mitch McConnell.

MR. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

CIVILITY, FAIRNESS, AND OPPORTUNITY

MR. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, each new year brings with it a range of different emotions. We look back on what we have accomplished in the last year, what we hope to achieve in the year to come, and think of ways we can better ourselves.

Some of our objectives may include eating just a little less. For me, that