

takes today's challenges seriously. We take our commitments seriously. And we take our defense seriously.

So especially in light of current events, I was incredulous to hear the Democratic leader call yesterday to postpone moving forward with the NDAA. Apparently, some of our Democratic friends need to go hit the Presidential campaign trail. They can't be here because they have to go campaign for not 1 day but 2 this week. They are too busy to stay in the Senate and authorize the resources that our All-Volunteer Armed Forces rely on. Postpone legislation on our national defense to accommodate the Presidential race in the middle of this ongoing crisis overseas? Come on. Come on.

I am sorry our Democratic friends feel compelled to skip out so they can compete for the favor of "the resistance." The rest of us, the Republican majority—we are going to be right here. We are going to be right here working and voting to make America stronger and safer.

Of course, the NDAA does not exhaust the urgent priorities we should attend to this week. As my Republican colleagues and I have been arguing for 2 months now—2 months—Congress must address the humanitarian crisis down on the southern border. The situation is well documented. Nobody is in doubt.

For months, record numbers of people have arrived at the border, overwhelming—completely overwhelming agencies and facilities. The Department of Homeland Security has had to redirect resources and personnel from other critical missions to assist the Border Patrol. The Secretary of Health and Human Services has said: "We are running out of money." This is the Secretary of Health and Human Services. "We are functionally out of space."

I was encouraged last week when badly needed emergency funding finally garnered some momentum. Under the leadership of Chairman SHELBY and Senator LEAHY, the Appropriations Committee approved funding 30 to 1. That is about as close to bipartisan as it could ever get.

There is no reason, no excuse, why this noncontroversial measure should not get a similar, overwhelmingly bipartisan vote here on the floor this week—this week, not some other time. Actually, there is no reason it shouldn't happen today. Partisan delays have exacerbated this crisis long enough. It is well past time my Democratic colleagues stop standing in the way and let the Senate get this done.

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.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1790, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1790) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2020 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell (for Inhofe) Modified Amendment No. 764, in the nature of a substitute.

A motion was entered to close further debate on McConnell (for Inhofe) Modified Amendment No. 764 (listed above), and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Wednesday, June 26, 2019.

McConnell (for Romney) Amendment No. 861 (to Amendment No. 764), to provide that funds authorized by the Act are available for the defense of the Armed Forces and United States citizens against attack by foreign hostile forces.

McConnell Amendment No. 862 (to Amendment No. 861), to change the enactment date.

McConnell Amendment No. 863 (to the language proposed to be stricken by Amendment No. 764), to change the enactment date.

McConnell Amendment No. 864 (to Amendment No. 863), of a perfecting nature.

A motion was entered to close further debate on the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of McConnell (for Inhofe) Modified Amendment No. 764.

McConnell motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, McConnell Amendment No. 865, to change the enactment date.

McConnell Amendment No. 866 (to the instructions) Amendment No. 865), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell Amendment No. 867 (to Amendment No. 866), of a perfecting nature.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

9/11 VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before I begin, I just heard the leader conclude his remarks. He didn't mention the fact today that he is meeting with several constituents of mine from New York, including John Feal and other 9/11 first responders, to discuss a solution to the shortfall in the Victim Compensation Fund.

I am glad the leader has agreed to meet with them. It is a good thing, but

it is not enough to have just a meeting. These brave men and women who selflessly rushed to the towers in the midst of danger, when no one knew what would come next, deserve a commitment that their bill will be considered in a timely manner here on the floor.

So, again, I urge Leader MCCONNELL to listen to the 9/11 first responders. Then give them your commitment, Leader MCCONNELL, that you will put their bill on the Senate floor as soon as it passes the House as a standalone bill. It will pass the House; it will certainly pass the Senate, given the cosponsorship; and the President will sign it. The families of those who, just like our soldiers, rushed to danger to protect our safety can breathe a sigh of relief.

Leader MCCONNELL is the one person—this is not a dual responsibility—I wish it were, at least when we are in the minority, but Leader MCCONNELL is the one person who controls the calendar on the Senate floor. He can stand in the way, as he has done before, or he can do the right thing and commit to give this bill the attention it deserves. I will be eagerly waiting to hear what the leader says after he meets with the first responders this afternoon.

IRAN

Madam President, on Iran and the NDAA, ever since President Trump unilaterally decided to abandon the Iran nuclear agreement, our two countries have been on a path toward greater conflict. In the past month, Iran has heightened its aggressive actions in the region, prompting responses from the U.S. Government. No one looks at Iran through rose-colored glasses. That is why Americans, myself included, are worried about the current course of events. Escalation happens quickly in the Middle East. Without a steady hand at the helm, without a coherent plan or strategy—things this President has lacked since the moment he took office—the danger of stumbling into war is acute.

Democrats have been urging Leader MCCONNELL to allow us a vote on an amendment to the NDAA concerning a possible conflict with Iran. We have an amendment, led by Senators UDALL, MERKLEY, MURPHY, and KAINE—cosponsored by Republican Senators PAUL and LEE—that would prohibit any funds authorized by the current NDAA to be used to conduct hostilities against the Government of Iran.

Again, this is a dangerous situation. Even if the President doesn't intend war, his erratic, inconsistent, and off-the-cuff policies could lead us to stumble into war. When we are at war, it doesn't matter how we got there. The loss of life and the loss of treasure, when we need so much attention here in America, is very real.

So we have an amendment, and we are urging Leader MCCONNELL to allow us a simple vote on an amendment to the NDAA concerning a possible conflict with Iran.

Let me repeat. The amendment is led by UDALL, MERKLEY, MURPHY, and KAINE, cosponsored by PAUL and LEE. So it is bipartisan. It prohibits any funds authorized by the current NDAA to be used to conduct hostilities against the Government of Iran.

Contrary to what the leader just said, the Udall amendment would not—would not—diminish our military's ability to respond to a provocation or act in self-defense. The way the leader characterized the amendment is just not true. He deliberately distorted the amendment. He knows better. The Udall amendment preserves absolutely our military's ability to act in self-defense, and it would make it perfectly clear that if President Trump wants to send our Nation to war, he would need Congress to authorize it first, as stipulated by our Constitution.

There is no greater power that the Founding Fathers gave to Congress than the ability to go to war. They were worried about an Executive who might be overreaching, who might be erratic, who might be inconsistent—and we have never had an Executive who fits those categories more than this current President—and they wanted Congress to be a check. If the President had to explain why he wishes to go to war, he might be more consistent and certainly less opaque. We should have this amendment on the merits, but we also should have it because this is how the Senate should work.

S. 1790

Leader MCCONNELL said he would have an open amendment process. Here is what he said:

[We'll] be turning to the NDAA shortly, that's one of the most important bills we do every year. It will be open for amendment.

Leader MCCONNELL's words, not mine.

We expect to have a lot of member participation.

Leader MCCONNELL's words, not mine.

It will be open for amendment, said Leader MCCONNELL. That meaning is pretty plain, but I must have misheard, and so must have America, because the NDAA, let me repeat, is not open for amendment—not even for a serious and timely and relevant debate on our policy with respect to Iran, not even for a matter of war and peace and the constitutional prerogative of this body to authorize it or not.

It is not just this amendment that is being excluded. My friend, the senior Senator from Minnesota, will offer an amendment on election security important to our national security. My Republican colleague will block it—no amendments.

There are so many clamoring on both sides of the aisle that the Senate go back to amending. If we are not going to do it on this bill, we are not going to do it at all this year. This is too common—no amendments, no bills, a graveyard in Leader MCCONNELL's Senate.

No Senator has been allowed to vote on their amendments for months. This is simply not how the Senate is supposed to be. So I urge Leader MCCONNELL, for the sake of the Senate and for the sake of war and peace and for the sake of the Constitution, to allow us a vote on our amendment. The leader should not run the NDAA like he has run the Senate for much of this year, like a legislative graveyard, where issues of consequence are buried so the callous political interests of the President and the leader can march forward atop their graves.

BORDER SECURITY

Madam President, on the border, as the Senate moves to consider a supplemental appropriations bill on the border, I want to turn my colleagues' attention to what is transpiring there at the border.

Over the past few months, we have read reports and seen images of deplorable conditions. At the Homestead facility in Florida, the Trump administration has allowed a for-profit detention company to operate what amounts to a modern-day internment camp: children ripped away from their parents, kept in cages, denied nutrition and hygiene, diapers, toothbrushes. How can our country do this? All because some in the President's purview think that might deter immigrants: use these poor little children—2 years old, 4 years old, we read about one 4 months old—as hostages and cruelly treat them. It is a black mark on our country. It is a black mark on those who allow it to happen at the Homestead facility in Florida and in other places.

Think of what law enforcement would do if a parent denied their child this kind of basic care, toothbrushes and diapers, and put them in cages. Why on Earth would it be acceptable for our government to do the same? Along with millions of Americans, I am appalled—appalled—by these conditions, and I am appalled by the thought that some in the Trump administration may actually want these deplorable conditions to continue because they think it will deter future migrants—migrants who are running away not because they are drug dealers, not because they are MS-13 members but because their children have been threatened by gangs: I am going to murder your son unless you do what I want; I am going to rape your daughter unless you do what I want. Who wouldn't flee? These are not evil people. To rip kids away from their parents, to separate families as a policy, to discourage immigrants fleeing violence, lawlessness, and degradation is sick and twisted. It is inhumane. The people who are in charge of this mess should be ashamed of themselves, and I can think of no other President—Democratic, Republican, liberal, conservative—who would allow this to continue.

Now we are working on a compromise appropriations bill here in the Senate to try to provide more resources and

better conditions for these kids and their families, but we also have to grapple with the real challenges at the border and do more to reduce the number of migrants who feel they need to flee their countries in the first place. That is why Democrats have proposed to hire more immigration judges at the border to reduce the backlog of cases and reduce the number of immigrants who are held in limbo. That is why we have proposed allowing asylum seekers to apply for asylum within their own countries, not at our border. It makes sense. That is why we have also proposed additional security assistance to Central American countries to crack down on drug cartels, gangs, and human trafficking, to stem the violence that impels so many to make the journey north that is so perilous.

These are the kinds of policies we should be talking about. They are not controversial. They are not partisan. They are simply commonsense—commonsense solutions to the problems both parties have witnessed. The President—this President needs to end the inhumanity of his administration's border management and work instead with us on real solutions.

SHELBY V. HOLDER

Madam President, I appreciate my colleagues waiting, but there is a lot going on here this morning.

Finally, today marks the sixth anniversary of the Supreme Court's disastrous decision in *Shelby v. Holder*, where a conservative majority undercut decades of progress by gutting key provisions of the Voting Rights Act. It will go down as one of the lowest moments of the Roberts Court. When Justice Roberts says he is not political and he calls the balls and strikes, the *Shelby* decision is an overwhelming and persuasive argument that that is not the case with this Chief Justice.

Few pieces of legislation have reshaped America for the better quite like the Voting Rights Act. But 6 years ago, in a narrow 5-to-4 decision, the Court eliminated important safeguards in the law. By the majority's reckoning, such provisions were no longer needed because discrimination was no longer a problem. Discrimination was no longer a problem? Hello. Hello. The Court said it. Justice Roberts signed the decision. "Mr. Balls and Strikes" was saying there is no discrimination in America anymore. It wasn't a problem.

Well, in the 6 years since *Shelby*, 19 States have instituted voting restrictions, including laws in North Carolina that the Fourth Circuit said "targeted African Americans with almost surgical precision." No more discrimination? Prior to the Court's decision in *Shelby*, North Carolina would have been required to seek approval from the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division before enacting these pernicious laws. This is one of many examples of how State and local officials have been freed up to implement discriminatory laws while the courts struggle to keep up.

Now, in ordinary times, the Senate would debate ways to reinstate the safeguards that the Court abolished in *Shelby*. We would debate policies like automatic voter registration and restrictions on discriminatory voter ID laws and efforts that we would make to make it easier, safer, and more reliable for Americans to vote. That is what Senate Democrats have proposed.

But, of course, once again, Leader McConnell has transformed the Senate into a legislative graveyard, where inaction is the order of the day. What a shame that the leader believes something as crucial as ensuring that Americans can exercise the franchise is unworthy of the Senate's time.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1540

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I share our leader's outrage over what is going on right now at the border over these private facilities where these children are being housed and about the lack of an ability to bring amendments on the National Defense Authorization Act. As for the one that the leader mentioned, it is imperative that we go forward with this right now.

We have a situation where the President tweets us closer to war each day, 10 minutes short. He got us out of an agreement that, while imperfect, would have prevented us from being in the situation that we are in. Congress must be a check and balance on this administration, and under the Constitution, we should have the ability to do this. I cannot stress how important this amendment is.

Today, I am here to talk about another amendment that is also necessary to protect our democracy and protect our country, and that is about our elections—our very elections, a fundamental foundation of our democracy.

We know one thing, and whom do we know it from? We know it from the President's own Director of National Intelligence. We know it from his FBI Director. We know it from all of his security leaders, and that is that Russia invaded our democracy. They didn't use bombs, jets, or tanks. Instead, they planned a sophisticated cyber mission to undermine our democratic system. Special Counsel Mueller also concluded that Russian interference in our democracy was "sweeping and systematic."

Our elections are less than 500 days away. We know that Russia is actively working to attack our democracy again, and our intelligence officials are again sounding alarms. President Trump's FBI Director said Russia's efforts to interfere in our 2018 election were just a "dress rehearsal for the big show in 2020."

Has the administration worked with Congress to help craft legislation to make sure our election systems are fortified against future attacks? No, they actually stopped the bipartisan bill

that was moving ahead at the end of last year.

I see my colleague from Oklahoma here, Senator LANKFORD. He and I led that bill, and the cosponsors, including the head of the Intelligence Committee, as well as the ranking member. It was a bill that had significant support and still has significant support. But just as we are about to mark up that bill in the Rules Committee, the White House made some calls to Republican Senators. Leader McConnell made some calls to Republican Senators, and that bipartisan effort was stopped in its tracks, which would have paved the way to making sure that the Federal election money was given out to the States and that we would have had to have backup paper ballots. It would have paved the way for audits. Instead, it was stopped in its tracks, blocked by the White House.

Earlier this month, the President invited more election interference when he said he would accept help from a foreign adversary once again. That happened. It is unprecedented, and it is wrong. At a time when the President is failing to do his job to protect our democracy, Congress must do its job.

In fact, there is bipartisan legislation that has been introduced in the House right now that includes many of the things that I will be talking about today that includes additional funding. I do thank the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. LANKFORD. He and I led the way, in addition to our colleagues in the Appropriations Committee—Senator SHELBY, Senator LEAHY, Senator COONS, and others—to make sure that we got \$380 million out to the States over a year ago. It is time to step up again.

Everyone remembers what happened back in the 2000 election. We all saw those hanging chads displayed on TVs across the country. That experience taught America that we needed to update our election equipment. When we couldn't figure out who won for President of the United States, yes, maybe you need to update your election equipment.

So what happened back then? Well, we passed the Help America Vote Act. I wasn't here then, but that is what they did. It was landmark legislation that provided more than \$3 billion to States to help them update their election infrastructure. That was 17 years ago, before the iPhone even existed, and the Federal Government has not made a big major investment to update our election technology since.

Russia knew that. What better way to upend our democracy than to try to break into our election equipment and to try to spread propaganda against campaigns and candidates in our election. That is what they did. They conducted sophisticated influence operations in 2016.

Where do I learn this? I learn this from the Trump intelligence advisers.

They hacked political committees and campaigns. They targeted election

administrators and even private technology firms responsible for manufacturing and administering election systems. In Illinois, the names, addresses, birth dates, and partial Social Security numbers of thousands of registered voters were exposed.

Just recently, we learned that the election systems in two Florida counties were hacked by the Russians, and the Department of Homeland Security is conducting forensic analysis on computers used in North Carolina after it was revealed in the Mueller report that a voting software company was hacked by Russia.

How much more do we need to know as we go into these 2020 elections? I don't think much more. We have a common set of facts about what happened, and we know that there is a continued threat against our democracy. What we need to do now is address these facts with a common purpose—to protect our democracy and to make sure that our election systems are resilient against future attacks.

We have a long way to go when it comes to making sure our election systems are resilient. Right now, 40 States rely on electronic voting systems that are at least 10 years old. Do you think I am telling a surprise to Russia? No, they know this. Twelve States have no or partial paper ballot backups—12 states—and 16 States have no statewide audit requirement to figure out, after the fact, what happened and if their elections were secure. These statistics are alarming because experts agree that paper ballots and audits are the baseline of what we need to secure our election systems.

Many election officials continue to sound the alarm that they lack the funding necessary to replace outdated equipment, hire cyber security experts, and make other much needed improvements to their election system. So maybe, as a country, we can just say: Well, States, if you are not doing this, it is not our problem. That is yours.

No, this is a Presidential election before us, and if a few counties in one swing State or an entire State get hacked into and there is no backup paper ballot and we can't figure out what happened, the entire election will be called into question. No Democrat, no Republican, and no Independent can want that to happen, especially when we can prevent it from happening.

The House bill includes the same amount of money as we did last time, and that is about 3 percent of the cost of one aircraft carrier. The bill that I am proposing now that we move forward to is about 8 percent of the cost of one aircraft carrier, and that is to protect our entire democracy from the kind of modern warfare—not old-fashioned warfare but modern warfare—that we are seeing today, which is cyber warfare.

Protecting our democracy from future attacks will require modernizing our election systems and building new safeguards to prevent cyber attacks,

important steps that will require meaningful Federal assistance. Do you really think that the State of Arkansas or the State of Maine is supposed to be fully responsible for protecting us from a foreign power's cyber attack? I don't actually think so. If we could come together to quickly help States address things like those hanging chads back in 2000, which were in fact just a function of bad election equipment, we certainly must come together to protect ourselves from a cyber attack from a foreign power. By the way, the last time it was one foreign power. Maybe this time it will be another one.

We must do the right thing for our country. That is why I have worked with my colleagues in the House and Senate, including Senator LANKFORD, on legislation that would provide critical election funding in the coming years.

The bill before us today, our legislation, the Election Security Act, would also require States to use paper ballots, and it would provide funding for States to implement post-election audits. It would strengthen the Federal response to attacks on our election systems by requiring the President to issue a national security strategy to protect U.S. democratic institutions from cyber attacks and influence operations, and it would establish a bipartisan commission to develop recommendations—drawing upon lessons learned from our European allies, who have also been repeatedly subject to attacks from Russia—to counter election interference. This is the kind of legislation that the American people elected us to pass.

As I noted, the House is taking action. It will consider similar legislation this week. The Senate must take strong action on election security as well.

I ask unanimous consent that the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1540 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Is there objection?

Mr. LANKFORD. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I started working on election security with Senator KLOBUCHAR in 2017. At the time, I served on the Senate Intelligence Committee. We have worked together, from the beginning, to make this a bipartisan—in fact, non-partisan—issue. Elections are an American event. They have partisan results, but the act of voting is an American event, not a partisan event.

We had a hearing in the Rules Committee. We worked through the process. We continue to get feedback. In fact, she and I worked incredibly hard

to be able to reach out to and have multiple meetings with secretaries of State from all over the country to be able to hear as much feedback as we could from the States, because elections are run by States. Elections are not run by the Federal Government. Each State runs their own election. Each county or precinct or parish has its own structure for doing elections. In fact, one of the strengths of our system is the diversity of how elections are actually done. So we had to do a lot of work behind the scenes with all of these different States, to meet with their leadership, to meet with Governors, and to meet with as many groups as we possibly could to get it.

The basic goal from the beginning was to achieve a piece of legislation that had a couple of features in it.

First, ensure timely information sharing between the Federal Government, State, and local officials because we learned in 2016 it was not timely information that was shared. The Federal Government had visibility on what Russia was doing; the States and the precincts did not. It took up to 14 months for the States to find out what the Russians were doing. That can never happen again.

Second, we must expedite security clearances for the State and local election officials. Again, we had this issue in 2016 when Federal officials saw what was going on by the Russians but said that the State individuals didn't have enough security clearance. So, instead, they got a nebulous memo that said to watch out for these IP addresses, with no explanation as to why. That can never happen again.

Third is a way to verify the results of our elections. That should be straightforward. Every State, every precinct should be able to verify that—to go back to the people in the area and say: This is how you voted, and this is how we verified that the number is accurate, that there aren't additional ballots showing up later that the machines didn't count, that suddenly pop up from nowhere. There are no hanging chads. There are no inconsistencies. So people can look and say: That was done efficiently and professionally.

The administration is taking steps on the first two of these. In fact, we had multiple hearings with DHS to talk about what they are doing to get security clearances. Now every single State has individuals within their State who have security clearances. Every State has greater cooperation now with the Federal Government. Multiple layers of cyber security have been offered to every single State so that each State can use their own cyber protection or add an additional layer from the Federal Government. It is up to that State to choose. It is not a mandated piece that has come down on them. Almost every State has taken that, though, and has said that they want those additional layers of cyber protection because it is not just about the voting machine or the piece of

paper; it is how it is counted, how it is presented, how the unofficial results go out in the States the night of the election. All of those things matter.

DHS has leaned in, and they have done aggressive work on this in the last several years. That is why the 2018 election went so smoothly. DHS has done a tremendous amount of work already on this.

I have been clear, though, through this process that this cannot be a way of federalizing elections and trying to run the elections or saying that every piece of election equipment has to be run through some bureaucracy here in DC, whatever it may be. This is a State responsibility that the State has to take on. Right now, there is not a way for the States that do not have an election system—pieces of hardware for their elections—to change that hardware before 2020. The first of our elections is not in November 2020; it is 8 months from now, when our primaries begin. States cannot purchase the equipment, put it into place, train the volunteers, and make that transition before the 2020 election. So the emphasis is, what can we do to assist States in cyber protection? What can we do to get information to them? How can we run this?

In the days ahead, Senator KLOBUCHAR and I completely agree that every State should have a system with backup paper ballots—every State and every precinct. Right now that is not so, but no matter how much money we throw at the States right now, they could not make it so by the 2020 Presidential election. It is not possible to get there.

In the 2018 omnibus, we added \$380 million to go to the States. Not all of that \$380 million has even been spent yet. There is still quite a bit of it that is banked. But that has all been allocated to the States, and the States are deciding the best way to use that. In States like mine—Oklahoma—we use optical scanners and paper ballots. That money was used in my State to assist in cyber protection of the system, the transition of the information, and how the unofficial results get out to the public. It is a good way to use those funds to make sure any threats are being mitigated.

My State, like 21 other States, was one of the States that the Russians tried to engage in our election systems. They came to the State election board in my State, tried to get into it, found out the door was locked, and moved on to another State. They did not get into our system. But there are other areas where we could protect it.

Of the \$380 million we allocated just last year, much of it has not even been spent. So I object to another \$380 million on top of that when the first part of it hasn't been spent yet, and it will not make a difference in this year's election because the \$380 million for last year was really preparing for the 2020 elections.

Here is my concern long term. I don't want election security to become a partisan issue. It would be easy for it to become that. H.R. 1, when it came out of the House, was clearly a very partisan bill.

I find myself at odds today with a partner in this, Senator KLOBUCHAR. We have worked together in a very nonpartisan way to resolve this issue. I think we still can resolve this and we can actually get a result, but a partisan proposal will not get us an end result in which both parties come together and resolve this.

I reiterate again that election security should never be a partisan issue. This is about the preservation of our democracy, and it is something that all parties—Independents, Republicans, Democrats, and all parties—agree should be a central issue.

Having stated all of that, begrudgingly, in this proposal because it is not a bipartisan proposal—I look forward to working through it and getting a bipartisan proposal done in the days ahead—I must object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I appreciate the work my colleague has done with me and others on this issue, but I do want to point out a few things.

No. 1, I agree that this should not be a partisan issue, and, in fact, our bill was as bipartisan as it gets with the two of us leading the bill, with Senators WARNER and BURR, the leaders of the Intelligence Committee, as cosponsors, and with Senator GRAHAM and Senator HARRIS from the Judiciary Committee. It was a strong bill, and I would be glad to call that up with an amendment if he would be willing to do that.

But one wonders, why wouldn't we be able to advance this bipartisan bill? It is because the White House made it decidedly partisan. They objected to its moving forward—our own bipartisan bill. Leader MCCONNELL did not want that bill to move forward. He made it very clear.

So let's be very precise about why we are having this discussion today, and that is that we could have done this bill with the backup paper ballots attached to the funding 1 year ago, but it was blocked by the Republicans. So now we are where we are. There is this idea that we just wait and every year say: It won't help the next election, and it won't help that next election. I believe in the importance and urgency of getting this done.

Secondly, I am not trying to federalize our elections. In fact, this model, while there is more money attached to it, is very similar to the model that we have discussed and that is included in our bill. It is this idea that if the States are willing to do what they are supposed to do, then they get Federal money. It does not federalize elections.

Third, the North Carolina example that I just brought up didn't just hap-

pen in 2016; it happened much more recently. So our concerns are based on the assessments that we have been given by the Trump security advisers based on what Trump's FBI Director said just last month. He didn't say it last year; he said last month that this is happening now and that Congress must do more to help defend our elections.

I will repeat that election security is national security. We must remember this. Last week, 22 State attorneys general sent Congress a letter asking us to take action to protect the integrity of our election infrastructure. We have received similar letters from State election officials, and leading law enforcement officials in nearly half the country are begging us to take action. Think about that.

While I have no doubt that there has been some progress and there is better communication, I tend to believe the people on the ground, the chief law enforcement officers in nearly half the States in this country. I tend to believe the FBI Director for President Trump himself, the National Intelligence Director for President Trump himself.

The integrity of our election system is a cornerstone of our democracy. The freedom to choose our leaders and know with full confidence that those leaders were chosen in free and fair elections is something Americans have fought and died for since our country was founded.

Going back to 1923, Stalin said to the Communist Party: Who votes? That may not matter. What matters is who counts the votes.

History is repeating itself, and obstructing efforts to improve election security is an insult to those who have fought for our freedom and those who work every day to protect our democracy. This is not about one election or one party. That is why we worked so hard to have a bipartisan bill and I was willing to make compromises on that bill.

We were gut punched by the White House. Senator BLUNT had sent that Rules Committee markup. It was ready to go. I think if that bill were called up right now, 75 percent of the Senators right here in this Chamber would vote for it, but we were gut punched by the White House. They didn't want the backup paper ballots. They didn't want to have those options. They didn't want to have additional money for election security.

So I don't want to hear about how this is a partisan effort to try to push this right now. This is not about one election or one party; it is about our democracy.

We need to be a united front in fighting against those who interfere with our democracy, and we must do everything in our power to prevent foreign interference from ever happening again. This is a bill we should be on because it is the Defense Authorization Act, and it is about the security of our country and free and fair elections.

That is the fundamental basis for the security of America.

I look forward to working with my colleagues. I hope we will find some way to overcome these objections from the White House.

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. DURBIN. 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, do we have a schedule this morning in terms of debate on the floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no consent agreement.

Mr. DURBIN. I will, of course, defer to the chairman and ranking member if they want to move forward on their legislation, but I would like to ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, if we can amend that—after a period of 10 minutes, the two leaders and the ranking member be allowed to speak for such time as they shall consume. That would work.

Mr. DURBIN. I would be happy to accept that as a friendly amendment.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, it pains me to say this on the floor of the United States Senate, but there is no other way to describe what America is facing today. By every objective and measurable standard, the policies of our government constitute child abuse when it comes to the treatment of these children on our border. Hardly a day goes by that we don't hear another horror story involving these migrants and particularly their children and babies.

Having been there and seen it and read the numbers, I will concede that we are being overwhelmed, and for that, there should be some understanding and perhaps even forgiveness if we don't respond as quickly as possible. But this has dragged on and on for months. There are children who are being held in detention under circumstances and conditions which are an embarrassment to this country and unacceptable in any civilized nation on Earth, period. It led me to join with 23 other Senators to write to the International Red Cross several weeks ago.

The International Red Cross is called in to countries around the world when jails and detention facilities have reached such a point that you need an international arbiter to come in and declare to that government and to the world how deplorable the conditions are.

I never dreamed there would be a moment when I would need to ask the International Red Cross to review our own detention facilities in the United States. What brings me to this point? Well, it is well publicized in the press.

There is a New York Times story of June 21. Let me read it.

A chaotic scene of sickness and filth is unfolding in an overcrowded border station in Clint, Tex., where hundreds of young people who have recently crossed the border are being held, according to lawyers who visited the facility this week. Some of the children have been there for nearly a month.

Children as young as 7 and 8, many of them wearing clothes caked with snot and tears, are caring for infants they've just met, the lawyer said. Toddlers without diapers are relieving themselves in their pants. Teenage mothers are wearing clothes stained with breast milk.

Most of the young detainees have not been able to shower or wash their clothes since they arrived at facility. They have no access to toothbrushes, toothpaste or soap.

"There is a stench," said Elora Mukherjee, director of the Immigrants' Rights Clinic at Columbia Law School. . . . "The overwhelming majority of children have not bathed since they crossed the border."

I might find that hard to believe had I not seen for myself, at the El Paso border crossing, what is happening. Albeit, it was several weeks ago, but the circumstances described in this article on June 21 mirror what I saw in El Paso.

Let me say at the outset and very clearly say that many of the men and women in the Border Patrol, Customs and Border Protection, are good, caring people who come from families themselves and privately have told me how heartbreaking these circumstances are. I am not going to make excuses for any wrongdoing by any of them or any Federal agency. I wouldn't try. But I do want to concede the point that there are many who want to do better but don't have the resources to do it.

So why aren't we doing more here? Why, in this empty Chamber, isn't the Senate coming together and working on a solution? We came up with over \$400 million in February—a special appropriation for humanitarian purposes at the border supported on a bipartisan basis.

Last week, we reported a bill out of the Senate Appropriations Committee 31 to 1 to appropriate \$4.6 billion to come down and do something about the circumstance at the border, a humanitarian response and more. I supported it. Most have supported it on both sides of the aisle. It is time to enact it and do it as quickly as possible. I stand ready for that to happen as quickly as we can schedule it.

In the meantime, we need to ask the basic question: How have we reached this point in this country? How have we reached the point when it comes to immigration that it is such a national embarrassment?

Take a look at the record of this administration in 2½ years. As you tick off the items of major policy decisions, you can find how we reached this point today.

Remember the first one, the Muslim travel ban? We were banning people from Muslim countries from coming into the United States.

Not too long after, this President decided he was going to eliminate DACA—a program that allowed 800,000 young people in this country a chance to live here without fear of deportation.

Then he turned around and eliminated the status of several hundred thousand in the United States who were in temporary protected status because they were escaping emergencies, crises in their own countries and natural disasters.

He followed that up with the notion of zero tolerance. Remember zero tolerance? Remember when Attorney General Sessions quoted the Bible, for goodness' sake, as his justification for separating infants, toddlers, and children from their mothers and fathers at the border? Zero tolerance.

Finally, a Federal court judge in San Diego said: Enough. I want to know who those children are, and I want to know where they are and where their parents are.

It was a common thing to ask. It sounds like an easy request, doesn't it? It turns out we didn't keep records. These kids were separated from their parents without a record of where they were going or where the parents were going. It took weeks, if not months, and still we can't resolve the whereabouts of some of those families who were separated.

Then came the President's decision that he announced by tweet a week ago that he was going to engage in mass arrests and mass deportations in the United States. Do you know what that means? It means children will be coming home from school to empty homes and wondering where Mom and Dad are. They are gone, you know. They have been deported. The fact that they have lived here for a number of years, had no problems with the law, and are part of the community, and the fact that those children and others in the household may be citizens doesn't seem to be important to this administration.

When we come down to it, we have reached a point when it comes to immigration—a stage I have not seen in modern times—where we are being inundated at the border and are in complete chaos here in the United States under the Trump administration. Oh, this President promised us when he was elected that he was going to get tough. Boy, he sure knows how to get tough. He doesn't know how to get effective. He doesn't know how to cope with something as terrible as the disintegration of the economies and social justice system in three Central American countries that leads people to cash in everything they own on Earth to give it to a transporter or smuggler to take them and their kids to the border. That is where we are. That is why we need to act.

First, we need humanitarian assistance—yes, count me in; the sooner the better—to put diapers on these babies, to give them basic foodstuffs, perhaps clean clothes. That is not too much to

ask this great United States of America.

Secondly, let's come up with an approach on Central America that makes sense. Swearing at them, tweeting at them, saying you are going to cut off all assistance to them hasn't worked very well, has it, Mr. President?

I found out at the border that smugglers use the President's tough talk to sell their case: You better get moving. He is going to get tougher. He is going to build a wall. You better get moving. And in panic, they do. This approach is not working. It is clear that it is not working.

Finally, haven't we reached a point in the United States of America where we know we need comprehensive immigration reform? I was part of that effort 6 or 7 years ago. There were four Democrats and four Republican Senators. We sat for months—myself, John McCain, CHUCK SCHUMER, BOB MENENDEZ, MARCO RUBIO, LINDSEY GRAHAM, Jeff Flake, and MICHAEL BENNET. We sat for months every night working on another aspect of immigration reform. We put together not a good bill—I think it was a great bill. There was a lot of compromise in it that I didn't like, but that is what happens when you sit down across the table and in good faith try to resolve your differences.

We brought it to the floor of the Senate and got 68 votes in the Senate. Democrats and Republicans said they are for comprehensive immigration reform. As Senator ALEXANDER of Tennessee, a Republican, said a few weeks ago, if we had passed that bill and made it the law, we wouldn't be facing the mess we are facing today. He is right to a great degree. I don't think it would have solved all the problems, but it sure would have solved a lot of them.

What happened to that bill after it passed the Senate with 68 votes? It died in the House. The Republican House refused to even consider it. So here we sit with this mess on our hands, with a President who tweets at people and threatens mass arrests and mass deportation. And the situation goes from bad to worse, to even worse, to embarrassing when it comes to the treatment of children.

We can do better as a nation, this Nation of immigrants which I am proud to be part of. This Nation of immigrants has absorbed people from around the world in a systematic, orderly way in the past, and we can do it again.

We need border security. No one should come in this country if we don't know who they are and what they are bringing in.

Secondly, we cannot accept everyone who wants to come to America. It has to be done in an orderly, thoughtful way.

Third, we should never accept anyone coming into this country who is a danger, period. If they are here undocumented and dangerous, they should leave, period.

Having said that, don't we all agree on that? Can't we move forward in a constructive, bipartisan way to solve this problem, to end this embarrassment? Once and for all, we have to say to the President that tweets are not enough.

What this reporter saw, what she reported as stench on the border, is something that should be an embarrassment to all of us. We are better than that. We need to prove it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, yesterday we got down to work on amendments for the national defense authorization legislation. We filed a substitute amendment that included 93 bipartisan amendments. When I say 93, there are 44 Democratic, 44 Republican, and I think 5 more that we have from both sides. This is what we have been trying to do. Both Senator REED and I have been encouraging people to bring amendments to the floor for a long period of time. In fact, the majority leader, Senator McCONNELL, has made several appeals that in the event this gets bogged down, go ahead and bring your amendments down so we can work with you. That is what we did. The substitute that we used yesterday incorporated 93 amendments, and they were actually brought to us for fear that what happened a year ago would happen again.

I am not sure that the system is wrong when it does this, but any one Member of the Democrats or Republicans can stop an amendment from coming forward.

It takes unanimous consent. People don't understand that. Right now, we are in a position where one individual—last year, one individual, and at one point, two individuals said they were stopping all amendments unless they got certain consideration for their own amendment. That seems to be happening again now. Nonetheless, that is why we have all of these amendments, and that is what we have done.

I heard a couple of my colleagues say that Republicans are blocking consideration of an amendment on Iran, the Senator UDALL amendment. That is holding up the bill.

Members of both parties are raising objections to not just one single amendment but to all amendments. We are following a process that allows all Senators to have their say. That is a good thing, but it means that anyone can hold up this bill.

What do we do to preclude damage—irreparable damage—to the most important bill of the year, the NDAA? We have taken the initiative to bring up amendments and discuss amendments. I have a list with me of all of the amendments that are in the bill that we are talking about, the substitute bill—the Cotton amendment; the open source fusion centers; the Pacific Island states; the Perdue amendment—I can go through all 93 of them. The DOD

Financial Improvement and Audit Remediation Plan, which Senator PERDUE has been talking about for a long period of time—we have it now. It is in the bill. CORNYN's bill on overseas absentee balloting—voting for members of the Armed Forces—that is in the bill. All these amendments are there, and that is what we have been doing.

That is why I found the whole idea of Senator SCHUMER's objecting to finishing this bill, as we had planned to do it, this week because of the political debates, the Presidential debates that are going on—I was pretty shocked yesterday to hear that my colleague from New York, the minority leader, said that we should delay votes on the NDAA so that seven Democratic Senators can participate in primary debates. That is clearly saying that politics is more important than the national security.

Whether it is seven or just one Democratic Senator who wants to participate, my answer would be the same: We need to get this bill done to protect the Nation. I say without apology that the national security preempts politics. This is the tradition of the Armed Services Committee. It is our tradition for a reason.

I repeat: Senator SCHUMER said we should delay votes on the most important bill of the year—a bill which has a quickly approaching deadline and which has wide bipartisan support—for political purposes. He said: "There is no rush to complete the NDAA." He said that there will be "no harmful consequences to our military."

I disagree. We have to enact the NDAA by September 30, the start of the new fiscal year. We don't have that much time to spare. Think about all the things we have to do between now and September 30.

If we don't pass the NDAA on time, we will delay needed reforms to the privatized housing scandal. I would call it a scandal. We have had two hearings on that. Up until February, no one had said anything about it. No one said there is a problem. They talked about back in the days when we did privatize housing. I thought it was a good idea. I was here at the time. I am partially responsible. It worked for a while, a couple of years. And then I think a lot of the contractors got greedy, and they found shortcuts. I think we in the uniforms were somewhat responsible, too, because they did some things that—they didn't have the oversight they had before, and therefore they didn't have the responsibility. So that is a big deal, and that is something that needs to be corrected, and that is in the bill. That is going to be a part of the bill. If we don't pass the NDAA, it is not going to be.

If we don't pass the NDAA on time, we will delay \$11.2 billion in military construction projects in 44 States. Yes, some of those are in my State of Oklahoma. We would handicap mission-critical infrastructure for combatant commands protecting America and U.S. in-

terests across the globe. These are MILCON projects that need to be done.

If we don't pass the NDAA on time, we will delay disaster relief for military installations still recovering from the devastating storms and disasters in Florida, North Carolina, and Nebraska.

If we don't pass the NDAA on time, we will lose authorities for ongoing security cooperation in Afghanistan and Iraq, reducing pressure on terrorist threats, encouraging our enemies, and undermining our partners.

If we don't pass this NDAA on time, we will be slowing enactment of the Fentanyl Sanctions Act, which Senator SCHUMER is very much concerned about and has been critical to getting this done. I think it is very important to inhibit the flow of these deadly drugs across our borders.

If we don't get the NDAA done on time, we will let the EPA continue kicking the can down the road on the PFAS crisis and providing Americans safe drinking water.

All of these things are going to happen if we start delaying it. You might say we are only delaying it for a week, maybe 2 weeks; still, that delays everything else, and that also puts it into the timeframe where we are going to be busy doing all these other things we are going to have to do. We have a lot to do before September 30 and only a number of legislative days to do it. We have to pass the NDAA. We have to get a budget deal. We have to bring the appropriations bills to the floor. These are all vital to getting our troops the resources they need on time and with predictability.

This is a simple request that our military leaders have made. In fact, they said it is the best thing we can do for our national security. This is what is going on right now.

I also listened to a lot of the discussion on the floor. They are talking about the concentration camps, all these—the treatment of our kids. Let me say, even though that is not in the purview of the committee that has the bill, the NDAA—that is Health and Human Services—I have done some looking into that. And Don Archer in my office has spent time with HHS, and they found out these kids are being kept well. Fourteen hundred of these kids are going to go to my State of Oklahoma, and I am going to be sure that they are healthy when they get there and that they are fed properly. Everyone is going to have their own bed, their own resources. The staff servicing these kids is at a 2-to-1 ratio.

I know it sounds great. It sounds popular. If you want to demean this President and make it look like he is abusing kids, that rings high, but it is just not true. We are going to have to do something to correct the misuse. It is doing a great disservice not just to the kids but to the bill.

Our responsibility to provide for the common defense is so important, it is in the opening lines of the Constitution. I know a lot of people don't read

the old document anymore, but I think it is pretty important. I would hope that my colleagues agree—especially those on the campaign trail—that a candidate for a higher office in this country who truly understands the importance of defending this Nation and our ideas should understand the need to pass this bill on time. We have to pass the bill. We have to pass the bill as soon as possible.

I want to again commend the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator REED, for his unwavering commitment to our men and women in uniform. He understands, as I understand, that this isn't the only important thing we have to do.

I would like for everyone to be aware that there is an effort to delay this bill for what I have to say would be purely political reasons. It is so that people who are on the committee can participate in a Presidential debate. Well, they have a daytime job, and they need to be doing their daytime job, which is defending America and passing the NDAA. That is what we intend to do.

I plan to be on the floor all day today, and I want to make sure this idea that somehow we are not getting amendments through, anticipating we might not be able to get them through—yesterday, we actually passed 93 amendments—93 amendments. It has taken several weeks to get all these amendments in. I am going to be reading off some of these amendments and making sure that the authors come down to the floor and talk about their amendment.

Senator BOOZMAN from Arkansas has an amendment that would modify authorized strength in the Armed Force Reserve. It is a very important amendment, and I am sure he is going to be coming down and talking about his amendment, as are the other Members. Some 44 Members actually have amendments they need to talk about. We will have that opportunity. I think we have all day long today to get that done and get this done and get back on track and pass the NDAA, the most important bill of the year.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, first let me thank Senator INHOFE for his leadership and his cooperation, which has gotten us to this point in the consideration of the fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. The chairman has been thoughtful. He has been very reasonable.

We had a record hearing in our committee in terms of the number of amendments we dealt with and how we did it in a very collegial fashion. As a result, we were able to once again, as he has indicated, include 93 additional amendments in the substitute package that has been submitted. That is testimony to the good work of the chairman and the outstanding work of our staff, who have been working very diligently, and I appreciate it.

This is a very good bill. It passed out of committee by a vote of 25 to 2—totally bipartisan vote. It contains many needed authorities, funding authorizations, and reforms that will help the men and women of our Armed Services.

As both of us have indicated, it also contains numerous amendments from many of my colleagues on other issues of great importance, such as, for example, the intelligence authorization. We have included in this legislation the work of the Intelligence Committee not just for this year but the past 3 years. So we will now have up-to-date authorities for the intelligence community. We will authorize the Maritime Administration. We have provisions that range far and wide. We have an amendment dealing with the fentanyl crisis. We have an amendment dealing with the PFOS/PFAS in our water around military bases. This is a significant crisis we are beginning to recognize more and more each day.

This legislation is extremely supportive of the men and women in uniform and, indeed, touches on many other important aspects that are necessary as we move forward.

As we both said in our opening statements last week, we would like to have a robust debate on this bill and vote on amendments. It was the process for many years. We need to get back to the process where we have amendments—some of them contentious, some of them not so contentious, but there would be an agreed-upon path, a reasonable time for debate, and then a vote.

In fact, the Chairman and I try to work together. When we have differences, we say: Well, that will be resolved by a vote. If you can't agree to a consensus compromise, then in this Chamber you ultimately hope you can get a vote, and that will be the deciding factor.

I understand there are differences about the proceedings, particularly with respect to the issue of potential military action against Iran. I do not think anyone will argue with the fact that it is a very pressing issue and the Senate has a role we are obligated to fulfill. Last week, the chairman and I were both at the White House, and the President very graciously listened to our thoughts and ideas about the response to the drone strike.

We are in a situation where potential conflict or interaction with Iran is not hypothetical. Just 4, 5 days ago, we were confronted with a very serious situation. The President made a decision not to use a kinetic strike on Iran. I think that was an appropriate decision. But we are at a point now where the Senate as an institution—not as individuals accommodating the President but as an institution—has to take a position, I feel.

We understand, too, that as the administration applies more and more pressure on the Iranian regime, there will be several likelihoods. One will be that these reactions to our pressure

will take place. As the President indicated in his televised comments, his first sense was this was probably not officially authorized, that it may have been a subordinate who had taken the action, which had minimized, to a degree, the severity. Of course, the most significant factor of all was that we had lost an expensive piece of equipment, but, thank goodness, we didn't lose any American personnel. Nevertheless, this pressure campaign is producing a counterreaction, and that counterreaction could be more and more dangerous to our interests. It could escalate. It would create a situation in which the question of armed conflict with Iran will not be, as I said, theoretical, but something we will have to confront.

The dangers of miscalculation and escalation on both sides are acute at the moment. So we have to, I think, as a Senate take a position with respect to this issue. That is why I think the amendment is extremely important.

What I would hope we would all like to see is that we are able to accomplish two things—one, to have an adequate debate and a vote on this amendment. There may be other amendments people will propose on which they will feel strongly about having votes, and we could consider those also; two, our ability to conclude our debate on the Defense authorization bill and move forward. I don't think we have given up on that pathway yet.

I think we are still trying to find a pathway to address these critical issues of national security, with respect to there being a potential conflict with Iran as well as our finishing this bill in a timely fashion. I don't think it will be months from now but really days from now or a week or more from now that we will finish this bill. I look forward to working with my colleagues to find this path forward.

Again, the chairman has been extremely responsive and thoughtful about this, and his views and participation will be critical to these efforts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, the past week has lain bare just how dangerous it can be to have a President who approaches foreign policy as if it were a reality show, when the worst thing that can happen is to get kicked off before the next episode airs—a President who doesn't seem to recognize that his words and his decisions can have life-and-death consequences for the brave Americans who wear our Nation's uniform. No matter your political party, what we have seen from the White House of late should worry every single one of us.

In one breath, Trump is beating the drums of war, thumping his chest, and pushing for a conflict that would kill an unimaginable number of people—servicemembers and civilians alike. In the next breath, he tries to act like a peacemaker who wouldn't even think

of starting a new war. It is gaslighting, plain and simple. Yet it is the closest thing to a Trump foreign policy doctrine since his inauguration.

So, while I am glad he called off a military strike last week, it hasn't made me forget that he and aides like John Bolton are the ones who brought us to the brink of war in the first place. Trump will not get any points from me for taking a small step to avert a disaster he himself created, and I have no confidence whatsoever that his carelessness will not lead us right back to that same brink today, tomorrow, or a week from now because, when it comes to Iran, Trump's erratic, incoherent strategy isn't just worrisome, it is potentially deadly for the men and women who are willing to sacrifice everything to keep the rest of us safe.

Look, I ran for Congress so that when the drums of war were sounded, I would be in a position to make sure our elected officials would fully consider the true costs of war not just in dollars and cents but in human lives. That was the vow I made to the troops with whom I deployed and to all those who have served since I hung up my uniform. I am standing here today, on the floor of the U.S. Senate, to keep that promise.

Right now, more and more Americans are preparing to head to a war zone that is 6,000 miles east in order to protect this Nation. They are ready to do their jobs no matter what, just as they have done time after time, even as their President and, yes, the Representatives in this very Chamber have neglected them.

Again and again, this administration has laid out two scenarios it says would justify war with Iran. Then it has taken actions to make sure those circumstances become a reality, which sets us on a collision course that has life-and-death stakes and no easy off-ramp.

The first scenario is if Iran edges closer to making a nuclear weapon. Well, you don't need to be a physicist to understand that Trump himself made that possibility more likely by unilaterally pulling the United States out of the nuclear agreement. In doing so, he freed Iran from having to abide by the deal that limited its nuclear production. Now he is raging about Iran's doing the very things his actions encouraged Iran to do. It is circular logic with potentially fatal consequences.

The second scenario it has laid out is an attack on U.S. troops in the region—another possibility that has been made more likely by a series of Trump's recent moves, as he has made clear through his bombastic statements and tweets that he is looking for excuses to send more troops to the area. Now we are dealing with the entirely predictable fallout from those actions—the raised stakes, the stoked tensions, and the louder calls for war from some on the far right.

Iran is no friend of ours. We were adversaries long before Trump took of-

fice. Yet what we are facing today is, in part, a manufactured crisis by this President. The Trump administration seems to be making foreign policy decisions not based on our Nation's interests but to serve some ideological or political purpose. In that effort, it is using our troops as bait, as if it is trying to manufacture its own 21st century "Gulf of Tonkin" crisis that it can use to justify war.

In some sort of nightmare *deja vu*, it is as if it is drawing from the same script that led us into Iraq—sowing chaos, shrouding intelligence, putting troops in harm's way—for no clear reason and with no clear end state in mind. On some days, it almost seems like it is provoking—even promoting—war just for war's sake, repeating those mistakes of years past that have cost us so many heroic lives.

It is as if Trump and the extremists in his administration don't remember the sacrifices our troops have made in the war we are still waging just west of Iran. It is as if it has forgotten all those flagged-draped coffins that have returned home from Iraq and the many veterans who have come home with scars, both visible and otherwise, most of whom will never be the same.

Look, I am no dove. I understand that war is sometimes necessary, and our troops certainly do as well. While Trump and Bolton may have never deigned to put on the uniform, I volunteered and served in the military for 23 years. I chose to fight in a war I did not support on the orders of a President I did not vote for. Why? I did it because, while I may not have believed in the war, I believed—and still believe—in the Constitution, and my Commander in Chief gave a lawful order after his having been authorized to do so by Congress. So, while I may not have supported the war or that President, I am proud to have deployed to Iraq in order to have served my country.

I know what is at stake for the thousands of troops this administration is sending into harm's way, and I can tell you it is a whole lot easier to cover your eyes and order other Americans to sacrifice if you don't have to sacrifice anything yourself. Trump may have responded "no" all five times to his Nation's calling him to duty, but our troops respond with a salute, and time after time, they report for duty every single time. One, two, three, four—I know of troops who have done eight deployments. It is much easier to ignore the everyday realities of war from inside the security of the White House, but it is nearly impossible if you have been outside the wire yourself.

So, with the drums of war beating loudly again, I am standing here, under the great Capitol dome, trying to keep my promise to hold the Members of this body accountable—trying to make sure we do our jobs. Our troops do their jobs every single day. Because the costs of war in both dollars and cents and human lives will no longer just be

theoretical if we keep to the path aides like Bolton are pursuing, our homeland will be in more danger; more wounded warriors will be sent to Walter Reed; and more fallen heroes will be laid to rest at Arlington.

Even if you are OK with that, the fact is, the President does not have the authority to declare war; only Congress has that power. We are the ones tasked with deciding when and how we send Americans into combat. We are the ones the Constitution has charged with that most solemn duty, not Donald Trump and certainly not unelected warmongers like Bolton. Lately, though, the White House has acted as if article I simply doesn't exist. Trump has acted as if he can just usurp his power from the legislative branch as though obeying the Constitution is optional. Well, it is not.

This should not be a partisan issue. No matter if you are a factory worker who pulls double shifts or the President of the United States, no one is above the law. No matter if you struggle to pay rent or your name is plastered in gold on the front of a building on Fifth Avenue, no one can overrule the Constitution. Our troops should never ever be chess pieces in some reckless ideological game. Now, in the midst of the very week that is dedicated to Congress's evading next year's defense funding, it is past time for Congress to reclaim that solemn responsibility—that sacred responsibility—of declaring war.

For too long, too many on the Hill have shrugged off that most solemn duty. Scared of the political risks in staring down election days, Congress has shirked its constitutional responsibility to our troops in its refusal to take up any new authorizations for use of military force. For decades, Congress has ceded its authority to the White House by failing to act. It has handed Presidents from both parties the ability to command our military without having clear authorization, effectively cutting the people's elected Representatives out of the war-making process entirely.

Enough. Enough of being so worried about political consequences that we fail to do our own jobs even as we expect our troops to do theirs every damned day without complaint. We need to do better by our servicemembers. We owe it to them to honor their sacrifices. Part of that means ensuring that no American sheds blood in a war that Congress has not authorized. Despite what some in the administration say, there is just no way that the AUMF that passed in order to go after the perpetrators of 9/11 can justify military action against Iran nearly two decades later and send our troops overseas who may not have even been alive when that AUMF was voted on.

If Trump and company want to go to war, they must bring their case to Congress and give the American people a say through their elected Representatives. They must respect our servicemembers enough to provide and prove

why war with Iran is worth turning more moms and dads into Gold Star parents, and they must testify about what the end state in Iran actually needs to look like. Then, when their case has been made and when Congress's debate is done, we in this body should vote. It is our duty. It is the least we can do for those who are willing to safeguard our democracy—our way of life, our Constitution—even if it means laying down their lives.

In the days ahead, vigilance is key. We can't simply believe the people who try to convince us that, in order to support our troops, we need to pass the NDAA as soon as possible. As a former unit commander, I know this is not true. The best thing we can do for our servicemembers is to make sure they know their actions are legally justified by their government. If that takes a week or two or three, then it is worth the discussion.

If the vote to authorize military force then passes, whenever that is, I will be the first person to volunteer to deploy. I will be ready to pack my ruck and dust off my uniform. I may no longer have legs, but I can man a truck. I can take on the grunt work or do whatever else it takes to uphold that oath to which all servicemembers and veterans have sworn—to, no matter what, protect and defend this Nation we love.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. 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. INHOFE. Mr. President, I just want to make one comment. I know that somehow it is popular to say demeaning things about our President and John Bolton.

I can remember the years that John Bolton was with the United Nations, representing the United States, and he did just such an incredible job. He is one that really has all the talent you could have in the background. He certainly knows more about defense than anyone else I know in this administration.

One of the proudest moments I had of this President was when he did away with that thing that John Kerry had during the last administration. They are always referring to our coddling the Iranians in the media.

I happened to be with Netanyahu when the President got us out of the arrangement with Iran, where we gave them—what—\$1.7 billion to do anything they want to with, and they had to admit they would be promoting terrorism with the money we gave back to them. It was an absolute disaster.

Anyway, there is something about this President—in spite of the fact that right now we have the best economy we have had in my lifetime, and right now

we have a type of full employment nationwide, and minority employment, we have never had anything at all like we are having right now. It is the result of two things this President did, and he did them with the help of the Republicans. We all lined up and helped him with this. It was reducing the marginal rate.

Reducing the marginal rate to increase the revenue coming into the United States is something we have known for a long time. It is not a Republican idea. That was John Kennedy. John Kennedy came up with the idea that we want to go ahead and increase revenue. At that time, he said, and his words were: We need more revenue for the Great Society programs, and the best way to increase revenue is to reduce marginal rates, and it worked.

Unfortunately, John Kennedy died right after that and couldn't see the product of his efforts. Then, after that, of course, Ronald Reagan did the same thing, and it had the same effect on the economy.

Then, when this President did it, we knew it would have that effect, but he did one more thing that they didn't, and that was he recommended, yes, you could increase the economy by reducing marginal rates, but the other way to do it is to reduce the onerous regulations that we got during the Obama administration.

During that administration, that is the biggest problem we had. People were leaving the country to go to places they could find energy. There was a war on fossil fuels—fossil fuels: oil, gas, and coal—and he ended that war. As a result of that, just in my State of Oklahoma, for example, our exports on crude have gone up 251 percent since that time.

Anyway, he also is rebuilding the military. Look what happened to the military back during the Obama administration. If you look at just the last 5 years of the Obama administration, he knocked down the amount of money that went into our military by 25 percent just in 5 years. That has never happened before.

Of course, all of that is over with now. We have a President who is a strong supporter. I will be talking about that later. It is just that the American people know better when they hear all the name-calling of this President. They don't like his style. Sure, I shudder a little bit when I hear a tweet coming, but when you stop and think about what he has been able to accomplish with his tweets, at least now people know there is another side. There is a truth out there that you can have access to instead of depending on just the liberal media.

The main thing I want to encourage is—we have people scheduled starting right after lunchtime—that Members come down and talk about their amendments. It is true we knew we were going to have some problems. We suspected we were going to have some problems getting to amendments be-

cause our rules provide that one Senator can stop the amendment process. An amendment can't come to the floor except by unanimous consent, and so they objected to unanimous consent until certain things can happen. Well, I don't criticize anyone, but we knew, because of that, that we were not going to be able to really get a lot of amendments on the floor for debate, and so we did it—in fact, we did it yesterday: ninety-three amendments yesterday.

Now, those 93 were from—equally divided—Democrats and Republicans. I have a list here, and they are going to be coming down to the floor, but I want to encourage our Members to come down because people have to know this is a good bill—this Defense authorization bill. We know it is going to pass. It has passed for 53 years, and so we know it is going to pass, but we also know it is the most important bill of the year. It is the one that takes care of our military that is fighting for our country.

So we have all of these amendments, and I encourage any of the Members, Democrats or Republicans, who are not scheduled to come down and talk this afternoon, to call up. We have lots of time open. We want to encourage them to do it. We want to make sure that not just the Members of this body and the other body across the Capitol but also the American people know we are doing something really great in terms of the Defense authorization bill. So I encourage you to call and come down to the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. 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. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the first-degree filling deadline for the cloture motions filed during yesterday's session of the Senate be at 2:30 p.m. today.

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, later today we will hopefully be taking up legislation to address the humanitarian crisis along our southern border. This year, 2019, has seen an overwhelming flood of migrants. So far this fiscal year, roughly 600,000 individuals have been apprehended at our southern border—600,000. That is approximately 200,000 more people than were apprehended during fiscal year 2018, and we still have more than 3 months to go.

Agencies that deal with the situation on the border are stretched to the breaking point. Shelters are overloaded, and providing adequate medical care is becoming more and more difficult. The Department of Homeland Security has been forced to pull nearly 1,000 Border Patrol officers from other

areas to assist with the surge of migrants. The Department of Health and Human Services, which is tasked with caring for unaccompanied children who cross the border, will be out of money to care for these children by early July. That means that caregivers for these children would have to work without pay, and private organizations with Federal grants to care for these children would go without their funding.

The President sent over an emergency funding request to address this humanitarian crisis more than 7 weeks ago, and Republicans were ready to take it up immediately. But the Democrat-controlled House was not interested. Why? Because the President was the one doing the asking.

House Democrats' No. 1 priority is obstructing the President. It doesn't matter if he is asking for desperately needed funds to address a humanitarian crisis. Democrats aren't interested.

When it became clear the House was not serious about addressing this crisis, the Senate decided to move forward, and last week the Senate Appropriations Committee approved an overwhelmingly bipartisan measure to provide desperately needed resources for the southern border.

Now the House is seeking to take up a supplemental of its own. This should be good news, but, unfortunately, the House bill is just another exercise in partisanship. The House is attempting to take up a bill that the President won't sign, as House leaders have known from the beginning. While I suppose we should be glad the House is at least acknowledging the situation at the border now, passing partisan legislation that will go nowhere in the Senate or with the President is no help.

The Senate has come together and will pass a real bipartisan measure that the President is expected to sign. The House should drop the partisan posturing and obstruction and pass the Senate bill so that we can get these desperately needed funds to the southern border.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. President, I have been to the floor several times in recent weeks to talk about the challenges facing our agriculture producers.

While the economy as a whole continues to thrive, our Nation's farmers and ranchers are struggling. Thanks to natural disasters, protracted trade disputes, and several years of low commodity prices, farmers and ranchers have had a tough few years.

As the senior Senator from South Dakota, I am privileged to represent thousands of farmers and ranchers here in the Senate, and addressing their needs and getting the ag economy going again are big priorities of mine. That is why I spend a lot of time talking to the Department of Agriculture about ways we can support the agriculture community, and I am very pleased that we have one big victory to

celebrate this week—the Department of Agriculture's adjustment of the haying and grazing date for cover crops planted on prevent plant acres.

Farmers and ranchers throughout the Midwest are currently facing the fallout from severe winter storms, heavy rainfall, bomb cyclones, and spring flooding. Planting is behind schedule, and some farmers' fields are so flooded that they won't be able to plant corn and soybeans at all this year. As a result, many farmers will be forced to plant quick-growing cover crops on their prevent plant acres for feed and grazing once their fields finally dry out and to protect the soil from erosion.

But before last week's Agriculture Department decision, farmers in Northern States like South Dakota faced a problem. The Department of Agriculture had set November 1 as the first date on which farmers could harvest cover crops planted on prevent plant acres for feed or use them for pasture without having their crop insurance indemnity reduced.

Farmers who hayed or grazed before this date faced a reduction in their prevent plant indemnity payments—those crop insurance payments designed to help them cover their income loss when fields can't be planted due to flooding or other issues.

November 1 is generally a pretty reasonable date for farmers in southern States. But for farmers in Northern States like South Dakota, November 1 is too late for harvesting, thanks to killing frost and the risk of late fall and early winter storms, and it is too late to maximize the use of cover crops for pasture, since a killing frost is liable to flatten cover crops before they are grazed.

I heard from a lot of farmers about this November 1 date and the dilemma they were facing about whether to plant cover crops that they might not be able to harvest or graze. So beginning in early May, my office approached the Department of Agriculture about changing the November 1 date.

I then led a bipartisan group of Senate Agriculture Committee members in sending a letter to the Department, making our case for farmers. Then, I followed the letter with a request for a face-to-face meeting with top Agriculture Department officials so that I could explain in person the challenges farmers were facing.

A week and a half ago, USDA Deputy Secretary Steve Censky and USDA Under Secretary Bill Northey came to my office. During our meeting, I emphasized that not only did the date need to be changed, but it needed to be changed now so farmers could make plans to seed cover crops. The decision about whether to plant a cover crop is a time-sensitive decision, and farmers were rapidly running out of time to make that call.

One week after our meeting, the Department of Agriculture announced that it would move up the November 1

date for this year by 2 months, to September 1—a significant amount of time that will enable a lot of South Dakota farmers to plant cover crops without worrying about whether they will be able to successfully harvest or graze them.

I met with South Dakota farmers in Aberdeen, SD, on Friday, and they were very happy about the Department of Agriculture's decision. Cover crops are a win-win. They are good for the environment because they prevent soil erosion, which can pollute streams and rivers and worsen flooding, and they are good for farmers because they improve soil health, protect soil from erosion, and can provide an important source of feed. That second benefit is particularly important for farmers right now.

Due to last year's severe and lengthy winter, feed supplies disappeared, leaving no reserves. Cornstalks, a source of grazing and bedding, will be in short supply this year, and so will the supply of alfalfa due to winterkill. Cover crops will be crucial to alleviating this feed shortage.

I am currently working with the Department of Agriculture to ensure that farmers have flexibility to use existing supplies of available seed for cover crops, and I will be encouraging the Agriculture Department to release Conservation Reserve Program acres for emergency haying and grazing this year to further address the feed shortage.

I am very pleased that the Department of Agriculture heard the concerns we were expressing and moved the November 1 haying and grazing date up to September 1 for this year.

South Dakota farmers and ranchers can rest assured that I will continue to share the challenges they are facing with the Agriculture Department, and I will continue to do everything I can here in Washington to support our Nation's farmers and ranchers and to get our agriculture economy back on its feet.

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

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

RECESS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, pursuant to the order in place, we recess.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate stands in recess.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and was reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).