

A bill (H.R. 3055) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the measures on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of T. Kent Wetherell II, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Florida.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, a new report from NBC News last night detailed the inhumane treatment of migrant children at the Arizona border stations: allegations of sexual assault, retaliation by Customs and Border Protection officers, overcrowding, lack of showers, lack of clean clothes, and lack of space to sleep. The accounts made by dozens of children at these facilities are horrifying and are completely unacceptable.

In the wake of several similar reports about the treatment of migrants by CBP officers in Texas, in the wake of revelations of secret Facebook groups where Border Patrol officers joke about the horrid treatment of migrants, it is abundantly clear that there is a toxic culture at Border Patrol that can only be changed—only be changed—by the immediate firing and replacing of top leadership at the Agency. CBP needs to

clean house. The top people at CBP ought to be fired now.

In just a few days on the job, Mark Morgan, the Acting Commissioner, has already shown himself to be far too callous about the way in which children and their families are treated. We need committed law enforcement professionals to take over the CBP, particularly those who have training and expertise in working with vulnerable populations.

There are rumors that Mr. Morgan was chosen because he is a tough guy—a tough guy—on kids. But he is a tough guy who will tolerate an out-of-control culture in many parts of the CBP.

It is a perfectly wrong choice for what is going on there. I will say this to President Trump. He is not going to help you. Whatever Americans' views are on immigration, they don't like pictures of little children in squalid and awful conditions, whoever they are.

The Acting Secretary of Homeland Security, Kevin McAleenan, who oversees CBP, needs to take this matter into his own hands. He has shown far more balance, far more expertise, and far more ability to talk about the truth—not some ideology—than Morgan or some of the others. He should take this matter into his own hands and pursue changes to the Agency that go beyond mere investigations and reports.

CBP needs a real change in personnel and in leadership, and it needs it now. The reports by NBC News and many others are a stain on this great Nation. We are not perfect. We are a lot better than most everyone else. But in the past, when there was a problem, we didn't revel in it; we tried to solve it. We cannot allow what is happening at the border to continue.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Mr. President, on another matter, a few weeks ago, it was reported that the author of a blatantly, virulently anti-Semitic cartoon depicting the Rothschilds and Soros was invited—actually invited to a social media summit at the White House. Up until yesterday, when the White House was asked questions about why he was invited, there was no answer. Reportedly, some in the administration privately defended the invitation of this out-and-out bigot. Only last night when it all became public did the White House finally revoke the invitation. But it is an absolute disgrace that it was extended in the first place and that it took them long to rescind. And it is a disgrace that the White House has not rescinded the invitations for several other individuals planning to attend who have spewed hateful and bigoted views online.

The plain truth is this: This President and this administration are shockingly willing to provide succor to some of the most hateful ideologues, ideologies, and viewpoints. The President has promoted White supremacists on his Twitter feed while constantly criticizing social media platforms for

removing hateful content. In doing so, he has defended people like Alex Jones and his detestable, conspiracy-ridden radio show.

The idea that everybody should be able to post on social media sites no matter how disgusting the content is wrong, in my view. When vicious, racist, anti-Semitic, and Islamophobic hate speech is posted online, social media sites, as private companies, should be able to remove that content. But this President amazingly seems to believe that when offensive language is coming from a rightwing source and it is taken off social media sites, that is censorship. That is the message this social media summit seeks to advance, and it is un-American.

At the same time, we hear that the White House and congressional Republicans are all too eager to decry anti-Semitism when they perceive it from a political opponent on the left. Well, where are those folks when the White House does something like this? Where are they? It seems some of our friends on the other side of the aisle want to politicize the issue of anti-Semitism, which should be condemned when anybody talks about it, but unfortunately we heard silence from our Republican friends when this virulently anti-Semitic cartoonist was invited to the White House—not a peep. And what he did was despicable and reminiscent of what was done before dictatorships took over in Europe.

The White House was right to revoke the invitation. It never should have been issued in the first place. A social media summit designed to give support to the most radical viewpoints on social media should never have been planned by the White House in the first place. It should be obvious, but with this President, unfortunately, the obvious bears repeating: The President of the United States should appeal to the better angels of our nature and not provide support to the basest voices in our society. It is another reason this Presidency is just a disgrace—a disgrace in terms of American values, American morals, and American honesty.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. President, now on election security, later this afternoon, Members from both sides of the aisle will take part in an all-Senate briefing on the threats faced by our elections in the 2020 campaign cycle. We are all no doubt aware of the general threat to our elections from foreign interference. It is crucial to hear from our law enforcement, defense, and intelligence communities about the specific nature of those threats and, just as important—probably more important—how we can counteract them and how we can prevent foreign interference in the 2020 election, which everybody, regardless of party—Democratic, Republican, liberal, or conservative—should be against. This is one of the things the Founding Fathers were most afraid of, that foreign powers would seek to

interfere in our elections. It didn't seem too much of a problem for decades and centuries, but it has now reared its ugly head—by the way, showing the amazing wisdom of the Washingtons and the Madisons and the Franklins and the Founding Fathers.

The briefing we are going to have should serve as a turning point for this Chamber. It should focus our attention and spark an urgent debate on how to protect our democracy from future attacks. The briefing this afternoon should be a springboard for action. So I was amazed to listen to Republican Leader MCCONNELL this morning, who, before the briefing has even taken place, seems to be prejudging the results of the meeting, saying that another Washington intervention in this matter is misguided. I was amazed to hear Leader MCCONNELL take credit for the election security funding which Democrats fought tooth and nail to include in the Appropriations bill and which was initially opposed by many of our Republican colleagues. They skip over the fact that Leader MCCONNELL and Republicans are right now blocking our efforts to include additional resources this year.

Leader MCCONNELL, if you are bragging about having put it in in 2016 and the FBI says the threat in 2020 will be greater, why aren't you letting us put more money in now? Why aren't you supporting that?

It makes no sense—a contradiction once again.

And here, amazingly enough, we hear Leader MCCONNELL echoing President Trump blaming President Obama for the interference in the 2016 election—blaming President Obama. The Russians interfered. They certainly had conversations with the Trump administration. Donald Trump encouraged them to interfere, publicly. And now Leader MCCONNELL has the temerity to blame President Obama? What a remarkable feat of revisionist history.

Let's be clear on two things. First, President Putin interfered in our elections, and he is to blame. Second, the Trump administration has not done enough to hold him and his oligarchs accountable. President Trump recently, when he met with President Putin, sort of made a joke of it. That is disgraceful. That is un-American. That is not defending the security of America.

Now, according to reports, we learn that the majority leader refused to work on a bipartisan basis to warn the public about Putin's interference in our elections in the midst of the 2016 election. And he blames President Obama when he was the one who didn't want to make it public? Give us a break.

We have a duty to the country to take this seriously and not whitewash the facts or prejudge the conclusions. This is about protecting the wellspring of our democracy—it is not political—and ensuring Americans have absolute faith that our elections will be free and fair.

It is unbelievable that in this Trump administration, unlike any other administration—Democratic or Republican—before it, interference in the election by a foreign power is made political. It is a disgrace.

I hope today's briefing provides Members with specific information about what the departments and agencies are doing to combat the threat to our elections and what we ought to do next. After it concludes, we cannot let this issue sit on the back burner. Democrats and Republicans alike must roll up their sleeves and get to work—the majority leader included.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, on healthcare, finally, as oral arguments continue today in *Texas v. the United States*, we must not lose sight of what is at stake here. Republican attorneys general, with the Trump administration's full support and backing, are trying to dismantle our healthcare system. They are arguing that millions of Americans—including 133 million Americans under 65 who live with a preexisting condition—should lose their care and their protections.

The lawsuit that President Trump supports and our Republican colleagues refuse to condemn would say to a mother or father of a child with cancer: If the insurance company wants to cut you off, tell you that you can't get the treatment your kid so desperately needs to live, that is OK.

Where are those Republican voices?

We all know the statistics, but there is a human cost and a human story behind each one. Emilie is one of my constituents, and I shared her story on the steps of the Senate yesterday. She was a healthy and active, vibrant young girl at age 7, but her life was turned upside down after a tragic accident. She fell off a horse and suffered a traumatic brain injury. Emilie had to relearn how to walk, how to talk, and how to eat—a 7-year-old.

The biggest challenge Emilie's family faced came when her private insurance said to her: Only 60 days of rehab, Emilie, and then you are out. It doesn't matter if you still can't feed yourself, and it doesn't matter if you can't walk.

But she was saved because of Medicaid. Medicaid stepped in, and the protections for Americans with preexisting conditions prevailed. Now Emilie has a great chance in the future. Do we want to tell Emilie's parents that we want to just cut this off?

What is wrong with our Republican friends here? It is the height of hypocrisy for Republicans to pledge support for Americans with preexisting conditions during the campaign season and then be silent as the Trump administration sues to take away all protections.

I call on Senate Republicans, for the sake of the Emilies and the millions like her, to speak out against this reckless lawsuit—a lawsuit that would spell disaster for millions of hard-working, fine citizens in this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we just heard the Democratic leader talking about the issue of healthcare and attacking the President and Republicans for not being supportive of protections for preexisting conditions, and I can tell you that is just not true. I can't think of a single Republican who doesn't believe we ought to provide protection for people with preexisting conditions.

Democrats have not acknowledged that ObamaCare has failed, and I think we can all see the evidence of that. We have seen skyrocketing premiums, copays, out-of-pocket costs, deductibles—all of those things have gone through the roof for a lot of people, particularly in the individual market—as well as a reduction in the number of choices and options. Fewer options and higher costs have been the legacy of ObamaCare, so the Democrats know it has to be replaced. The reason they know it and you can tell it has to be replaced is that they are already out there talking about a proposal—a completely one-size-fits-all, government-run, national approach to taking over people's healthcare in this country called Medicare for All, at a cost of \$32 trillion, which I will come back to in just a moment.

The President and his administration have also acknowledged that ObamaCare has failed because of the skyrocketing costs and fewer choices and have chosen to try to get that repealed through the courts. Either way, we are going to be having a discussion about healthcare here and about what is the best system moving forward.

Republicans, of course, as I mentioned, believe we have to protect people with preexisting conditions. Whatever follows in ObamaCare's wake, I think there is agreement on both sides of the aisle—both Republicans and Democrats—that preexisting conditions will be covered.

So let's just take that political argument off the table because that is all it is. It is nothing more, nothing less, nothing else than a political argument made by Democrats when they know full well that Republicans are on the record in support of protecting people with preexisting conditions.

The question is, What will we replace it with? We believe, obviously, that there is a much better approach that gives people more choices, more options, and creates more competition in the marketplace, which would put downward pressure on prices.

The Democrats, as I said, have endorsed and are supporting a \$32 trillion government takeover of the healthcare system in this country, which will put enormous costs on the backs of working people in this country. I will come back to that in just a moment.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. President, last Friday we learned that there were 224,000 jobs that were