

accused and preventing innocent people from being put behind bars for a crime they didn't commit. DNA evidence is very, very powerful.

States have seen the positive results of this program at the national level and have been following suit. Texas has led the Nation in passing mandatory rape kit testing laws, conducting audits of the backlog, and using Debbie Smith funds to analyze untested sexual assault evidence.

Since 2011, the Debbie Smith Act has helped Texas reduce its backlog of previously unsubmitted rape kits by approximately 90 percent—from over 20,000 kits to now around 2,000. This program has allowed us to provide victims of sexual assault with the resources they need and the answers they deserve while more effectively identifying criminals across the board.

The benefits of this law simply cannot be overstated, and that is why the Debbie Smith Act was readily reauthorized in 2008 and 2014. Now it is time to once again reauthorize this important legislation.

Earlier this year, Senator FEINSTEIN, the senior Senator from California, and I introduced the Debbie Smith Act of 2019, which will extend this program through 2024. As you might expect, with this kind of nonpartisan legislation, it sailed through the Senate earlier this year. In fact, it passed the Senate in May with not one person voting against it. But here we are, nearly 4 months later, and the House of Representatives has not scheduled a vote. If they don't take action before September 30, the law will expire—something I hope we all can agree would be unconscionable and certainly completely unnecessary.

The benefits of this program transcend politics or party, and allowing it to expire would be a disservice to the victims and advocates who have championed this bill for the last 15 years, particularly Debbie Smith herself.

It is time for the House to vote to reauthorize the Debbie Smith Act so that we can get it to the President's desk without further delay.

One of the strongest advocates for the reauthorization of the Debbie Smith Act is the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, also known as RAINN. It is the Nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization, and in its 25-year history, it has helped 3 million survivors and their loved ones.

Last week, RAINN held a press conference announcing the delivery of more than 32,000 signatures urging the immediate passage of this legislation by the House of Representatives. Debbie Smith also spoke at the press conference.

Just to remind colleagues, Debbie is, of course, a remarkable woman whose advocacy was born from a terrible personal experience. We have had the benefit of hearing from Debbie over the years many times in the Judiciary Committee.

I believe there is no one—no one—who has done more to support victims

of sexual assault than Debbie, and I am continually grateful to her for her courage and her candor as she travels around the country advocating for survivors. It can't be easy to talk about your own personal sexual assault and how you tried to grapple with the fact that your rape kit has not been tested and, thus, you don't even know who your attacker was and whether he may show up at some future date and try to repeat his crime.

During the press conference, Debbie spoke about the years of fear she dealt with while waiting for her attacker to be identified. She said: “The years I spent waiting for justice can never be returned to me.”

That is a heartbreak reality for survivors of sexual violence and a reminder of why it is so critical to reauthorize the Debbie Smith Act without further delay.

While we can't turn back the hands of time and somehow change history, we can act now to provide victims with the support, the answers, and the closure they need.

I urge Speaker PELOSI to bring the Debbie Smith Act of 2019 to the floor for a vote immediately in the House to demonstrate Congress's ongoing commitment to support victims of sexual violence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Mr. KAINES. Mr. President, I rise to object in the strongest possible terms to President Trump's continued raid on the budget of the U.S. military. As a candidate, the President promised the American public that he would build a border wall with Mexico and that Mexico would pay for any wall that he would build. The President has broken his promise. It shocks me that, as Commander in Chief, he now insists that it has to be our troops, our military families, and our Nation's security that has to be sacrificed for his foolishness. Frankly, it shocks me even more that Republican colleagues in this body seem perfectly willing to let him do that.

If you will not stand up for the men and women in our military, whom will you stand up for? If you will not stand up for important projects in your own State, whom will you stand up for? If you will not stand up to protect your Defense authorization bill or your Defense appropriations bill when they are being cannibalized, when will you stand up?

We will have a vote soon to block the President's destructive efforts to weaken our military and to trample on the power of Congress to set the Nation's budget and appropriations levels. I am hoping that my colleagues, Democratic and Republican, will stand up.

Let me first address the need for a secure border. I have called the President's insistence on using military monies to build the wall foolishness. What do I mean by this?

I don't challenge the need for border security. I strongly supported a comprehensive immigration reform package in 2013 that included vast amounts for border security, much more than the President has asked for. The bill had strong bipartisan support in the Senate, but the Republican-majority House refused to even take the bill up in committee, much less on the floor of the House. Had we passed that bill in 2013, it would have been a powerful step forward for immigrants, Dreamers, employers, TPS recipients, the American economy, and the security of America's borders.

In February of 2018, I worked with a bipartisan group of 16 Senators—8 Democrats and 8 Republicans. We put a proposal on the table, a permanent fix for Dreamers and a major investment in border security. In fact, we put an investment in border security into that bipartisan bill that had every penny that the President asked for for the next 10 years, \$25 billion, but President Trump attacked that bill and killed the bill, even though he had earlier indicated that he would sign it. There was \$25 billion for border security over 10 years, with basic guidelines to ensure that the monies were spent wisely and not foolishly.

I learned something from that experience. What I learned is that I don't believe the President cares about solving the border security issue. The substance of it means nothing to him, or he would have embraced a deal that gave him every penny he asked for in February of 2018.

He could have had a deal a long time ago if this mattered to him. What the President cares about is big campaign rallies with people chanting “build a wall” so he can continue to stoke his political machine. That is what I call foolishness.

It gets worse. A foolish insistence on political sloganizing over problem-solving is one thing, but taking money out of the military budget—from key priorities affecting our troops and the lives and safety of our troops and their families—is something much worse. It is disrespectful, and it is dangerous.

The President proposes to raid the military construction budget to the tune of \$3.6 billion to build 173 miles of border fencing. That is an average cost of \$4,000 per linear foot of fence. For reference, a standard 6-foot fence costs \$25 a foot, and a standard 6-foot brick wall costs \$90 a foot. The proposal is to spend \$4,000 a foot on fencing.

Let me give you examples of projects in Virginia and elsewhere that are being slashed to build this \$4,000-a-foot fence.

In Virginia, we will lose \$77 million in MILCON projects that the Department of Defense has told the Senate they need. There is \$26 million being taken away from improvements to a Navy ship maintenance facility in Portsmouth. Here is what the DOD said about the importance of that work on the ship maintenance facility:

The building has been cited for a number of life safety violations. These violations include no sprinkler protection, inadequate fire alarm placement, lack of a mass notification system and inadequate egress.

IMPACT IF NOT PROVIDED: Approximately 330 personnel working more than 256,000 manhours annually, will remain in a high-risk environment, with continuing significant rework, higher stress, and additional operating costs due to inadequate working environment.

That is what this cut will mean to that facility.

There is \$41 million being taken away from improvements to hazardous chemical storage facilities in Portsmouth and Norfolk. Here is how the DOD describes the impact on that cut and why the dollars were needed:

If this project is not provided . . . Norfolk will continue storing hazardous materials in non-conforming storage facilities that do not meet current life safety/fire safety code requirements.

Noncompliant firewalls, inadequate fire suppression systems, fire alarms, and inadequate ventilation.

There is \$10 million being taken away from a cyber facility that was recently announced to be located at Joint Base Langley Eustis. Needless to say, the cyber protection of our Nation is a higher and higher priority every day. Here is what DOD says will happen if those funds are not provided:

[We will be] unable to reach operating capability without a facility that includes the required SCIF—

a classified facility—

space from which to operate. Having the required SCIF space is necessary for the team to receive the intel and perform the training required to perform in the cyber mission space. Continued use of leased space is costly and represents an enhanced security risk.

Those funds are being cut.

Just to give a few examples, \$75.4 million is being taken away from heating plant improvements at Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska. Here is what that means, according to the Department of Defense:

Failure of the boiler is expected within the next 3-4 years.

That was requested in 2017.

Loss of heat and power during Eielson's sub-arctic winters, with temperatures as low as 65F below zero, would be devastating to facilities and missions housed in those facilities. If the situation were deemed critical enough, the base would be forced to consider evacuating facilities due to a lack of heat and power. Once closed, the facilities would freeze and require many millions of dollars of repair to return to usable condition. Completing the planned replacement of all boilers will guarantee continued steam and power generation to support the flying mission.

That money is being taken to fund the wall.

There is \$62 million being taken away from improvements to a school on the base at Fort Campbell in Kentucky. Here is what that means, according to the Department of Defense:

The existing school structures do not comply with current building codes, Anti-Terrorism & Force Protection standards, and sustainability standards.

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning and electrical systems are not sufficient.

IMPACT IF NOT PROVIDED: The sub-standard environment will continue to hamper the educational process and the middle school will not be able to support the DOD curriculum and provide for a safe facility. The continued use of deficient, inadequate, and undersized facilities that do not accommodate the current student population will continue to impair the overall educational program for these students.

There is \$13 million being taken away from improvements to a childcare center at Joint Base Andrews, here in the DC area. Here is what that means, according to the DOD:

The current facility—
a childcare center—

has suffered from sewage back-ups, heating, ventilation and air conditioning failures and mold and pest management issues. This project will accommodate 165 children and staff. As of Feb 2018, 115 children are on the Priority 1 waiting list. . . .

Why would we do this to these military families and their kids when they are sacrificing to volunteer and serve the country—take the program away, take away the funding for the childcare development center they need—to spend it on a wall that the President promised Mexico would pay for? We are now making these families pay for it. We are now making their children pay for it. We are now making the troops pay for it.

There is \$15 million being taken away from a healthcare center at Camp Lejeune, a healthcare center for military members and their families. Here is what that means, according to the DOD:

This project solves the problem of providing primary care services to the active duty operational forces . . . located in sub-standard infrastructure throughout the installation. [The] current capacity is insufficient and cannot accommodate more than half of the population resulting in a dispersion of patients and personnel. [Existing facilities] in some cases lack basic requirements such as sinks, proper ventilation, and exam rooms with doors.

IMPACT IF NOT PROVIDED: Required medical and dental services for Marine garrison care will continue to be provided in substandard, inefficient, decentralized and uncontrolled facilities.

My son was based at Camp Lejeune for a number of years. That one stings. Why would we take money out of the healthcare facility for marines who are living on the garrison?

Finally, \$8 million is being taken away from the space control center at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado. This is interesting because the Armed Services Committee just worked together with the administration to enhance a space force, a space command, because it is a higher priority. It needs to be. We all agree it needs to be because of advances that are being made in space capacities by China, Russia, and other nations. Yet the proposal is to take \$8 million away from the space control facility. Here is what the DOD says that would mean:

There are no adequate facilities located at either Peterson or Buckley AFBs for this

space control squadron. The only solution that meets all mission requirements is to construct a new facility on Peterson AFB.

If this facility isn't constructed, the military will be unable to stand up “the space control mission and equipment, with operational and strategic mission impacts due to inadequate facilities.”

We have just reached a deal with the administration to elevate the space force to meet the challenges of our principal nation-state competitors. Yet these monies are being taken away.

Will we really do this? Will we really do this to the safety of this country, to our security, to our troops and their families? Will we allow the President to unilaterally hurt these patriotic people, when he has long been able to find a fair and comprehensive immigration deal with Congress that includes border security funding?

Will the Senate majority say a word, raise an objection, show support for the military, show that Congress sets the budgets and appropriations, not the Executive, make clear that no President—not this President or any President—should be able to move money around at will to support a blatantly political agenda at the expense of critical defense priorities? That is what we will be voting on soon.

I urge my colleagues to reject the President's foolish and dangerous raid on our military.

With that, 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. LEAHY. I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week, the administration announced it was going to raid \$3.6 billion from military construction projects to pay for President Trump's ineffective and controversial border wall. That is the wall they gave their solemn word that Mexico would pay for. Now the money is being taken out of our military.

Look at some of the things he has taken money from: a new middle school at Fort Campbell, KY, a child development center at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, a new elementary school in Puerto Rico, a fire rescue station at Tyndall Air Force base in Florida. These are among the projects canceled on orders from a President who apparently values his cynical campaign promise over our men and women serving our country in uniform and their families.