

our important job of funding the Federal Government.

Last week brought an unfortunate spectacle: The vast majority of our Democratic colleagues actually filibustered legislation to fund our national defense—at a dollar figure they had previously agreed to—for the sake of a political fight with the President.

The funding our commanders need to keep pace with China and Russia, the funding our men and women in uniform need for their tools and training, even a pay raise for our servicemembers—all of it was blocked by our Democratic colleagues, blocked by Democrats in order to pick a partisan fight with the White House. That is an interesting statement of priorities, but I remain hopeful that we can get this process back on track.

Back in July, both parties in both Houses of Congress and the White House all agreed to a bipartisan, bicameral roadmap to guide appropriations. We all agreed to rule out poison pill policy riders and not to seek changes in Presidential authorities relative to current law. So I hope we can rediscover that roadmap and make some progress. In the meantime, before the end of the week, we will vote on a continuing resolution to prevent a lapse in funding while the work continues.

SOCIALISM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on a related matter, while Senate Republicans continue to seek bipartisan solutions, the story on the other side of the Capitol has been a little bit different.

Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic House continue to neglect opportunities to find compromises that might actually become law and instead churn out one leftwing messaging bill after another.

Two weeks ago, just days before Iran's coordinated attack on the world's largest oil processing facility in Saudi Arabia, House Democrats took it upon themselves to send us several pieces of legislation that would have reduced—reduced—American energy independence.

Domestic energy is a driver of American prosperity and one of the big success stories of recent years, but the House Democrats want us to retreat. They send us go-nowhere legislation the Senate will not pass and the President will not sign.

And then, lest a whole week go by without one of these exercises, here is what happened last week: House Democrats began unveiling Speaker PELOSI's handmade plan to have Washington, DC, bureaucrats start micromanaging America's prescription drugs. It is the same old one-size-fits-all, government-controlled philosophy we continue to see from our Democratic colleagues. Forget about choice. Forget about competition. Forget about free enterprise and finding ways to unleash more market forces to help consumers. Just

give Washington bureaucrats more power to clumsily call the shots and manipulate markets from the top down.

Predictably, what this plan amounts to is not an efficient, effective way to help American families but an efficient, effective way to bring even more of the economy under the bureaucracy's thumb and potentially set us on a track toward nationalizing a major industry.

There are millions of Americans who benefit from our Nation's incredible innovations and the R&D breakthroughs on new drug treatments and cures. We really ought not to jeopardize that.

American families deserve more choice, more competition, more affordability. The last thing we need is for the socialist delusions of the Green New Deal and Medicare for All to be copied and pasted into innovations and cures, putting them at risk.

Fortunately, this Republican Senate won't let the Speaker's dangerous proposal hurt the country. We will stay focused on the American people's business, and we will keep hoping our friends across the building put aside the political performances and join us to work on real solutions with a real chance of becoming real laws.

UKRAINE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has long worked on a bipartisan basis in secure settings out of the public spotlight to conduct critically important oversight of classified and sensitive matters. So I have been disappointed to see our colleague, the Democratic leader, choose to politicize the committee's ongoing efforts with respect to a recent whistleblower allegation—the special subject of which is still unknown.

As my friend Senator SCHUMER is aware, Chairman BURR and Vice Chairman WARNER have been working together to get the Acting Director of Intelligence and the intelligence community's inspector general before the committee this week to discuss the matter. As with most matters before the committee, I believe it is extremely important that their work be handled in a secure setting with adequate protections, in a bipartisan fashion, and based on facts rather than leaks to the press.

It is regrettable House Intelligence Committee Chairman SCHIFF and Senator SCHUMER have chosen to politicize the issue, circumventing the established procedures and protocols that exist so the committees can pursue sensitive matters in the appropriate, deliberate, bipartisan manner.

Although we don't know the substance of the allegations, there is speculation that it relates to our relationship with Ukraine. For my part, as I stated earlier this month, I was very glad to see the White House release security assistance funds for Ukraine.

I championed U.S. security assistance to Ukraine over the objections of the Obama administration in 2014 and have consistently believed in the importance of helping our Ukrainian partners defend their territory against Russian aggression. In fact, I had been personally pressing them to release security assistance funding for several months to ensure the United States did not walk back our important commitments to Ukraine.

On two occasions I raised the need to keep our commitment to Ukraine with the Secretary of Defense, expressing my interest in seeing this money be released to help our Ukrainian partners. I raised it with the Secretary of State. My staff also engaged senior officials at the Pentagon, at the State Department, at the National Security Council, and at the Office of Management and Budget. I also worked closely with Senator GRAHAM on the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee and Chairman SHELBY.

Throughout July, August, and early September, I worked hard to ensure that Ukraine received this much-needed assistance. That is because, going back years, I have urged administrations of both parties to be completely clear-eyed about the dangerous intentions of Putin's Russia and the importance of standing with Ukraine.

I sounded the alarm early and often when President Obama went soft on Putin and missed opportunities to send arms to Ukraine, and during the Trump administration, I have been a strong supporter of its efforts to provide defensive lethal weapons to Ukraine and to Georgia.

As I have said repeatedly, Russia poses a significant threat to U.S. interests. The best way to contest Putin and his hegemonic aspirations is to rebuild our defenses, work closely with our allies and partners, and improve the capacity of those threatened by Moscow to defend themselves.

I am grateful that security assistance has finally been released to help our friends in Ukraine defend themselves. Now the task falls on us to pass a Defense bill and make the necessary investment in modernizing our own military to ensure America's preeminent position in the world and to deter challenge from adversaries like Russia and China.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 2486 and H.R. 4378

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time en bloc.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2486) to reauthorize mandatory funding programs for historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions.

A bill (H.R. 4378) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bills 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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Ms. ERNST assumed the Chair.)

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination Brian McGuire, of New York, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

UKRAINE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I just listened to the majority leader come to the floor and tell Members of the Senate that they should close their eyes and box their ears to the current scandal that is engulfing the White House and the Trump administration. I heard the majority leader accuse Democrats of “politicizing” President Trump’s demand that the Government of Ukraine interfere in the 2020 election. That is a laughable charge, and it is not going to silence us on this matter of grave importance.

First of all, I have no idea what it means to politicize something these days. News flash: We are politicians. We practice politics. That is our job. I get told very often that I am politicizing gun violence when I suggest that maybe we should pass laws in order to change the daily trajectory of violence in this country. Yet the very reason we are here is to protect the safety of our constituents and to protect the sanctity of our democracy.

What we are standing up for right now is the rule of law, and I hope, over the course of this week, my Republican colleagues will join us in that basic responsibility that Members of the Senate and House of Representatives have.

We see the rule of law slipping away from us right now. We see our Nation being turned into a banana republic where the President can do anything he wants and turn the organs of state into his permanent political machine—his means of crushing his opponents. Today we see that many of my Republican colleagues are not just letting it happen but facilitating it.

There has to be a line that the President cannot cross. There has to be a moment when we all stand up and say: This has gone too far.

The President has admitted this weekend to asking a foreign leader to open an investigation into one of his political opponents as a means of advancing himself politically. That is not allowed in a democracy. That fundamentally corrupts the foreign policy of our Nation. It makes us all less safe when foreign governments now wonder whether they are going to be enlisted into the political operation of the President of the United States. This has always been a no-go area for Democratic and Republican administrations because we understand the vast power the Presidency has. If the President chooses to use that power and the leverage he has over people in this country and in other countries to do his political bidding, then there is nothing to protect any of us from the executive branch.

The idea that the President can openly admit that he is asking a foreign government to get involved in his political reelection campaign—and believe that he will get away with it—suggests a belief in the impunity surrounding his office. We should all be concerned about that.

At the very least, if my Republican colleagues don’t share my grave alarm at the disclosures of the last 48 hours, then we should at least agree that the whistleblower complaint needs to come before the Congress unredacted. There is no fuzzy penumbra around this law. It is clear as day. If a whistleblower makes a complaint that is deemed urgent in nature, it must be presented to the Congress. The President cannot hold it back; the executive branch cannot make it a secret.

What makes it worse is that the President seems to be playing a game with this whistleblower complaint. He seems to be teasing out little bits of information that are contained in it here and there in order to play to his political advantage. It is even worse than holding back the complaint from us. He is now using pieces of it to try to gain advantage over his political opponents.

At the very least, over the next 24 hours, we need to come to a conclusion that the law needs to be followed. If the President can withhold from us whistleblower complaints that are not

flattering to him—that potentially implicate him—then what is the point of having a whistleblower law? What is the point of having a process to protect people who are uncovering corruption in the administration if the administration can keep those complaints secret?

Let’s just be honest. If this President gets away with it, the next Democratic President can get away with it, and the next Republican President can get away with it. We will have lost all of our power to see into the wrongdoing of an administration. There will be a day when Republicans want to see into potential wrongdoing of an administration of the opposite party, but that will be all gone if we don’t, at the very least, come to the conclusion that we need to see it as the law states.

That is just the beginning because I think—as the President has advertised—that complaint is going to show he did, indeed, try to pressure a foreign government to conduct investigations into one of his political opponents. I think this is a really serious moment for the country. I think it is a really serious moment for the prerogatives of the article I branch.

I understand that my Republican colleagues may not be ready to talk about consequences for the administration for their wrongdoing, but, at the very least, we need to come together and make sure we have all of the information necessary.

By the way, it doesn’t end with the whistleblower complaint because the whistleblower complaint is likely going to raise even more questions that we are going to have to answer. We have a duty to then go out and find additional information.

For many, the President’s admission of guilt may be enough to make a determination about what the next steps are. But for those who aren’t persuaded that there have to be consequences for the President’s admission of corruption, then we should use the organs at our disposal to try to figure out the rest of the details surrounding this incident or series of incidents. What kinds of contacts have the President’s representatives been having with the Ukrainian Government? Has the State Department been involved in trying to do the President’s political bidding in and around Ukraine? How many people in the administration knew about this? Who tried to stop it? Who has been involved in keeping the whistleblower complaint from us? There are so many questions that need to be answered here, and it should be our responsibility to get to the bottom of all of them.

I think this is a really serious moment for this country. I think the minute the President is able to turn the foreign policy of this Nation into a vehicle for his own political advancement is the day that democracy, as we know it, slips away from us. If we aren’t ready to have a bipartisan conversation about consequences and remedies this week, then let’s at least have