

Why does this matter? There is a lot of work that has gone into trying to determine what those appropriations bills should say and should contain. Certainly, how much money we spend is important, but if you sidetrack the appropriations process, you eliminate the prioritization. We need to make decisions every year on behalf of the American people. Is there something that we should spend no money on? Last year it received money but not this year. It is not enough priority for us to spend enough money on this year. Are there things we are spending money on today, this year, that are about right, and are there a few things we should spend more money on?

That is a process that involves hearings. It involves witnesses. It involves testimony. It involves other Members, the U.S. Senators, and 100 of us have the opportunity to provide input as to how much money should be spent in those various areas of the appropriations bill. Are there things that are higher priorities, programs that work better than others?

We ought to care about this from a fiscal point of view—how much money we spend. Are we on a path to get us toward greater fiscal sanity, getting our books to balance? But at the same time, in the process of doing that, are we making decisions that determine that something is more important than something else because we know we shouldn't and can't spend money on everything?

That is what the appropriations process does. Maybe we didn't get it exactly right, but allowing the bills to come to the Senate floor allows 99 of my colleagues to join me in the ability to offer amendments to change those priorities. So every Member of the Senate, on behalf of their constituents back home in their home States, ought to care about an appropriations bill being on the Senate floor.

Perhaps, this is the point when I should say that if we fail to do this, what this normally will mean is that we have what we call a CR, or a continuing resolution, meaning that we are going to fund the Federal Government next year at the same levels and in the same way as we did this year.

That lacks any kind of common sense or a basis for making a good decision. Not everything is equal. Just because we spent something last year in this amount doesn't mean it is the right amount next year. If we have been doing continuing resolutions one year after another, what that means is decisions we made about spending 3 or 4 years ago remain the priorities for next year's spending.

We ought to avoid the continuing resolution. We ought to do our work. Tomorrow's vote puts us on a path to do that. Again, we are only on that path if the Members of the Senate decide that this is something we are going to proceed to accomplish.

Fiscal order, prioritization of spending—I also think that Congress over

the years has deferred too often to Federal Agencies and Departments. I tell my constituents that I know the American people are not satisfied with the nature of Congress as an institution and perhaps not satisfied with even their own Senator or U.S. Congressman or Congresswoman, but we are the closest thing that you have to the ability to make your will known and cause and effect in Washington, DC.

Someone can visit with me and someone can visit with every U.S. Senator and have a consequence here. It is through this process, if you allow us all to participate in the legislative process, that we can take our constituents' will and bring it to Washington, DC, on their behalf.

In the absence of that, it just means the Departments, the Cabinets, the Cabinet Secretaries, the Agency heads, the Bureau chiefs, and the people who work within the bureaucracy have more say if we don't do appropriations bills than elected officials representing Kansans and the people of 49 other States.

This is a way we can bring the people of the United States into decisions made in Washington, DC. When we defer, when we do a continuing resolution, it means it is more likely that no person within the bureaucracy has any reason to pay any attention to our interests. A constituent brings me a problem and says: Something is going on at the Department of Interior, and this is what we are seeing, and this is how it affects us. Could you help solve that problem? Can you get somebody's attention at the Department of Interior? Could you get somebody's attention at the Department of Commerce?

If we don't do appropriations bills, our ability to influence people at the Department of Commerce—the power of the purse strings—disappears. It means that we have less ability not only to determine how money is to be spent but to be able to tell an Agency head or a Cabinet Secretary: This makes no sense. What you are doing to folks back home is very damaging to them. Let us explain to you.

If human nature, being what it is, says that if you are the person or if you are the organization—in this case, the U.S. Senate—that determines how much money an Agency, Department, or Cabinet Secretary gets within their realm of authority, you are going to be much more likely to listen to a Member of Congress and help us solve problems on the behalf of our constituents.

The appropriations process matters greatly. I think we are poised for the opportunity to demonstrate that this place can work, it can represent the American people, and we can allow all of our colleagues to have input in the appropriations process, which has been ongoing since last year.

I hope the conclusion tomorrow by my colleagues is that this is a worthy endeavor. The U.S. Senate ought to return to the days in which we did 12 appropriations bills on an annual basis

and allowed the American people their input in the appropriations process.

PROTOCOL TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY OF 1949 ON THE ACCESSION OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor to express my support for ratifying the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of North Macedonia. In light of the Kremlin's ongoing aggression against the United States, against Ukraine, and against many of our democratic allies, today's vote sends an important signal that we are serious about standing up to Moscow. A strong NATO is critical to the security of the United States, and supporting NATO's expansion is one of the most important things this body can do to protect our Nation.

This historic vote would not be happening without the Prespa Agreement between Greece and North Macedonia, which resolved the two countries' name dispute and came into force in February. I want to acknowledge the hard work of these countries, as well as the tireless efforts of American diplomats, to make Prespa a reality.

North Macedonia has already made notable contributions to the security of the U.S. and of NATO. North Macedonia has deployed more than 4,000 troops to Iraq in support of U.S. efforts there, and in 2018, North Macedonia boosted its contribution to Afghanistan by 20 percent.

It actively supports the international counter-ISIS coalition and has also supported missions in Kosovo. This history of partnership with the U.S. on important security issues speaks strongly in favor of North Macedonia's inclusion in the Alliance.

NATO is strongest when all of its members contribute, and I am glad that North Macedonia is committed to hitting the target of spending 2 percent of its GDP on defense by 2024. The government has already made great progress towards that target, and we must hold them to that promise.

I also want to stress the importance of all NATO members spending 2 percent of GDP on defense. Our allies have increased their defense spending since 2014 in response to a clear and growing threat from the Kremlin. We must work to make sure that trend continues, and we must do it as partners, not as bullies.

We must also remember that belonging to NATO is about more than military capabilities. NATO was established as a club of democracies that abide by a certain set of principles. When the Clinton administration was considering new members, former Secretary of Defense William Perry laid out some criteria for inclusion in this group: individual liberty for citizens, democratic elections, the rule of law, economic and market-based reforms, resolution of territorial disputes with neighbors, and civilian control of the military.

North Macedonia has made progress on rule of law and democracy, but more work remains to perfect the system. NATO member states should not consider this process complete and must continue supporting North Macedonia's work to fully implement its reform commitments.

Finally, admitting North Macedonia into NATO is an important step towards fully integrating the Balkans into the international institutions that contribute to peace and stability in Europe. I hope that today's vote will provide momentum for North Macedonia to open EU accession talks as well. There is unfinished work for peace in the Balkans, and the United States must remain committed to the region to resolve these long-running challenges.

The Kremlin, of course, does not want to see stability in the Balkans. It does not want to see the spread of democracy and rule of law. It does not want countries like North Macedonia to experience the peace and prosperity that integration with the West brings. That is why Russia tried to stop the Prespa Agreement with disinformation and political manipulation, and why it has vocally opposed North Macedonia's NATO accession.

With today's vote, we can make clear that no country outside the Alliance gets a veto over who gets to join NATO, especially not Russia. We can show our support for a country that has partnered with us on important security missions and is making tough but necessary reforms. We can promote stability in a critical region of the world and reduce Kremlin influence there. Most importantly, we can protect our homeland by expanding an alliance that has proven invaluable to national security.

While it is a positive step that we are voting to ratify North Macedonia's NATO accession protocol, it is also an opportune moment to take a step back and consider the Senate's treaty power more broadly.

Article 2 of the Constitution endows the President and the Senate with shared power over treaties. The President, it states, "shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur." While the Constitution does not expressly dictate a procedure for terminating treaty relationships, Senators have long asserted that the shared treaty power extends to withdrawal and therefore also requires Senate approval.

Regardless of whether the executive branch agrees with this position, what is completely unacceptable is that Senators are first learning about treaty withdrawals and threats to withdraw online or in the newspaper instead of through proactive outreach by and meaningful dialogue with the executive branch.

The stakes could not be higher. Among the three treaties President

Trump has pulled out of just this year is the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty—INF Treaty—a cornerstone of the nuclear nonproliferation regime with Russia. The Senate approved this; treaty in 1988 by a vote of 93–5.

Now, there are rumors swirling that the President will imminently pull out of the Open Skies Treaty, a multilateral arms control agreement that has been a critical element of U.S. and European security. The Senate approved that treaty in 1993 without any recorded opposition.

As with so many aspects of President Trump's foreign policy, withdrawal from Open Skies would be another gift to Vladimir Putin. Just last year, the United States conducted an extraordinary flight authorized under Open Skies and intended to reaffirm U.S. commitment to Ukraine and other partner nations. Further, when the Ukraine crisis first emerged, the United States used images collected by U.S. surveillance missions under the Open Skies Treaty to publically demonstrate that Russian forces had invaded Ukrainian territory. Withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty would be perceived as casting us further doubt on the status of the U.S. commitment to Ukraine's security and would advance the Russian narrative that the United States is an unreliable partner in the region.

These withdrawals not only demonstrate a reckless approach to foreign policy—an approach that gratifies the Trump administration's short-term goals at the expense of our country's long-term interests—they also erode the Senate's prerogative on treaties. Given the constitutional mandate of shared responsibility for treaties between the Senate and President, along with a heightened standard for Senate advice and consent, it is inconceivable to think that unilateral treaty termination, absent any engagement whatsoever with the Senate, could be constitutionally sound, yet that is what this President is doing and what this Senate must reject.

It is in this context that we must face an unfortunate truth relevant to the continuing health of the NATO alliance, which is the constant threat that President Trump may suddenly pull the United States out of NATO altogether. It is a dangerous option the President has apparently raised with subordinates. If recent history is any guide, the fact that a U.S. withdrawal would be reckless, dangerous, and, as the former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO has said, "a geopolitical mistake of epic proportion," does not mean that the President will not pursue it.

With that in mind, it is unfortunate that Senator MCCONNELL refused to allow amendments to the North Macedonia Protocol. Had he allowed a more open process, I would have offered an amendment that would have conditioned Senate advice and consent on

the protocol to a requirement that the President not withdraw from NATO without Senate approval. While this step may not have been necessary previously, we must regretfully move in that direction to respond to President Trump and to protect against his ability and willingness to jeopardize U.S. national security through hasty and unilateral treaty withdrawals.

So, while I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in voting to ratify North Macedonia's NATO accession protocol, I must express my concern that the Senate has not yet taken any steps to prevent President Trump from pulling the United States out of NATO or other treaties absent any Senate input or approval.

Mr. CASEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled vote commence now.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on treaties Calendar No. 5, Treaty Document No. 116–1, Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, John Cornyn, John Thune, John Hoeven, John Boozman, Thom Tillis, Steve Daines, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Barrasso, Richard Burr, Shelley Moore Capito, Roy Blunt, Mike Rounds, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of the Republic of North Macedonia shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Massachusetts

(Ms. WARREN), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 84, nays 2, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 326 Ex.]

YEAS—84

Alexander	Ernst	Perdue
Baldwin	Feinstein	Peters
Barrasso	Fischer	Portman
Blackburn	Gardner	Reed
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Risch
Blunt	Graham	Roberts
Boozman	Grassley	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rosen
Brown	Heinrich	Rounds
Burr	Hirono	Rubio
Cantwell	Hoeben	Sasse
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Cardin	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Carper	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Casey	Jones	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kaine	Shelby
Collins	King	Sinema
Coons	Lankford	Smith
Cornyn	Leahy	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tester
Cotton	Markey	Thune
Cramer	McConnell	Tillis
Crapo	McSally	Udall
Cruz	Menendez	Van Hollen
Daines	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Moran	Wicker
Durbin	Murphy	Wyden
Enzi	Murray	Young

NAYS—2

Lee Paul

NOT VOTING—14

Bennet	Kennedy	Stabenow
Booker	Klobuchar	Toomey
Harris	Murkowski	Warren
Hassan	Sanders	Whitehouse
Isakson	Schatz	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 84, the nays are 2.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from North Dakota.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks, on Tuesday, October 22, the time until 12 noon be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees. I further ask that all postcloture time on Treaties Calendar No. 5, Treaty Document No. 116-1, expire at 12 noon tomorrow and that the Senate vote on the ratification of the treaty.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, unfortunately I was unable to attend the rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of the Republic of North Macedonia. Had I been able to attend, I would have voted in support of cloture.●

OCEAN PLASTIC POLLUTION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, oceans, lakes, and rivers across our planet are filled with debris that litters shorelines and threatens public health, navigation safety, wildlife, and the environment. This debris causes serious damage to the health of ocean ecosystems and marine life and, due to ocean currents, often travels great distances and poses threats to nations that are not responsible for the mismanagement of such waste.

One of the most common forms of marine debris is plastic, which is abundant in our everyday lives, often in the form of single-use packaging. Countless seabirds, sea turtles, seals, and other marine animals are killed each year after ingesting plastic or getting entangled in it. And most commonly used plastics never fully degrade but, rather, break down into smaller and smaller pieces, known as microplastics, which pose unique problems of their own.

The negative health, environmental, and economic impacts of marine pollution, both to countries that discharge waste and to those on whose shorelines such waste washes up, are steadily mounting. Billions of pounds of plastic and other debris can be found in our oceans and waterways.

In the Senate version of the fiscal year 2020 Department of State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill, which was reported unanimously by the Appropriations Committee on September 26, the committee recommended funding to respond to this global threat. In this bill, the committee directs the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development to redouble their diplomatic and programmatic support for regional and global efforts to address this urgent problem, including through grants, technical assistance, and new multilateral mechanisms, and provides \$10 million to support such efforts.

While the funding provided is minuscule compared to what is needed, the committee's intent is clear. The United States must increase its leadership and visibility on this issue and become more engaged in efforts to prevent and mitigate the impacts of marine debris. The committee recognizes that the United States cannot address this problem alone. Nothing connects countries of the world more than oceans and waterways, and strong international cooperation is necessary to guarantee their conservation for generations to

come. It is imperative that the United States increases its engagement both bilaterally and multilaterally to tackle this challenge.

It is not an understatement to say that what I am speaking about—the protection of the oceans, lakes, and rivers of our planet—is essential to our existence. I hope other Senators will join me, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and others who have taken up this cause in calling for additional resources to address ocean plastic pollution.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING AMELIA ISLAND KAYAK EXCURSIONS

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week it is my honor to recognize a small business that exemplifies family values and dedication to its community. I am proud to recognize Amelia Island Kayak Excursions of Fernandina Beach, FL, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Established in 2013, Amelia Island Kayak Excursions is the product of the Bullington family's love of kayaking in the Amelia Island inlands. Six years ago, Mark Bullington and his two children, Amber and Aaron, decided to turn their hobby into their livelihood. Their love of Florida and commitment to responsible stewardship of the Earth led the Bullingtons to share their passion with visitors and their community.

Showcasing Florida's beauty, Amelia Island Kayak Excursions offers both kayak and boat expeditions throughout wildlife-rich Egan's Creek, Lofton's Creek, and more of Florida's coastal environment. Tours range from 2 to 5 hours, and overnight tours are offered for experienced kayakers. Additionally, Amelia Island Kayak Excursions offers private boat tours for small groups to observe the diverse local wildlife.

Since its founding, the tour guides of Amelia Island Kayak Excursions have continued to learn more about Florida's unique environment and community. Over the span of his career, Mark has logged more than 4,500 miles kayaking and canoeing, gaining extensive knowledge about the scenic ecosystem in the process. Amber not only leads tours but is also involved with the local business community through the Nassau County Chamber of Commerce and, in 2018, was recognized as the chamber's Ambassador of the Year. Aaron is certified through the University of Florida as a Florida Master Naturalist, a certification which lends itself easily to his role as tour guide.

As a well-established tour service, Amelia Island Kayak Excursions has become an essential part of the economic framework of Fernandina Beach. This business's influential role has not gone unnoticed. In 2017, Amelia Island