

political theater. So American workers and farmers are still waiting.

However, while our Democratic colleagues block these bipartisan priorities, at least they are not shy about what they do support. We have seen what Democrats prioritize. We remember the Green New Deal, an effort to grab unprecedented control over American families' daily lives. Designing, building, or furnishing a home or business? Democrats want Washington to dictate how you do that. Commuting, traveling for vacation, mowing your lawn? They would like you to do that without gasoline or jet fuel sooner rather than later. Make a living producing, refining, or delivering affordable American energy? They want you to find another line of work whether you like it or not. That is the Green New Deal.

There is also the matter of Medicare for None. That is the scheme that would take the program that millions of American seniors rely on, throw away everything except the label, and paste that onto a new, one-size-fits-all, Washington-run insurance plan that would be mandatory for every American. Medicare, gone. Private plans and the popular Medicare Advantage Program, gone. Every health insurance plan that Americans get on the job, which over 180 million people depend on, gone.

This is literally what several of the leading Democratic Presidential contenders have endorsed—a new nationwide experiment in socialism. And every single American—man, woman, and child—would be the subject of this experiment, whether that is what we want for our families or not. From this mandatory one-size-fits-all insurance plan to new price controls that would limit lifesaving cures, our Democratic colleagues are rallying around policies that would leave American families paying more to wait longer for worse care. That is their prescription—paying more to wait longer for worse care.

Then, if these plans weren't bad enough on the merits, there is the small issue of the crushing new tax burden you would have to pile onto the U.S. economy in order to make some effort to pay for all of this. One leading Democrat released a breathtaking proposal last week that illustrates the road they would like to head down. This candidate's Medicare for None plan on its own, notwithstanding all the other socialist plans—just the healthcare plan—would cost \$52 trillion over the first 10 years alone. That is the candidate's own estimate—\$52 trillion over 10 years.

Even after cannibalizing everything the government currently spends on healthcare, the plan's author admits there would still be a staggering \$20-plus trillion left over to finance. Other experts say it would be more. For some perspective, if you add up every cent that is deposited in every commercial bank across the United States of America, that is about \$13 trillion. So you

could literally seize—seize—every dollar that Americans have deposited in banks and you would have nowhere near enough money to pay for even the first decade of this crazy experiment. Democrats are confident they can produce this huge sum of money through historic tax increases on job creators and on the American people. It would be an enormous—enormous—new tax burden dumped on the U.S. economy that would kill jobs, depress workers' wages, and make America less competitive literally for generations to come.

At the exact time when Republican tax reform has made the United States more competitive and boosted prosperity here at home, Democrats want to take us backward and make our Nation a less attractive place to create jobs.

Here is what Larry Summers, a former Treasury Secretary under President Clinton, wrote about this far-left plan in the Washington Post:

[It] will discourage hiring, particularly of low-skilled workers. . . . There is . . . the real risk of an economic contraction following a sharp market decline.

That is Larry Summers, the Clinton Treasury Secretary. Particularly, it would discourage hiring, particularly of low-skilled workers, and a sharp market decline. So in order to take away employer-sponsored insurance from 180 million Americans, Democrats want to kill American jobs and bring the economy to a screeching halt.

Look, I would implore my friends across the aisle to put aside this destructive socialism and join us in the current work that needs doing right now for the American people. We have a landmark trade agreement that needs passing. We have U.S. Armed Forces that need funding. We are just waiting on our Democratic colleagues to show up.

#### 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 of David Austin Tapp, of Kentucky, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mr. McCONNELL. 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. 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.

#### DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, let me begin by echoing what the leader said earlier about the importance of passing the Defense appropriations bill.

I just came from a meeting with members of our Defense Department where we talked about how important it is that the appropriations process moves forward. The Defense authorization bill, the broader bill that sets the priorities for military spending, is also stalled out here. That is something that both sides have agreed to for 58 years. It sets out how we are going to make sure that we take care of our men and women in uniform and that they have the equipment, the weaponry, and the training they need to do their jobs and to keep America safe. The authorization bill is stalled right now. That is the priority bill.

The appropriations bill, the part that funds all of that—that, too, has been blocked last week, most recently by the Senate Democrats, who filibustered the Defense appropriations bill.

So both the authorization bill and the funding bill are now both stalled out here in the Senate because of obstruction and delays by the Senate Democrats. That is unfortunate for the men and women in uniform in this country because in that Defense appropriations bill is the largest pay increase in a decade for our men and women in uniform, not to mention all of the important priorities that are funded when it comes to the weapons systems and the most sophisticated technology that is necessary, again, to keep Americans safe both here at home and around the world.

I can't emphasize enough how important it is for our Democratic colleagues to come to their senses and conclude that taking care of America's military is job No. 1. If we don't get national security right, the rest is conversation. It really is. All these other things that we talk about are secondary and pale in comparison to making sure that we are taking the steps necessary to protect Americans, as I said, both here at home and around the world.

The Defense appropriations bill funds all of those priorities, all those things that are important, from pay and benefits for our men and women in uniform to, again, all the things that are necessary for them when it comes to training, equipment, and weaponry to do their jobs and to do them well, to continue to keep Americans safe both here at home and around the world, and to be able to project American power where necessary in a world that is increasingly dangerous.

I would just urge the Democrats here in the Senate to allow this appropriations process to move forward. Give us a vote. Let's vote on it. Let's get the military funded. Every day that goes by where it is not funded is lost time, and there are resources that can't be put into those important priorities

that are so essential to America's national security interests.

We have a filibuster being conducted by the Senate Democrats. It needs to be stopped. We need to move forward with the Defense appropriations bill, and I hope the Senate Democrats will come to the conclusion that this is the right thing to do, not only for the Senate but, more importantly, for our country.

#### FILTER BUBBLE TRANSPARENCY ACT

Madam President, the internet has brought Americans a host of benefits: a wealth of information at our fingertips, unparalleled convenience, new opportunities for education and commerce, and innumerable new methods of communication. But I don't need to tell anyone that along with the countless benefits of the internet have come a number of concerns.

One thing that is on the mind of many consumers is privacy. As the internet gradually permeates every area of our lives, internet companies become the repository for an ever-increasing amount of our personal data and our personal information, from what we ate for dinner last night to the temperature we like to keep in our house.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation and the Internet of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I spent a lot of time focused on data privacy issues. This past June, I convened a hearing entitled "Optimizing for Engagement: Understanding the Use of Persuasive Technology on Internet Platforms."

At that hearing, we heard from a variety of experts about the ways companies use consumers' personal data to determine what individuals see online. As I said at the time, one reason I decided to hold the hearing was to inform legislation I was developing that would require internet platforms to give consumers the option to engage without having the experience shaped by algorithms that are driven by their user-specific data.

Last Thursday, I introduced that legislation, called the Filter Bubble Transparency Act, here in the Senate. I am proud to have a number of bipartisan cosponsors on this bill. Senator BLUMENTHAL, Senator MORAN, Senator BLACKBURN, and Senator WARNER have all cosponsored this legislation, and I am grateful for their support.

The Filter Bubble Transparency Act is designed to address one aspect of the privacy problem, the issues that arise from internet companies' use of consumers' personal information to shape what consumers see on their platforms. Many people are unaware that much of the content they see on the internet is determined by sophisticated algorithms and artificial intelligence that draw on data about each consumer's online activity.

For example, a recent Pew Research Center study found that 53 percent of U.S. adults don't understand how

Facebook News Feed works. Many of us know that Netflix is curating information and recommendations specifically for us based on the movies and the shows that we watch. They use past behavior to project what future behavior is going to be, and they take all that information and they aggregate it. Then, they use that to recommend certain things that we might want to see.

A lot of us are aware that Amazon is delivering product recommendations based on our purchase history. In other words, when you buy things online, you see the ads for the types of things that you buy online. But the reality is that internet companies have moved far beyond just recommending TV shows or just recommending things that you might want to purchase. Increasingly, every aspect of our online experience is personalized based on the vast amount of information that companies collect about us—from our age and occupation to how many times we visit certain websites.

The data used by these companies to make predictions about us comes from a wide range of sources—from smart devices like Alexa, Google Assistant, Ring doorbells, and Nest devices; scanned emails and documents; data acquired from third parties, like banks, credit card processors, and health data services, among many other sources. This data is used to make statistical predictions about how we are going to behave in the future.

This statistical prediction-making is happening on a massive scale. For example, Facebook has stated that the artificial intelligence that it uses for its News Feed can make 6 million predictions per second. Billions of people are being fed content on internet platforms that is basically selected for them by algorithms trying to make predictions about what will keep each user engaged on the platform. Clearly, the powerful mechanisms behind these platforms, meant to enhance engagement, also have the ability, or at least the potential, to influence the thoughts and behaviors, literally, of billions of people.

That is why there is widespread unease about the power of these platforms and why it is important for the public to better understand how these platforms use the information they collect to make predictions about our behavior.

As I said, a significant cause for concern is that most people are not always aware that the information they see is being filtered. We are trapped in what one observer has termed the "filter bubble," our own private world of filtered search results and tailored content, without even knowing that we are there.

There are real concerns that the ever-increasing use of filters to shape our internet experience contributes to political polarization, social isolation, and addiction, as well as permitting companies to manipulate user behavior.

My bill, the Filter Bubble Transparency Act, takes aim at these concerns by requiring major internet platforms to notify consumers that the information they are seeing has been selected for them using filters based on their personal data. It would also require these sites to give consumers the option of seeing unfiltered results.

Twitter provides a good example of what the Filter Bubble Transparency Act will do. Twitter gives consumers an option to view an unfiltered timeline through the use of a prominently displayed icon that is easy to access throughout a user's time on that particular platform. Consumers have the option of viewing the timeline that Twitter has curated for them, which pushes the posts that Twitter thinks they want to see to the top of their feed or viewing an unfiltered timeline that features all posts in a chronological order.

That is the kind of option that my bill would give the consumers on other types of social media platforms. Consumers will be able to choose whether to see an unfiltered social media feed or search results or whether to view the curated or personalized content that the site chooses for them. It would be an option. We believe this gives consumers more choice and more control. They would be able to easily switch back and forth between the two options whenever they wanted. After all, consumers may want to see the filter-driven content in some cases. I mean, I would certainly prefer to see Netflix recommendations that are tailored to my viewing history, and if you have 1,000 tweets to read, it can be useful to see the ones that you are most likely to be interested in at the top of that feed. But consumers should also have the option to escape from that filter bubble and to see information that has not been selected specifically for them.

I strongly support a light-touch approach to internet regulation that allows the free market to flourish. The internet would not have grown the way that it has had it been weighed down with heavy-handed government regulations. In order for free markets to work effectively, consumers need as much information as possible, including a better understanding of how internet platforms use artificial intelligence and complex filters to shape the information that those users see and receive.

My bill would provide transparency and consumer control without jeopardizing the opportunity and innovation that we have come to expect from the tech industry. As internet companies collect and make use of more and more of our personal information, it is important that consumers know how their data is being used. At an even more basic level, it is important for consumers to know that their data is being used to curate the content they see.

That is exactly what the Filter Bubble Transparency Act would do—allow