

cells that can often be attached to existing infrastructure like utility poles or buildings.

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation called the STREAMLINE Act to make it easier for companies to deploy these small cells so that we can get the infrastructure in place for 5G technology. I have also spent a lot of time focusing on securing adequate spectrum for 5G.

Last year, the President signed into law my bipartisan bill called the MOBILE NOW Act. It was legislation that I introduced to help secure adequate spectrum and to facilitate next-generation infrastructure. Tomorrow, in my role as chairman of the Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation and the Internet, I will be chairing a hearing looking at the progress that has been made in implementing the MOBILE NOW Act. We have a great slate of witnesses testifying tomorrow, including Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken, who has driven the implementation of advanced mobile broadband technology in Sioux Falls, SD.

The MOBILE NOW Act has helped us make progress toward the deployment of 5G, particularly in identifying licensed spectrum that can be used to support 5G deployment in more rural areas of the country.

MOBILE NOW also recognized the critical role that unlicensed spectrum plays in the development of 5G and in the larger communications landscape. Wi-fi operating on unlicensed spectrum will have an increasing role as we continue to connect more devices in the 5G era.

There is more work to be done, though. While we have made good progress on securing low- and high-band spectrum, China and South Korea are ahead of us in opening up mid-band spectrum for 5G. We don't want to lose out to China and South Korea on 5G, so we need to substantially increase the amount of mid-band spectrum available to U.S. companies.

Senator WICKER and I recently introduced legislation to facilitate the rapid acquisition of mid-band spectrum. Our 5G Spectrum Act would bring a substantial amount of mid-band spectrum to market for U.S. companies ready to deploy robust 5G networks.

In addition to fostering tremendous technological breakthroughs in everything from agriculture to energy, 5G has the potential to add \$500 billion to the economy and to create literally millions of new jobs. But in order to achieve those economic benefits, we need to stay at the head of the 5G revolution.

The United States lagged behind other countries in deploying 2G and 3G technology, which had real economic consequences. Europe, for example, took the lead in 2G and cornered most of the market in sales of networking equipment and telecom hardware.

As 4G emerged, however, the U.S. wireless industry stepped forward, in-

vesting billions in 4G deployment. The government also took steps to support the wireless industry, freeing up spectrum and making it easier to deploy the necessary infrastructure. That is what we have to do again today. If we want to stay at the head of the race to 5G, the government needs to make sure that wireless companies have access to the necessary spectrum and the ability to efficiently deploy small cell infrastructure.

We are right on the edge of the 5G revolution, and I am confident that the United States can lead the world in 5G, just like we did with 4G. We just need to take the last few steps to enable widespread 5G deployment.

I look forward to talking with individuals on the frontlines of 5G deployment at the hearing tomorrow. I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that both the spectrum and the infrastructure are in place for 5G technology.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon, the majority on the House Intelligence Committee released a report on the evidence it has examined thus far in the impeachment inquiry into President Trump. The report asserted that the inquiry has “uncovered a months-long effort by President Trump to use the powers of his office to solicit foreign interference on his behalf in the 2020 election,” going on to say that the “President placed his own personal and political interests above the national interests of the United States.”

Those are extremely serious charges, and the conduct they describe is undoubtedly worthy of congressional investigation, which is precisely what the House impeachment inquiry is designed to do.

Whatever your party affiliation, it is up to us in Congress—and particularly in the Senate—to examine the evidence, remain impartial, and treat this matter with the seriousness it deserves. But at the moment, too many Members of the President’s party are stretching the bounds of truth in an attempt to defend the President’s behavior. Certain Members on the other side have parroted the fiction invented by Vladimir Putin’s intelligence services that Ukraine, not just Putin, interfered in the 2016 elections. One Member repeated this falsehood, recanted on

live television, and then went back to making similar comments a few days later.

Yesterday, Leader McCONNELL, when asked to set the record straight, said that it was a matter for the intelligence committees to look into.

Well, Leader McCONNELL, the intelligence committees have looked at it. In fact, according to reports, the Republican-led Senate Intelligence Committee investigated the allegations that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election and found no evidence to support the claims. The Republican-led Intelligence Committee found no evidence, and Leader McCONNELL and so many of our Republican friends, in febrile obeisance to Donald Trump and his falsehoods and lies, have refused to even rebut that.

It is a dark day for America when a foreign leader who is our enemy can spread a false truth and is either defended or there is a lack of rebuttal from our Republican colleagues. What the heck is going on here in this America?

David Hale, the No. 3 official at President Trump’s State Department, was asked by Senator MENENDEZ yesterday whether he was aware of any evidence of Ukrainian interference in 2016. He said: I am not. He was not aware. Fiona Hill, another Trump appointee and a former NSC official, testified under oath that it was “a fictional narrative.”

There is no doubt that the idea of Ukrainian interference in 2016 is a hoax perpetrated by Putin’s intelligence services, echoed by FOX News and acolytes of President Trump’s, who similarly have shown no regard for truth—none.

The fact that Republican Senators are repeating and amplifying this fiction or playing coy about it, as Leader McCONNELL is, is just wrong for America, wrong for the future of our country—a turning point, a dark point, in our history. And in my view, it shows the extreme depths—the febrile depths—to which certain Members on the other side will stoop to provide cover to a President accused of serious wrongdoing—a President who almost no American believes is credible any longer.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, on another matter where we could use some bipartisanship, in 16 days, funding for the government will expire. We have several important pieces in place to avoid a shutdown, including the recent agreement on allocations known as 302(b)s. Several sticking points remain, but overall, this is good news because I believe, left to our own devices, Congress could work through the final issues and make sure the government stays open.

However, a report came out yesterday suggesting President Trump may refuse to sign any funding agreement without securing funding for his border wall first. If all of this seems a little familiar, it is because it is. Nearly a

year ago exactly, the President torpedoed bipartisan negotiations by demanding the very same thing—funding for his border wall—and the result was the longest government shutdown in history.

Funding for a border wall was a non-starter for Democrats then, and it remains a non-starter for Democrats now. The votes did not exist even within the President's own party then, and they have not materialized now.

We had hoped the President had learned his lesson, but it appears that exactly a year after losing this same battle, the President is considering a repeat of history and another Trump shutdown.

I hope cooler heads will prevail—I believe they will—but I would warn President Trump and my Republican colleagues, the last Trump shutdown was terrible for the American people and terrible for Republicans. It is in all of our interests to keep the President away from the appropriations process and avoid another Trump shutdown before Christmas.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. President, finally, on SNAP, today the Trump administration announced it had completed a new rule that would potentially throw hundreds of thousands of needy Americans off food assistance.

Let me repeat. Hundreds of thousands of people who need food and have struggled to find employment would be kicked off Federal food assistance under a new Trump administration rule.

Right now, there are about 37 million Americans who receive benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The vast majority of them work, but they don't earn enough to feed their families, and those who don't qualify for assistance for 3 months out of every 3 years.

Under the new rule, the Trump administration would trample on States' abilities to request waivers to these strict time limits in areas of great unemployment. Nearly every State in the Union has requested a waiver at one point or another.

The Trump administration is driving the vulnerable into hunger just as the Christmas season approaches. It is heartless, it is cruel, and it exposes a deep and shameful cruelty and hypocrisy in this administration.

One of the Trump administration's justifications for these cuts is that they will save the government money. Well, 2 years ago this very month, the Trump administration blew a more than trillion-dollar hole in our deficit with a gargantuan tax cut for corporations and the ultra-rich. The Trump administration argued it was money well spent. Now, the same administration says we have to pinch pennies when it comes to helping the hungry, particularly around Christmastime? This makes the Grinch look charitable. The same Trump administration that

has steered millions of dollars to wealthy agribusinesses and foreign-owned entities is now saying they need to save money by cutting off food aid to poor families who need it. This is jarring hypocrisy, and it shows clear as day where this administration's priorities clearly lie—with the rich and powerful, not the most vulnerable members of our society.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we have a debt issue in America. For some reason, we are losing track of that. The economy is so good right now. Unemployment is at historic numbers. The inflation numbers have stayed down. More Americans are bringing home more take-home pay, which means they can buy more stuff. More job opportunities are out there. In fact, we literally have 1.5 million more job openings in America than we have people looking for work in America.

With the economy going so well right now, everyone is losing track of the debt and deficit, which are not going well right now. Last year, the Federal Treasury received more tax revenues than it has ever received in the history of the United States, which is surprising to some folks I have talked to who said that there was a big tax cut in 2017, so that would mean tax revenue would go down. It didn't. It went up.

When that tax cut occurred, more people were able to bring home more money and to spend more, which created more jobs. There was more investment, and the economy charged up. So we actually have more revenue coming in now than we used to have, but we still have a trillion-dollar deficit. That is the amount of overspending in a single year. We have the highest amount of revenue we have ever had. Yet we have epic levels of deficit spending, adding to \$23 trillion in total debt as a nation—\$23 trillion. It is a number none of us can even fathom.

We are approaching a time when it would take the income of every single American for the entire year to be collected as taxes to pay off our debt. We are at 95 percent total debt to GDP. These kinds of numbers can't be sustained, and everyone quietly knows it in the back of their mind, but dealing with debt and deficit seem to be something we will deal with in the future—someday, someday, someday.

I am here to encourage this body to say that we should be taking on the issues of debt and deficit now. The two things that have to occur in order to get on top of our debt and deficit are to get a growing economy with growing revenues—we have that now—and then we have to deal with Federal spending.

What would it take to manage Federal spending? We are so far out of balance. A trillion dollars—literally we could shut down the entire Department of Defense, the Department of Education, the State Department—we

could close down every single one of those, and we still wouldn't balance in a year. And no one would propose doing that. There is no 1-year fix to trying to get on top of our deficit; this will be a multiyear process.

Just to state how bad it has become, if we chipped away at our deficit for the next 10 years—for 10 years, chipped away at our deficit to get us back to just balance—and then we had a \$100 billion surplus the next year, which would be an enormous surplus, with a \$100 billion surplus—it would take us 230 years in a row of having a \$100 billion surplus in our Treasury just to deal with our debt. It would take 230 years in a row of \$100 billion surpluses.

Again, we are not just out of balance; we are way out of balance. There is no one secret thing we can do to get us back on track, but we do need to get started. That is why our team puts out something we call "Federal Fumbles." The "Federal Fumbles" guide is something we put out every single year. It is just a group of ideas. It is no magic bullet. It is just something our office puts out that looks at areas of inefficiency across the Federal Government and ask: Why is this happening the way it is happening, and what would happen if we continue doing the same things we are doing? Are there areas where we can save money and that we would be OK with as a group?

We are not trying to put out partisan ideas; we are just putting out ideas. Quite frankly, the "Federal Fumbles" guide is not a confrontation for this body; it is the opening salvo in a conversation. We are bringing our ideas. You may have different ideas. Great. Bring yours. Let's try to figure out how to solve this together because this last year, we paid \$371 billion just in interest payments on our debt. This fiscal year, we paid \$423 billion just in interest. That is \$423 billion that is not going to healthcare, transportation, the basic structure of our government, or the national defense. It is \$423 billion spent on interest payments, and it just goes away.

We are asking questions as we put out this Federal Fumbles guide. How do we solve this? What are some ideas?

We have simple questions such as, why did the Social Security office pay \$11.6 million to deceased beneficiaries in Puerto Rico?

We ask questions such as, why did the government pay almost half a billion dollars last year on temporary tents—not buying them, renting temporary tents—along our southern border? Was there a better way that could have been done other than half a billion dollars in cost?

We have some questions about the 21 government shutdowns that have occurred in the last 40 years, including the one earlier this year. That shutdown cost the Federal taxpayer over \$4 billion.

We ask straightforward questions about things like tax credits. If you like the Tesla that you pull up next to