

in modern history. Well, the House Democrats' denigration of their solemn duty will not cause the Senate to denigrate ours. If the House continues down this destructive road and sends us articles of impeachment, the Senate will take them up in the new year and proceed to a fair trial.

Now, in the meantime, our colleagues' obsession with impeachment has left us with a host of important, bipartisan legislation that is still unfinished at this late date.

For months, Senate Republicans have been calling on our Democratic colleagues to go beyond picking fights with the White House and actually legislate for the American people. Yet, for practically the entire autumn, our Democratic friends' political calculation seemed to be that these vital pieces of business could wait until the eleventh hour because impeachment was the higher priority—and wait they have.

Finally, after weeks of pressure from the Republicans and from hard-working Americans across the country, Speaker PELOSI backed down yesterday and announced that she will let the House vote on President Trump's USMCA. The Democrats have stalled this agreement for so long that it is now impossible for the USMCA to become law in 2019, especially given all of the other urgent things they have stalled right alongside it. The Democrats have simply run out the clock. Assuming the House Democrats send us articles of impeachment next week, a Senate trial will have to be our first item of business in January. So the USMCA will continue to be a casualty of the Democrats' impeachment obsession for several more weeks before we can actually turn to it. Yet I am glad the Speaker is finally beginning to bring her USMCA obstruction to a close.

As we triage in the coming days, the Republicans hope we will be able to pass not only the NDAA conference report but also government funding legislation that allocates taxpayers' hard-earned money to urgent Federal priorities. The NDAA has consistently brought Members together from across the political spectrum—and with good reason—in that it gives Congress the opportunity to set priorities for the U.S. military of the future. The NDAA helps to guide the Pentagon's investments in modernization and readiness, cutting-edge weapons and capabilities, and in servicemembers and military families.

I am grateful for the efforts by Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED, who made compromises from the beginning and worked hard to ensure the conference report remained true to the 58-year tradition of a bipartisan bill that prioritizes our military and sets aside unrelated partisan priorities.

I cannot say the same thing about the Democrats in the House, unfortunately, but I hope they will learn from this year's difficult path to a con-

ference report. Next year, I hope they will produce a bipartisan bill from the beginning that will put our national security interests first. Now, obviously, that authorizing legislation should be paired with the appropriations measure that will actually fund our service-members' tools and training and enable our commanders to actually plan ahead.

I am grateful for the hard work by Chairman SHELBY, his counterpart in the House, and our subcommittee chairs to reboot a stalled appropriations process and try to get bills over the finish line in the short time that remains.

To be frank, only a laser focus from both parties in both Chambers on getting results will create a path to pass appropriations bills this year. There is simply not the time left for my Democratic friends to continue haggling over the exact kinds of poison pills, partisan policy riders, and Presidential transfer authorities that the Speaker and the Democratic leader had explicitly agreed months ago would be off the table. Under the agreement months ago, these were supposed to be off the table.

The White House, Republican leaders in both Chambers, and the Democratic leaders in both Chambers all agreed to these parameters—literally pledged in writing that these kinds of partisan roadblocks would be kept out of the process. So if all parties honor what they agreed to, we should have an opportunity to agree on government funding in time to make this a law this month, which means next week.

Now that our Democratic colleagues are back at the table, Senate Republicans stand ready to do all we can in the time we still have. Let's end this legislative year on the right foot. Let's deliver for our All-Volunteer Armed Forces and for families all across our country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, over in the House this week, Democrats are taking up the latest installment in their campaign to have the government take over Americans' healthcare: the Pelosi prescription drug bill.

There is no question that high prescription drug costs are a problem. One in four seniors reports difficulty affording medications, and there are too many stories of patients being forced to ration pills or to abandon their prescription at the pharmacy counter. But the Pelosi drug bill is the wrong prescription for the problem of high drug prices. Why? Because it would reduce Americans' access to lifesaving treat-

ments and discourage investment in prescription drug research.

Between 2011 and 2018, more than 250 new medications were introduced worldwide. American patients have access to nearly all of them, but that is not the situation for patients in a lot of other countries. The chamber of commerce reports that patients in France have access to just 50 percent of those new drugs. French patients, in other words, are missing out on fully half of the new drugs that have been introduced in the past 8 years.

Why do Americans have such tremendous access to new drugs while other countries trail behind? Because the U.S. Government doesn't dictate drug prices or drug coverage. As statistic after statistic demonstrates, when governments start imposing price controls, patients' access to new drugs and treatments diminishes.

Government price controls also discourage the medical research and innovation that produce the prescription drug breakthroughs of the future. The United States leads the world in prescription drug innovation, and a big reason for that is because the U.S. Government doesn't dictate drug prices.

It wasn't always this way. European investment in drug research used to exceed U.S. investment, but that changed when European governments stepped in and started imposing price controls. Today, European investment in drug research and development is almost 40 percent lower than U.S. investment, in large part because of European governments' price controls.

No other country comes close to achieving the number of prescription drug breakthroughs that companies in the United States achieve. That situation, however, is not going to last if the Democratic Party has its way.

The Pelosi drug bill would impose a system of government price controls on up to 250 medications, and reduced access to drugs and fewer medical breakthroughs would soon follow.

The California Life Sciences Association released a statement noting that the Pelosi drug bill could result in "an 88-percent reduction in the number of drugs that are brought to market by small/emerging companies in California." It goes on to say that "such a dramatic decline would be felt most in the higher risk/smaller population therapeutic areas of R&D, including new drugs for endocrine, metabolic, genetic and rare diseases, and pediatric cancers." Again, that is from the California Life Sciences Association. In other words, there would be fewer medical breakthroughs for those who need them the most.

As I said earlier, the high cost of some prescription drugs can be a real problem for many families, but the answer—the answer—is not to introduce a government-run pricing system that would mean that important prescription drugs would not be there when you or your child needs them.

There are a lot of things we can do to lower the cost of prescription drugs

without resorting to government price controls. Multiple Senate committees have been actively engaged on this topic. There are options for how to improve transparency in a complicated and often opaque drug-pricing process. There are ideas to examine competition and consolidation in the pharmaceutical supply chain; to ensure that generic companies can access the samples they need to develop a new generic or biosimilar; to prevent companies from engaging in patent thicketing to block competition; to promote real-time benefit tools to help inform consumers of cheaper drug options; to advance value-based insurance design to support coverage of high-value items and services, like medicines, that people with chronic conditions need to manage their health; and to modernize the Medicare Part D plan design and cap seniors' out-of-pocket costs.

Republicans in the House recently introduced legislation on prescription drug costs that both promotes innovation and contains bipartisan ideas for reform, including increased transparency in drug pricing and provisions to prevent drug companies from gaming the system. This bill provides several ideas passed by the Senate Finance Committee, while focusing on policies that can be passed through both Chambers of Congress. Importantly, it eliminates those policies that have divided us.

There are bipartisan solutions on the table. It is unfortunate that House Democrats have abandoned bipartisan efforts on drug pricing and have decided to pursue their government-run alternative.

It boils down, really, simply to this: Government price controls mean access to fewer drugs, and access to fewer drugs means that when you or your child or your mom or your dad needs a lifesaving medication, that drug may be out there, but it may not be out there for you, and that is not acceptable.

The Pelosi drug bill is a bad prescription for the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

JERSEY CITY SHOOTING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to express deep sympathy for the families and the victims of the shooting yesterday in Jersey City, which left one fallen police officer, Detective Seals, and several bystanders as victims. My heart goes out to their friends and family today.

Local and Federal law enforcement must investigate quickly and professionally so we can implement the best responses. We are not sure yet if this was motivated by hate or if it was criminal in nature, but whatever the answers, rest assured the response must be swift, sure, and strong.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. President, now on impeachment, yesterday, the House Judiciary Committee announced two Articles of Impeachment against the President of the United States. The articles allege that President Trump abused the office of the Presidency by soliciting the interference of a foreign power in our elections to benefit himself personally. They also allege the President obstructed Congress in the investigation of these matters.

The President has had every chance to defend himself against these allegations. He has had every chance to rebut the specific evidence that was presented in the House. If there is information or a witness who the White House believes can provide exculpatory evidence in defense of the President, nothing is stopping them from testifying under oath. But if the President is so innocent, if this is a mere witch hunt, then why isn't he answering the specific charges? Why is he blocking witnesses from testifying who would have direct knowledge of these facts?

The House has made an extremely strong case. The burden now lies on the President to rebut it, if he can. And what the majority of Americans are saying is that the fact that he refuses to produce rebutting evidence, the fact that he blocks witnesses from testifying, the fact that he won't let documents come forward may well indicate that he did everything alleged in the House proceedings.

To talk about things that are unrelated to the charges against the President have nothing to do with what happened here. The President merely needs to claim his innocence. If he has nothing to hide, he should have nothing to fear from handing over documents or allowing witnesses to testify. So their silence, the silence imposed by the White House on top officials with knowledge of these dealings, speaks volumes.

What has the President, the White House, and their congressional allies here in the Senate and the House tried to do? Instead of defending the President with facts, the White House, the President himself, and congressional Republicans employ one fringe conspiracy theory after the next to explain away the President's conduct, even though they have nothing to do with the specific charges against the President.

Here in the Senate, unfortunately, we have several Members on the other side of the aisle who are forming their own conspiracy caucus. Any conspiracy theory pulled out of the air by known pranks, then broadcast on FOX News, which shows an all-too willingness to

broadcast this stuff, is then picked up here as a diversion. Why do they want to divert? Is it because they know the facts can be answered?

For the past few weeks, certain Republican Senators have repeated the fiction invented by Putin's intelligence services that Ukraine, not Putin, interfered in the 2016 election. They are mouthing Putin's propaganda. The Republican Party is to be anti-Russian, anti-Putin, anti-Communist, but now all of a sudden, because President Trump has created so many different diversions because he seems to go along with what Putin wants, these Republicans have become Putin mouthpieces when it comes to these conspiracy theories.

Today, an example, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee is holding a hearing on the report issued this week by the Department of Justice Inspector General, which found no evidence of a political motive for the FBI investigation into the Trump campaign. The deputy counsel of the FBI said there was an obligation to investigate—not by anyone's design—once they heard these allegations that came from a credible source.

What will the Judiciary chairman do? Will he focus on the central finding of the IG report? I suspect not. I suspect Republicans on that committee, instead, will take every opportunity to contort the facts to further the President's baseless claim that the FBI was out to get him. So many people accused of crimes and wrongdoing, instead of addressing the issue when they know they are guilty, blame the prosecutor. That is not what our system of justice is about.

But, astonishingly, that is what the chief law enforcement officer of the land, the Attorney General of the United States, did yesterday in interviews. Contradicting the findings of his own inspector general—someone who would study the case for months, someone who the Attorney General himself had recently praised as fiercely independent and a superb investigator—what Attorney General Barr did was push the false narrative that the FBI acted in bad faith when it investigated the Trump campaign. Attorney General Barr has signed himself up to be a charter member of the conspiracy caucus.

The real bad faith is the relationship between the Attorney General and his oath of office. He did not swear to "support and defend President Trump," but that is what he has done as Attorney General. It is deeply, dangerously corrosive to the primary rule of law in our constitutional system.

At the same time, the Attorney General's handpicked prosecutor John Durham put out a ridiculous statement on Monday, criticizing the findings of the IG report. Durham used to have some credibility as a no-nonsense prosecutor, but when Barr chose him, I said, Uh-oh, because Barr is not a down-the-middle guy. By putting out a