

abolition of U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement efforts. At the very time when these are some of the most stressed people working on behalf of the country for the Federal Government, we have people on the other side saying we should eliminate border enforcement.

We had a bill introduced in this Chamber last year that every Member of the minority supported. When you read it closely—I am not at all sure they all did because I don't believe this is the position they all had, but when you read it closely, it was a clear open borders bill. There was no way anybody was likely to be apprehended crossing the border except just to tell them "You know you are here legally now. Come back sometime, and we will see if we can figure out what to do."

We are for protecting people who are uniquely at risk in the country that they come from.

Asylum is an important thing. No country in the history of the world has been any more open than we have been to allowing people to come here legally, to have people who legally seek asylum come here. But the truth is, there is no asylum granted just because you are from a poor country or from a dangerous country, so most of the people who come saying that they are seeking asylum don't get it. Maybe that is why most of them don't show up in court. They know that their argument—they would rather be here than where they are from, but their argument will never work in court for most of them, and that is clearly understood.

We are going to have a lot better opportunity to solve the problems we need to solve regarding the border if people have confidence that the government has done a reasonable job of securing the border. I don't think anybody expects the border in a big country like ours to be so impenetrable that nobody could ever get in under any circumstances. I think they do expect that when you have found the 90- or 95-percent solution, appearing until now to be affordable and widely supported—when you have found the 90-percent solution, people do expect that at the very least that you would apply the 90-percent standard to the responsibility of the government to secure its borders.

So whether it is trying to figure out what we need in our workforce to have a continued growing and vibrant economy or it is trying to figure out what we do about people who have come here and decided to stay, whether they came here across the border or in some other way but stayed beyond the time they were supposed to be here or got here without going through the normal process—those are going to be much easier to come to a conclusion on if people know that the government has done its job to get the border under an acceptable and anticipated level of security, which we would expect to have in a country as strong and vibrant as ours.

Particularly for people who were brought here and grew up here, this is an 80-percent issue in the Congress and in the country. Virtually nobody thinks kids who grew up here and didn't get in significant trouble shouldn't be allowed to live in the country they grew up in. Frankly, we need them. We need young people entering the workforce. We need people who are, in almost all cases, highly motivated.

I talked to a university president just this week who said that these kids are the kids who, over and over again, set the standard. They are the kids who, over and over again, prove why we want them to be in our country.

These problems will be much more solvable if we will just deal with the one fundamental problem of controlling our borders, of having immigration laws that work.

I hope, as was mentioned earlier today, that we can get to this conclusion and get to this conclusion quickly. This is obviously a place where we need to come together. Not only does the government need to function, but this is an issue we need to solve, and I guarantee that all of these related issues will be more easily solved if we secure the border.

No President has ever had the credibility that this President will have if he says to the American people: I have met my commitment. The border is secure. We are now continuing to work to be sure that the court systems work, that we have protected those people who protect us on the border. There is great credibility here if the President is willing to get to a place that he can say that.

I think his efforts to secure the border are significant steps toward allowing us to solve the other problems we need to solve, and we need to solve them sooner rather than later.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:20 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COTTON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONSTITUTING THE MAJORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 12, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 12) to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Sixteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 12) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

CONSTITUTING THE MINORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 13, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 13) to constitute the minority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Sixteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 13) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed—Continued

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, this shutdown is not a negotiation situation. This is a hostage situation.

The President of the United States has taken 800,000 Federal workers, tens of thousands of Federal contractors, and thousands of small businesses hostage to extort money for his vanity wall.

We have all heard from our constituents about the pain the shutdown is causing. This Friday many government employees will miss their first paycheck as a result of the shutdown. Most of us live in a world where we need paychecks, and it is obvious that our constituents shouldn't have to "make adjustments," as the President frames it, for the President's shutdown.

Our 800,000 Federal workers aren't the only people in our country feeling the impact of the shutdown. The situation is inflicting unnecessary pain on our government contracting community and small businesses that rely on the day-to-day operations of the Federal Government, not to mention the millions of Americans who request government services.

Let me just tell one story. Michelle Baker is a Federal contractor in Waikiki who helps the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies to write reports in a way that is accessible to the public. Michelle told Honolulu Civil Beat that she and her husband have resorted to taking out a payday loan with an exceptionally high interest rate to pay for their food this week.

Let me be clear. There are two people who can end the pain of the shutdown right now—Donald Trump and Senate majority leader MITCH MCCONNELL. The President has demonstrated repeatedly that his word is not good. He is an amoral hostage taker, and you cannot and should not negotiate with a hostage taker.

Senator MCCONNELL, on the other hand, has not held back in exercising his power when he saw fit to do so. Senator MCCONNELL had no problem using his power to unilaterally deny Judge Merrick Garland to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. Senator MCCONNELL had no problem using his power to lower the number of Senators it would take to confirm nominees to the Supreme Court, starting with Neil Gorsuch. Senator MCCONNELL had no problem using his power to force the Senate to come within one vote of denying healthcare to millions of Americans by bringing forth a bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Senator MCCONNELL had no problem using his power to ram through a huge tax cut for the wealthiest Americans and corporations at the expense of middle-class families.

Senator MCCONNELL has the power to end the shutdown by bringing up the legislation that the House has sent us—the same legislation that passed the Senate last Congress—to get the full government open and running again.

We should all be asking: Why won't Senator MCCONNELL use his power to

help 800,000 Federal workers and tens of thousands of government contractors get their paychecks? No one needs to remind Senator MCCONNELL that Congress is a separate branch of government. The Senate can act without the hostage taker President's consent or assent.

Since the amoral President has hunkered down with his hostage strategy, I call on Senator MCCONNELL to use his power to do his job as Senate majority leader. More Members of his own caucus are coming forward every day and calling on him to act, regardless of whether the President threatens or promises a veto.

It is time for Senator MCCONNELL to stand up to Donald Trump and for the Senate to do our job and end this shutdown.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor on what is now day 19 of the Trump shutdown—an epic Presidential temper tantrum that forces the rest of us to, once again, plead with the President to stop hurting the American families he promised to represent. This time, it is because President Trump marched our country right into a government shutdown, paralyzing Federal Agencies and preventing them from carrying out the most basic government functions.

What does this government have to show for it? Eight hundred thousand hard-working Americans, some off the job and some still asked to come in. Their bills are mounting and no money is coming in. That includes the air traffic controllers in my home State of Washington who wrote me letters. They don't question whether they will keep showing up to do the job they love—a job that keeps the public safe—but they have no idea when they will get their next paycheck. That means stress, stress about providing for their families, stress about being able to pay their mortgages, pay for preschool, pay down post-Christmas bills. They are forced to bear the brunt of this Trump shutdown.

It is not just Federal workers. Thousands of senior citizens and individuals with disabilities are facing possible eviction as HUD scrambles to figure out how to make housing payments. Our national parks, the crown jewels of our country, are no longer adequately maintained for public use, while the small businesses right outside the parks that rely on visitors, like those

outside Mount Rainier National Park in my home State of Washington, are feeling the pain and cutting back on staffing. Our farmers and our tree fruit growers are unable to get their applications processed through the shuttered Farm Service Agency. Millions of low-income families are now unsure if they will receive the help they need to put food on the table for their children in the coming weeks.

I could go on, but I don't need to. With each passing day, it is very clear just how much this Trump shutdown is hurting families in every community in every State of our country, and no prime time address or fearmongering trip to the border is going to change that reality.

To President Trump, I say: Enough with the tweets, enough with the fact-twisting. It is time to stop playing politics and finally agree to end this shutdown that you began. Stop trying to bully your way out of this mess.

To my Senate colleagues, I say: In case it is not crystal clear, ending this nightmare is not complicated. Three weeks ago, in this very spot, we passed a bill that kept the Federal Government open without funding Trump's wasteful wall, the one he promised Mexico would pay for. That bill was very simple. It was all about keeping our government open and avoiding a completely unnecessary crisis.

Democrats supported the bill. Republicans supported it. In fact, it passed unanimously because we know the people we represent have no interest in elected officials playing games with their lives and livelihoods.

Now the Democratic House has followed suit. They have passed a bill that will do the same thing. Yet that simple solution—keeping our government funded, on schedule, and without interruption—has been stopped in its tracks by President Trump, who apparently sees no problem with keeping the government shut down for months or even years, as he said, all to fulfill a shallow campaign promise that everyone knows will do nothing to truly address our broken immigration system and keep our country safe.

What we have here is a crisis of the President's own making, from top to bottom. I, for one, find it simply outrageous that instead of searching for real solutions or working with Congress in good faith, the President is dug in and demanding American taxpayers bail him out to save face.

Members of this Congress were elected to make decisions that help the American people. We were not sent here to provide cover for the President.

I urge my Republican colleagues to make it your priority to work with us to fund our government and end this completely unnecessary crisis.

This started out as a Trump shutdown, but with every day that passes that the Republican Senate will not act, Republican leaders take more and more ownership, along with every Republican Senator who supports them.

Some Republicans in the Senate are already standing up, and I commend them. They want to work with us to stand up to President Trump and to end this shutdown, and they would like the opportunity to vote to do just that, but not enough yet, and the clock is ticking.

I say this to Republican leaders: Work with us to restore certainty to the American people—from the hundreds of thousands of Federal workers who are being forced to forgo their paychecks to the small business owners, to the farmers, to the seniors and low-income families, to the air traffic controllers and all those people whose lives are being unnecessarily thrown into chaos and who deserve a fully functioning government.

The President of the United States may be throwing a tantrum and playing political games, but the people we represent and our country as a whole deserve a whole lot better.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEAHY. It is now day 19 of the Trump shutdown, 19 days that the Federal Government of the oldest democracy and the world's only superpower has been functioning on only half of its cylinders.

I have spoken multiple times about the devastating impact this reckless and unnecessary shutdown is having on the Federal workforce at domestic departments and agencies—departments like Homeland Security, Agriculture, Transportation, Justice, Interior, and Commerce, agencies like Customs and Border Patrol, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and the National Park Service.

These departments and agencies have furloughed and stopped paying hundreds of thousands of employees who, as a result, are idle and no longer able to do the jobs that millions and millions of Americans depend on. Hundreds of thousands more are working without pay until the shutdown ends.

The President, a billionaire who has never had to worry about not being able to pay the rent, says he can relate. If he actually believes that, he is alone.

Programs are on hold, and contracts are being cancelled, for which the Federal Government is liable for penalties. Government shutdowns don't save money; they cost billions of dollars and have lasting consequences. And who pays? American taxpayers.

This is a disgrace, and it is made even more so by the fact that it is entirely avoidable were it not for the intransigence, indifference, and obsession of one person, President Donald Trump.

An obsession not with border security—we are all for that, and there is more than a billion dollars in prior appropriations for border security waiting to be spent. In fact, we have offered another \$1.3 billion for fiscal year 2019. The White House never says anything about that.

No, the President's myopic obsession—repeated on national television last night—is with building a 30-foot-high wall—mostly on desolate land that the government will have to seize from private owners—along our southern border. The price tag to U.S. taxpayers would be at least \$18 billion and likely more, a price tag that at campaign rally after campaign rally he promised Mexico would pay.

There are multiple reasons why that is a terrible idea, why it won't stop illegal migration, why it won't stop illicit drugs, and why it would be a colossal waste of taxpayer dollars, which I have discussed before and will again.

Today I want to speak briefly about the impact the Trump shutdown is having not on the Federal Government's domestic programs and workforce, but its impact on U.S. national security and global leadership.

It is worth asking: What made the United States the world's superpower and a global leader in the first place?

Of course, one reason is our superior Armed Forces. That, I suspect, is the answer President Trump would give, but he would be only partly correct.

Even more important are the ideals enshrined in our Constitution and Bill of Rights, our democratic institutions and coequal branches of government, our diverse citizenry, and our regional and global alliances and partnerships. Without these, our men and women in uniform would have precious little to defend.

Today, the global supremacy and influence of the United States are being challenged like no time since the Cold War with the former Soviet Union. Why? One need look no further than 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Since his first days in office, President Trump has disparaged long-standing friends and allies. He has withdrawn from international agreements negotiated by past Republican and Democratic administrations, announced plans to withdraw from a key nuclear nonproliferation treaty, and proposed drastic cuts to the operations and programs of the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, which implement foreign policy.

Now the State Department, like other Federal departments and agencies, is swept up in the Trump shutdown.

Our choices are obvious: We can engage with the world by affirming our commitment to our ideals, by continuing to strengthen our democratic institutions, by empowering our diplomats and by expanding our global alliances and partnerships.

Or we can withdraw, even to the point of shutting down the Federal

Government, cede the global stage to others whose interests are often adverse to our own, and become the captives of simplistic campaign slogans, xenophobic antimigrant hysteria, and a manufactured national security emergency.

The President said the country needed a "good" shutdown. He said that: a "good" shutdown. There is no such thing.

He said he would be "proud" to take the "mantle of blame" for shutting down the government. Then the next day he blamed Democrats, rejecting out of hand our proposal to pass the six appropriations bills that already received overwhelming bipartisan support in the Republican-controlled Senate.

Most of those bills have nothing to do with border security, but the President is obstinately holding hostage thousands of Federal programs funded in those bills, including the paychecks for the people who implement them, which harms all Americans.

With a stroke of a pen, the President could reopen the government and continue negotiations on border security; yet he refuses, and instead he flipantly said the shutdown could last "months" or even "years."

What has this reckless abuse of executive power meant for our standing in the world? What has it meant for our diplomats at the State Department and in our embassies overseas whose job is to protect our global interests, to maintain our alliances and partnerships, to assist the millions of Americans working, studying and serving overseas, and to protect our security?

As of yesterday, 34 percent—more than one-third—of U.S. direct-hire State Department employees in Washington and at our embassies around the world have been furloughed. That is nearly 10,000 employees at the State Department alone who are unable to do their jobs. Others are working without pay.

If the shutdown continues, more paychecks will be withheld, the number of furloughed employees will increase, and there will be a parallel shutting down of diplomacy, of programs, of contracts, and of our ability to engage with both allies and adversaries.

The effects are far reaching.

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security will run short of funds, forcing the State Department to deplete resources used to keep other programs operating order to protect our diplomats and facilities overseas or eventually relying on unpaid contractors to do the job.

Roughly 85 percent of the employees of the State Department's Office of Inspector General have already been furloughed. Oversight of waste, fraud, and abuse has virtually ground to a halt.

Vietnam, a country of nearly 100 million people bordering China, is becoming a key security partner in the Pacific region; yet thanks to the Trump shutdown, key employees at our embassy and USAID mission in Hanoi

were furloughed. The American flag is flying, and the lights are on, but that is about it.

This is illustrative of what is happening in every region of the world, and it does not take a lot of imagination to predict the consequences of a longer shutdown.

For example, the State Department and U.S. Embassies regularly use their social media accounts to update Americans overseas of important developments that potentially threaten their safety. This was the case during the recent tsunami in Indonesia. How will the State Department respond to the next natural disaster when its social media accounts—tools that are relied on increasingly in today's world—have fallen silent?

What about the loss of U.S. influence on the world stage? With most official travel suspended, how do we ensure that our priorities are protected at the next trade, arms control, or international health summit?

What do you suppose the leaders of China, Russia, Iran, Syria and North Korea—not to mention allies like Great Britain, Canada, and Japan—think about this?

If I were President Putin, or President Xi Jinping, or Ayatollah Khamenei, I would be celebrating. What could be better than U.S. Embassies operating on life support and U.S. diplomats sidelined, while the U.S. Government is shut down over building a wall across the southwest desert?

Does President Trump think the rest of the world will sit idly by, waiting until the U.S. Government reopens? The opposite will happen. They will take full advantage in ways that will not be short lived.

While massive humanitarian crises imperil the lives of millions of people in Yemen, Syria, Burma, Venezuela, and Central Africa, the White House is embracing a diminishing role for the United States.

While Russia meddles in our elections and expands its influence in the Middle East, while China buys the allegiance of countries in Africa, Asia, and our own hemisphere by investing billions in ports, energy and transportation projects, the State Department is shutting down programs and sending its people home.

It is not just the State Department. USAID, the Peace Corps, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, they are all furloughing personnel and canceling new activities.

With the exception of the U.S. military, if this drags on, the United States will be a superpower in name only. An exaggeration? Don't bet on it.

While our diplomats are furloughed, rather than use the funds Congress already provided for border security that remain unspent, the President has threatened to ignore the legislative process, declare a national emergency where none exists, and order the Pentagon to pay for the wall that he swore Mexico would pay for.

Such a flagrant, unwarranted misuse of authority and circumvention of the democratic process would be immediately challenged by Congress and in the courts.

Regardless of the outcome, what would it say about our commitment to democracy around the world? How would it be perceived outside this country, particularly by autocrats in Syria, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Brazil, Egypt, Russia, Hungary, Poland, or China?

It would be welcomed as a green light for declaring a state of emergency and wielding unchecked executive power—without regard for the legislature or judiciary—as a pretext to do virtually anything. Shut down the independent press. Arrest judges and opposition political leaders. Use the army to police the streets. Close the borders. All in the name of a manufactured national emergency.

This is already happening. In Guatemala, which purports to be a democracy, President Morales is openly defying rulings by constitutional court magistrates who are courageously defending the institutions of justice that are under assault, and the police are ignoring orders of the attorney general.

In Egypt, President al Sisi has locked up tens of thousands of political opponents and other dissidents. In Turkey, President Erdogan has done the same. President Trump has praised both leaders.

In Brazil, President Bolsonaro, a former military officer, has vowed to open up the Amazon to mining, logging, and agribusiness. He wants to give the police a free hand to use lethal force with impunity. He is gearing up to crack down on civil liberties. The White House has applauded.

No one disputes that the United States has experienced national emergencies, when we faced a potentially existential threat. Pearl Harbor and the 9/11 attacks are obvious examples. The Cuban missile crisis could have been.

A future deadly disease pandemic that infects thousands of Americans and rapidly spreads out of control might qualify.

The President talks as if the sky is falling in Texas, but any rational person recognizes that the situation on our southwest border is not remotely a national emergency. To call Central American families fleeing poverty and violence a threat to the security of the world's wealthiest, most powerful country is an embarrassment, especially when the Border Patrol's own data shows the number of migrants apprehended at the southern border has plummeted over the past 10 years.

The White House, grasping for arguments to justify the President's broken campaign promise that Mexico would pay for his wall, has played fast and loose with the facts in a desperate attempt to incite fear among the American people.

The President and Vice President have shamelessly trumpeted all kinds

of wildly inaccurate and grossly misleading statistics about migrants, terrorists, asylum applicants, unaccompanied children, and illegal drugs that are contradicted by their own agencies.

The White House says thousands of migrant terrorists have been apprehended, falsely suggesting they were stopped at the Mexican border. Almost none of them were.

We face a far greater threat from al Qaeda and ISIS using social media to inspire extremists already in the U.S. or Canada to commit terrorist acts. The last thing anyone would do who is genuinely concerned about terrorism is to shut down the government and withhold funding from the very agencies whose job it is to track down and arrest those people.

The real threat to our national security is shutting down the government, furloughing 10,000 State Department employees, telling our embassies to cancel programs and our diplomats to stay home.

While we come to grips with practical ways of strengthening our borders so we can more humanely and efficiently process migrants who request asylum, which we must do, we must also stay focused on the real threats to our national security.

We need our embassies at full strength. We need our diplomats in the room with their European, Russian, Chinese, South Korean, Central American, Middle Eastern, and African counterparts.

We need to strengthen NATO and our other alliances, so we can rely on our allies and partners to support us in responding to real national emergencies.

We need to expand our cyber security, nonproliferation, international broadcasting and other public diplomacy and internet freedom programs, military education and training, maritime security, law enforcement, and other international assistance programs. Instead, because of the President's obsession with the wall, these and other State Department programs are stuck in neutral, and the people who implement them are at home.

We need to act like a superpower at the United Nations, in NATO, and in the many other regional organizations where decisions are made that directly affect our interests and our security.

None of this is possible during a government shutdown, a shutdown that with each passing day erodes our democracy, weakens our global leadership, and threatens our security.

We all know this. The American people know this. The world knows this. The President needs to reopen the government and start acting like the defender of the Constitution and of our national security that the country needs.

I again urge the Republican leader to let us vote on the bipartisan, six-bill minibus, and when it passes, he and the entire Republican Caucus should urge the President to sign it.

That is our job, as an independent, coequal branch of government: to vote,

to appropriate the funds so the Federal Government can work for the American people. It is not our job to sit on the sidelines while the wheels of government grind to a halt because the President is recklessly holding it hostage.

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

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

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to set the record straight on the President's border wall—quite frankly, something he didn't talk about much last night during his speech to the country. But the truth is, this is where the problem is. So I want to talk about it a little bit today.

The President made it crystal clear—dozens of times, in fact—that he was prepared to shut down the government in order to get the \$5.7 billion for the wall, leading up to that speech last night. So here we are today, day 19 of President Trump's shutdown. Political gamesmanship? Well, that is nothing new in Washington, DC, but the fact is, our debates need to be grounded in facts. So here are the facts:

The President's demand for \$5.7 billion for a border wall is tall in hyperbole and wide on theatrics but short on facts.

Last night, the President said that Congress has refused to provide the resources needed to secure the border. That is not true. In fiscal year 2018, Congress gave the President \$1.3 billion to construct fencing and other fixed structures along the southern border. I know so because I worked side by side with my Republican colleagues to write that bill. Today, not one of those projects is under construction—not one.

Strong border security is much more than physical barriers. Congress appropriated \$21 billion for immigration enforcement and border security in last year's Homeland Security Appropriations Act. That includes money to expand manpower, increase technology, and utilize communication services and resources on top of funding for physical barriers.

Here is another fact: Hard narcotics like meth and cocaine and opioids are not coming over the border in backpacks; they are coming through our ports in cars and trucks. We have the technology to fix that, so let's appropriate the money toward real solutions at our ports to stop the drugs from entering our country, not \$5.7 billion for a wall.

So, again, let's stick to the facts. Despite having more than \$21 billion in border security and immigration enforcement funding, including funds for

physical barriers, the President has shut down the government to demand another \$5.7 billion exclusively for a wall.

One would think to ask, what would you possibly spend \$5.7 billion on, especially after already having \$21 billion to spend on border security and immigration enforcement? And we did ask him that. We asked him for a plan. We told the President and Homeland Security Secretary Nielsen that if they are going to break their promise to have Mexico pay for the wall and use American taxpayer dollars, they ought to produce a plan of action.

The plan we received in late December was incomplete—no analysis of alternative technologies, no analysis on the impact to communities, to landowners, to wildlife. And that plan only asked for \$1.6 billion, not the \$5.7 billion the President is now demanding.

The President has also failed to address private property rights and eminent domain. What is he going to do if a family refuses to sell off wide tracts of their farm or ranch to allow a wall to go through and split their ranch, divide their ranch? Are families going to cede their water and mineral rights? Is the administration prepared to enter into good-faith negotiations with literally thousands of families? And do we know how much that is going to cost the American taxpayer?

These questions need answers. Yet, with these questions still unanswered, there are folks in this body, the U.S. Senate, who are prepared to write a \$5.7 billion check to the President right now.

So here we are on day 19 of the President's shutdown. During the President's speech last night, he was right about one thing: There is a crisis taking shape in our country. But it is not the crisis on the southern border that he is trying to manufacture. As a result of the President's shutdown, there are 19,000 border agents today who are working without pay. There are 51,000 TSA agents working without pay. These are hard-working folks. They have families, they have mortgages, and they are being forced by the President to secure our country's borders and ports and airports while not knowing when their next paycheck will arrive.

I have heard from Border Patrol agents who moved across the country at their own expense so that they could be stationed along Montana's northern border. How have they been repaid for their willingness to serve? Well, they are not being paid. Not only do they have to absorb the moving costs, but now they have to pay for rent and cover other essential costs without a paycheck, and they are continually wondering when they will get paid next.

Look, at the end of last year, CBP's recruitment efforts finally started to bear fruit. For the first time in years, CBP began to achieve gains in hiring border agents. This shutdown not only

could, but I believe it will set back those efforts dramatically. Who could blame a family for passing on a job that could force you to work for free?

The President talked last night of a "sacred duty to America." I can think of few things more un-American than withholding pay from someone after an honest day's work.

But it is not just those stationed at the border and at our airports who are hurting because of the President's shutdown. I am going to give a small sample of letters and emails I have received from the folks from the great State of Montana since the shutdown began.

Ronald from western Montana says this:

I spoke to my son, a career Coast Guard member. He tells me that the Coast Guard is being directed to continue their duties without being paid due to this ridiculous shutdown. Senator, that is not right! Why do these brave men and women have to continue to risk their lives without being paid? My boy is worried about being evicted from his apartment with two young daughters and a wife because they won't receive their housing allowance! Please help fix this un-American situation.

Shilo from Bozeman writes:

I and other federal employees have been converted into political footballs for partisan politicians. My Christmas vacation was canceled and pay has been suspended during a time when some of us need the money the most. We are being disadvantaged and made to suffer while the comfortable and blithely unaffected cling to their arbitrary political ideologies and refuse to compromise.

Daren from northeast Montana:

I have a farm equipment loan that is at a standstill because the USDA is not picking up the phone. I have contractors and vendors who are waiting to be paid. The impact of this shutdown will last long after it ends.

Debra from Indian Country:

My daughters are federal employees proudly serving the Northern Cheyenne Tribe in Montana through the Indian Health Service. My daughters are both enrolled members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, and both are single, hardworking mothers. My granddaughters are afraid their moms won't be able to pay the bills or buy groceries if the paychecks don't arrive. Morale is horrid in Lame Deer.

Please stop this immoral shutdown. It is very unfair to hardworking people like my daughters. They must work but will not get a paycheck this Friday if the shutdown continues.

Mr. President, this is what a crisis looks like, and this is a crisis you have created.

The President barely mentioned the wall last night in his address to the Nation. Yet we are here on day 19 of a government shutdown that is a direct result of his wish to build a wall from sea to shining sea.

It is time for the Senate to be the Senate. It is time for the folks in this body to quit making decisions based on politics and start making them based on facts.

The facts in this case are clear. There is no plan for \$5.7 billion for a border wall, Mexico will not pay for it, and the dysfunction of this administration

is causing real turmoil in the lives of 800,000 workers and their families.

I am calling on the majority to bring some common sense to this situation and to stand behind the bipartisan legislation that Republicans and Democrats have passed over the last several months—over the last month in particular—to reopen the government and put an end to this crisis.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to deliver a message to the hard-working agriculture producers in Nebraska and across America who feed the world.

At the end of last Congress, the House and Senate came together and passed a 5-year farm bill that provided the certainty and the predictability our farmers and ranchers needed during tough economic times. President Trump signed this important piece of legislation into law.

As a proud member of the Senate Ag Committee, I had the privilege of working on this legislation and securing key provisions for Nebraskans. Among these were measures that protected crop insurance, streamlined trade promotion programs, bolstered opportunities for producers to use precision ag technology, and unleashed broadband deployment throughout rural America.

Because of this bill, folks in agriculture were feeling more confident about planning for the future. Now we find ourselves in the middle of a partial government shutdown, and there is some anxiety in farm country as funding to the U.S. Department of Agriculture has lapsed. In that regard, I want to provide some important updates to producers who are concerned.

The year-round sale of E15 is critical, and it is a critical issue for Nebraska's farmers, renewable fuel producers, and our rural communities. Our State has 25 ethanol plants that employ more than 1,300 hard-working Nebraskans with high-paying jobs, which are mostly located in rural communities, but for far too long, an outdated regulation that banned the sale of E15 during summer months has held our communities back.

Here in the Senate, I worked closely with a group of farm State colleagues to demonstrate the benefits of higher blends of ethanol fuel. I also championed bipartisan legislation, the Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act, to allow for the sale of E15 year-round. Our efforts got President Trump's attention, and I was proud to support him last fall when he announced that he would direct the EPA to initiate the year-round sale of E15.

Through our continued efforts in the Senate and the action by President Trump to follow through on his promise, rural America is on the way to a major victory.

This week, some reports surfaced saying that the partial government shutdown is going to delay EPA's rule-making process for year-round E15. I would like to reassure our fuel producers that this is simply not true.

In fact, the EPA spokesman issued the following statement, saying:

This is a priority for both President Trump and Acting Administrator Wheeler. The ongoing partial shutdown will not impede EPA's ability to keep to our deadline.

I was pleased to learn that this rule-making process is still on track, and I want to make sure Nebraskans are aware of that fact as well.

Additionally, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced he is extending the deadline for agriculture producers to apply for payments under the Market Facilitation Program. These payments are provided by the USDA's Trade Mitigation Program, which was a good-faith effort that recognized the economic hardship of our farmers and ranchers and the problems they were facing.

I have heard from Nebraskans who have applied for this program and who have received payments. Per Secretary Perdue's recent announcement, the Agency will extend the application deadline for the period of time equivalent to the number of days that the Farm Service Agency offices were closed during the shutdown. This should assist farmers who are interested in applying for the program but have been unable to do so during this partial shutdown. I understand the concerns of Nebraskans who are sincerely worried because USDA Farm Service Agency offices are closed.

Agriculture is the economic engine of the State of Nebraska. Across the State and in rural areas throughout our Nation, farmers are thinking about spring planting. They want to be able to plan ahead and make decisions about the future of their businesses. These hardships are real, and they are impacting Nebraska families. That is why I am continuing to have conversations with my colleagues about how we can come together in a sensible way that properly secures our border and ends these lapses in government funding.

Nebraskans know full well that I have long supported securing our border because it is a critical national security issue. I have visited the southern border, and I have spoken with our border agents. I have seen areas where a wall is necessary and other areas where technology or adding more border patrol is appropriate. Unfortunately, we have seen border security, an issue that has long had support from Republicans and Democrats, become deeply politicized.

As we continue to look and work toward a way forward, I want to keep

people updated and informed about the steps that our government continues to take to provide certainty, stability, and peace of mind to Nebraskans.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, yesterday I left my home in Cleveland and kissed my wife good-bye and headed to the airport early in the morning. I went to gates A, B, and C in the Cleveland Airport and talked to the TSA agents who are all working and working without pay.

Then, when I got to Washington—I flew into National Airport—I went straight to a building in Arlington where I talked to cafeteria workers. They are Federal contract workers who serve food at our Smithsonian museums and other Federal facilities. They don't work for the Federal Government. Their paychecks don't come from the Federal Government. They are contracted through a company and then paid by these companies. They have lost their jobs during the Trump shutdown.

These workers, making \$12, \$13, \$14—some with some seniority make \$15. They are union. They make 2 or 3 dollars more than the nonunion comparable workers. But they are not getting paid.

Unlike the 800,000 Federal workers, some working without pay, some furloughed—unlike them, if history is a judge, they will not get paid those lost wages. So these are people making \$12, \$13, \$14 an hour who have already lost 2 weeks of work because of the Trump shutdown, and unless Congress acts, they have no prospect to get that back pay. Again, their wages are at that level.

Then, last night, to sort of cap the day, in my apartment here I watched the President of the United States talk about his wall and dig in a little more.

You know, I wish President Trump would talk to the workers he is hurting with this shutdown. I wish that he would go out and, as President Lincoln used to say, get his "public opinion bath" and listen to these workers; that he would leave the White House or Mar-a-Lago, where he spends most of his time, and talk to these workers I talked to yesterday—the TSA workers in Cleveland who are working without pay. The anxiety levels are going up and up and up for these workers because this coming Saturday they will miss their first paycheck—and then beyond that too. This also affects the food service workers.

Last week, President Trump said—imagine this, a billionaire President—his shutdown, the Trump shutdown, which he proudly, as Commander in Chief, said: “I am proud of this shutdown.” Last week, he said: “This shutdown has a higher purpose than next week’s pay.” Imagine that, a billionaire President, living in this beautiful house paid for by taxpayers and having his estate in Mar-a-Lago, and he would say: “This shutdown,” this Trump shutdown, “has a higher purpose than next week’s pay.”

I wonder if he would tell that to TSA workers, the ones I met in Cleveland, including Aaron Bankston, who told me:

If you’re the only breadwinner in your family, and to have your kids looking up at you, it’s hard to tell them, we don’t have anything to put food on the table, that’s the hard part.

We just have to get us back working. We’re working diligently over here, trying to make sure we’re securing America.

Mr. President, tell the cafeteria workers I talked with there is a higher purpose than their week’s pay because, remember, it is not just Federal employees feeling the pain. There are also these contractors. There are 800,000 Federal employees. We think—we can’t get the number from the government yet—I am not sure the administration wants to tell us these numbers. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of contract workers making \$10, \$12, \$15 an hour—making a little more if they are lucky enough to have a union, but some making as little as \$8 or \$9 or \$10 an hour.

A lot of Americans don’t realize that thousands of janitors and cafeteria workers and security guards are out of work because of the President. You know, it is all kinds of Federal employees. It is people who process tax returns at the IRS. It is people who are helping farmers adjust to the new farm bill we passed proudly—Senators ROBERTS and STABENOW and a bunch of others. It is about people wanting to get a mortgage, and they can’t get it approved at FHA because of this shutdown. It is also people making \$8 and \$10 and \$12 an hour. Unless we do something, these workers will not get the backpay they should get because they are employed by private contractors. They have no way, at \$12 and \$15 an hour—without pay, they have no way of making up their lost hours and lost wages. I am working with a relatively new Minnesota Senator, Ms. SMITH, on legislation to try to come up with a solution to get these workers backpay, the way that workers who are actual Federal employees get backpay. Fundamentally, it comes down to respecting the dignity of work. That means respecting the dignity of work and that these workers make a decent wage with decent benefits.

Missing one paycheck may not seem like a lot to the billionaire President and the multimillionaire Cabinet with their massive investment portfolio.

I will say that again. Missing one 2-week paycheck or two 2-week paychecks or even, if the President gets his way, three 2-week paychecks may not seem like a lot to a billionaire President and a multimillionaire Cabinet with their massive investment portfolios, but it means a whole lot to these people. Missing a paycheck is a big, big deal that the President of the United States clearly either doesn’t understand or doesn’t care about.

The President doesn’t understand that working people can’t just send a letter to creditors saying: Excuse me from paying rent this month or paying my mortgage or paying for my medications. You can’t put groceries or gas in the car with an IOU.

One of those cafeteria workers told me in Arlington: I have to pay rent. I have other bills. I have a college student in community college. He needs help with his books. He said: President Trump, I am asking would you please open the government. Everyone is going through hardship. We really don’t want this wall you want.

I am guessing the President of the United States, the billionaire President, jetting back and forth between the White House and Mar-a-Lago in Florida, will never talk to not just these workers I talked to in Virginia or those TSA employees in Cleveland—I am sure he will not talk to them, but I hope he will talk to some people like them.

He spends his time in his resort, but he doesn’t see them. To him, they are invisible, but MITCH McCONNELL can see them. MITCH McCONNELL’s office is down the hall on the right about 100 feet. I have shared on this floor before how lobbyists, during the tax bill, when President Trump and the majority in the Senate and the majority in the House gave a \$1.5 trillion tax cut—and 70 percent of that tax cut went to the richest 1 percent, people like themselves, the President, the Cabinet, many Members of the Senate, many Members of the House. I documented it to show—as I looked out this door and opened these doors, I showed this is the place where the lobbyists go in and out of the majority leader’s office, talking to him about their special interest legislation.

So I ask—right now, Senator McCONNELL could come out of his office, and he could walk down this hall. I would be happy to open the door for him, if that is not contrary to Senate rules. I would be happy to open the door for him and welcome him. He could right now vote to reopen the government and get this process moving and tell the President of the United States. He also could go to Virginia. He also could go to the airport in Louisville or Cincinnati, and he could listen to their stories, but he doesn’t seem to be listening either because I am guessing if he did, he might be a little more inclined to let us vote to get these workers back on the job.

I am calling on Senator McCONNELL to come out of that office, to walk

down this hall, and to come here and begin the process of opening the government.

Let’s talk for a minute about what the President said last night. The President continued his record of telling lie after lie after lie after lie, misleading the people he is supposed to serve. Facts matter. So when you hear the President say we need a wall, remember that it is a fact that illegal border crossings are at historic lows. It is not fake news. My wife says if it is fake, it is not news, and if it is news, it is not fake. It is a fact that border crossings are at historic lows.

Another fact, border crossings are down about 80 percent since 2000. Another fact, the President’s wall would do nothing to stop opioids coming into our communities. First, most illegal opioids are seized at legal points of entry, not tracked over some remote area of Texas. Fact, the shutdown makes it harder for Customs and Border Protection to do their jobs intercepting those opioids.

Another fact, last year we passed the INTERDICT Act. I worked with my colleague from Ohio, Senator PORTMAN, and Senator MARKEY from Massachusetts on a bipartisan bill to get Customs and Border Protection the screening devices they need to test for opioids. Why would we focus on the President’s vanity project, building this wall? A promise he made—remember his promise? “I will build the wall, and the Mexicans will pay for it.” Well, he is now asking American taxpayers, over time, to pay \$25 or \$30 billion.

Why would we focus on the President’s vanity project instead of getting the agents and technology they need? We can do this with agents, technology, helicopters, and all the things we need to do to protect the border because that is what we want to do. We don’t want this vanity project. We want to protect the border.

Another fact, most undocumented immigrants aren’t committing crimes. In fact, there are 56 percent fewer criminal convictions of undocumented immigrants than of native-born Texans. So a native-born Texan is more likely, percentagewise, to commit a crime than an undocumented person living in Texas.

Keep in mind the facts of what this shutdown is costing the American people; 800,000 Federal workers are going without a paycheck; 420,000 of them are on the job without pay; thousands of contract workers, custodians, cafeteria workers, janitors not only are not getting a paycheck, but they probably never will for this lost work.

Here is another fact. The President and Senator McCONNELL could end the shutdown right now. The Senate passed a bill unanimously to fund the government in December. That is a fact. We passed it. It is a fact. It was unanimous. It is a fact. The House passed bills to fund the government last week. It is a fact. Senator McCONNELL right now could come out of that office, walk

down this hall, and Senator McCANNELL could put those House bills on the floor right now, and we could vote to end this shutdown. We could send them to the President's desk, and if the President is going to continue his vanity project and continue this Trump shutdown and he vetoes it, we have the ability to override it.

The President doesn't tell us what to do. He seems to be telling the Republican majority what to do day after day. I applaud those who stood up to him recently and said they want to open the government, but it is also a fact that this President said: "I am proud to shut down the government."

The Commander in Chief of the United States of America—the Commander in Chief—the top person in this country's government said: "I am proud to shut down the government."

Facts matter. The fact is, President Trump, once again, as he betrayed the General Motors workers in Lordstown, as he betrayed the General Motors suppliers—all the companies that supply the building of the Chevy Cruz—he has betrayed these Federal workers; he has betrayed these contract workers who are making \$10, \$12, and \$15 an hour; and he has betrayed the American worker.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Senator from Florida.

S. 1

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, what is before us right now is S. 1. For those who are here today watching or who are at home or will watch this later and are wondering what the Senate is doing, other than coming down here and giving speeches, what we are trying to do is start debate on a bill, on S. 1.

S. 1 is the Senate effort to respond specifically not just to general events that are happening in the Middle East but, in particular, the decision made a few weeks ago that the United States would be leaving Syria and our presence there.

At the time when the decision was made, I told everybody I thought it was a bad idea. A lot of people agreed, and there are a lot of reasons why it was a bad idea. Although I do think it is important anytime we ask the American people to send their young men and women abroad—in the case of Syria, it is about 2,000 special operators working alongside tens of thousands of Kurdish and Syrian democratic forces. Anytime we spend money or send Americans abroad to risk their lives, the American people deserve for us to go to them and justify why it is we should be doing it or continue to do it. That is certainly the case with Syria.

So I don't agree with the decision, but I do think it has given the Senate and those of us who disagree with that decision an opportunity to go out and tell people why it is that it is important. That is a broader topic, and I will have more to say about that in the days to come, but one of the reasons

why it is important is because the U.S. withdrawal from Syria will have a dramatic impact on the security of Israel.

Now, again, anytime we ask the American people to support another country with money or diplomatic support or anything that it might be—weapons—we should justify it. We should never take for granted why it is that it is important that we support that other country.

In the case of Israel, at a time when very few things enjoy bipartisan support, support for Israel has wide bipartisan support in Congress and across the country, and rightfully so. Our support of the State of Israel is founded both on morality and our national interest.

On the issue of morality, the State of Israel is very unique. It was founded for a very specific purpose in the aftermath of the holocaust, in which millions of Jews lost their lives. It was vowed that never again would the Jewish people not have a place to go and seek refuge or live in a place of peace and security. The State of Israel was established to be that homeland for the Jewish people. It is unique in the fact that it was given birth by an international organization. It is unique in the world in that regard.

The second reason we should support Israel is because it is in our national interest. Israel is everything we wish more countries in the Middle East and around the world were. They are a pro-American, free enterprise democracy. I would ask you, for a moment only, to imagine what the world would be like, how much easier our foreign policy would be if there were more countries in that part of the world that were pro-American, free enterprise democracies. We have one, the Jewish State of Israel. That is why we should support it.

From its very birth, Israel has faced threats to its very existence, but I would say today that the threats it faces are the greatest ones it has had to confront in almost a half century. The impetus for much of that threat comes from one place, and that is Iran, a country which almost as a matter of course as a government chants "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" on a regular basis. It is one of the stated purposes of that government, to destroy the State of Israel, but they aren't just words; they are actions.

I have a map of Iran and Israel. Of course, notice that Israel is the tiny little area on this map. At its narrowest point, Israel is 9 miles wide. This is not a large country in terms of the map area. It is unreal how much of the world's attention, both from international organizations and international debates, focuses on this one tiny country, but there it is, the very small nation that you see right there in yellow.

There is Iran. It is, clearly, larger in terms of on the map and in reality. Iran isn't simply a rhetorical enemy of Israel; it is taking action to encircle Israel and to threaten its security.

It begins with engagement in its missile program. Iran is developing and has developed ballistic missiles with a range that reaches every part of Israel. Here is the bottom line: Iran can lodge ballistic missiles that reach any city in Israel right now, which is why their nuclear ambitions are so dangerous.

Imagine that at some point in the future, Iran is able to attach a nuclear warhead to one of those ballistic missiles—a country whose leaders on a regular basis chant "Death to Israel" with a nuclear weapon that can reach Israel. Well, that is a proposition nobody wants to see come about. That is why the Iranian ambition to have nuclear weapons is so dangerous. They already possess that as it is today. But they don't simply directly target Israel; they also—I believe directly—they hide behind surrogates in the region, who do their bidding. These surrogates have for many years been found in southern Lebanon among Hezbollah. We will talk about them in a moment. They are a surrogate that works at the behest of the Iranian Government.

There have been conflicts—in fact, wars—between Israel and Hezbollah in which there have been massive military attacks coming from Lebanon, rocket strikes into Israel and Israel's response. The last one was in the 2005–2006 time period, and it could happen again. In fact, I believe the conditions are ripe for it to happen again. It could happen at any moment for a variety of different reasons that will have to be part of another speech because time doesn't permit. Suffice it to say, it is a dangerous proposition.

How does Hezbollah get this weaponry? They get this weaponry from Iran. It is shipped through Syria. The U.S. disengagement from Syria will make it easier for Iran and the IRGC and Hezbollah to bring those weapons into southern Lebanon to strike at Israel at some point in the future. In addition to that, Iran is also present on the ground in Syria, which, as you see, borders Israel. So not only does Iran help Hezbollah, but Hezbollah and Iran are in Syria, on Israel's very border in the same region in the south, and a U.S. withdrawal will make it easier for Iran to grow their presence there. So now Israel faces a threat from Hezbollah, from southern Lebanon, and a threat from Iran and Hezbollah in Syria.

We also see that the Iranian influence has grown in Iraq. The second leading political movement in the current Iraqi Parliament is a Shia group, directly aligned in Iran, with growing political influence. They want to kick America out of there. Believe me, they want to turn Iraq into another base of operation from which Israel can be targeted.

Down here in Yemen, the Houthis are an agent of Iran. You may say: Well, that is kind of far. It isn't in the sense that those missiles and rockets could reach there as well, but it also allows

them the opportunity to shut off transit here at this chokepoint on the bottom of the Red Sea, which could directly impact, ultimately, the ability for trade and commerce for Israel and for the region writ large.

Obviously, we see a growing Iranian presence in Bahrain and Kuwait.

Suffice it to say that Iran is carrying out an effort to grow its influence and encircle who it views as its enemies—the Sunnis in Saudi Arabia but more than anyone else, the Israelis.

This is not the only threat, by the way, that Israel faces. It also faces growing violence and resistance in the Judea-Samaria region—often called by some the West Bank—and Gaza, where there have been upticks in violence.

I failed to mention that in southern Lebanon, Hezbollah routinely builds tunnels from Lebanon into Israel. The purpose of that is to be able to sneak fighters right into Israel through those tunnels so they can conduct commando raids and kill civilians—not military personnel but civilians.

The threats Israel is facing are growing every single day.

I want to talk specifically for a moment about the missile threat to Israel. Here are the ranges of these rockets. There was an Israel-Hezbollah war. The next one will be far deadlier. It will be far deadlier for a couple of reasons.

The first is that Hezbollah can build these rockets; they no longer need to ship them in. Over the last decade and a half, they have built the capability to construct these rockets themselves.

The second is that they have more of them. That matters because Israel has a very good missile defense system, but you can overwhelm a missile defense system with volume, meaning 100 rockets are launched, and you knock down 99 of them, but 1 of them gets through and hits a population center and kills 10,000 people. Hezbollah now has that capability.

These rockets are also precision-guided. They are not just lobbing them over and they hit what they hit. They can launch precision-guided munitions to target specific areas within Israel. The ranges of these rockets they now possess are stunning. As an example, if you look at this little ring here, it tells you how many seconds it would take from launch to impact, meaning 10 to 25 seconds before they could hit, for example, the area of Nazareth and Tiberias. Moving farther down, you see 35 to 50 seconds. Farther down, around Tel Aviv, 75 seconds. Jerusalem, just south of that is probably another 10 seconds added, 85 seconds. A hundred and twenty seconds. A hundred and fifty-five seconds.

Imagine for a moment that you are visiting Israel or live in Israel or are a student studying there—whatever it might be—and one of these launches comes in, a barrage of 1,000 rockets launched. You literally have 35 to 50 seconds—less than 2 minutes. There is no country in the world that can mobi-

lize people to get out of the way in 2 minutes. These are their population centers. This is the threat that faces them right now, and that is just from Lebanon. Imagine that same capability I just described also existing in Syria. Imagine it all being launched simultaneously from Syria, from Lebanon, and from Iran. Now you begin to see the construct of a plan to destroy this tiny nation and why it is so critical that the United States support them in fighting for their existence. The threat is extraordinary.

There is one more element to it. There is now a global effort called boycott, divestment, and sanctions, BDS. It is designed to wage economic war on Israel—in essence, to pressure companies to boycott Israeli companies and people who do business in Israel until they stop, to pressure investment funds and banks to no longer do investments in anything related to Israel, and to pressure governments around the world to sanction Israel. That is what this effort is about. It is to undermine them economically as well. It is economic warfare and being waged at every level. It is working. People are adopting this around the world, and there are some who advocate for it here. We have recently seen in the news a number of companies that decided not to do business in certain parts of Israel because of the pressure from that movement.

By the way, I would point out that they are not just boycotting the economy; there are people who won't do concerts, and they won't play the Israeli sports teams. They want the Israeli Government kicked out of the international committee for different sports, including soccer—the Olympic committee. They boycott cultural events. They boycott universities. They are pressuring universities to cut ties with any university in Israel over all this. It is an effort to destroy Israel culturally and economically in a way that works in combination with the effort to destroy it physically. It is a very real threat.

We have tried to confront both of these issues in bipartisan legislation. I have up here a chart, and I will talk about it in a moment. Twenty-six States in this country have tried to do something to condemn BDS. I will get to that in a moment before I tell you the “what.”

I told you why it is so important that we stand with Israel and the threats that Israel faces. Now I will describe what this bill does. This bill has four components to it. One deals with the human rights violation in Syria. We will discuss that further, perhaps tomorrow. The second component of this bill deals with Jordan, which is one of the neighbors that Israel has that is actually critical to its security. One of the best things that happened to Israel security was the deal with Jordan and Egypt that allowed them, at their periphery, to have countries that at least recognize them and are not out to destroy them. Jordan faces its own

threats from some of the same actors, by the way. And add ISIS to that.

The other two elements are we took these two bills that have bipartisan support—cosponsored by Republicans and Democrats—we combined them with the other two bills, which also had such support, into one bill. That is S. 1. We viewed it as an opportunity for the Senate and for Congress to weigh in on foreign policy at a time when we believe that all of the threats to Israel that I just described are made worse by the decision to withdraw from Syria. That is the bill that is before us.

Today, I want to talk about the two components that impact Israel directly. The first is basically the United States-Israel Security Assistance Authorization Act. That is a fancy title for a bill that I coauthored with my very good friend and another strong supporter of Israel, Senator CHRIS COONS of Delaware, who sits on the other side of the aisle. Again, I told you this is a bipartisan issue.

This bill has 72 cosponsors here in the Senate. It passed overwhelmingly by a voice vote. We didn't even have to have a rollcall vote. It was just voice-voted out, meaning there was unanimous consent—no one objected—on the 1st of August of last year. It passed in the House, with an amendment, on September 12. Then it was hotlined for a potential voice vote here on October 11, 2018.

What does this bill do? The first thing it does is it lays out a statement of policy. Let me tell you why that is important. People say: Statement of policy words—why do they matter? They matter in the region because one of the things that would encourage Hezbollah or any of Israel's enemies to perhaps attack it is the belief that the United States is no longer as committed to Israel's security as we once were. They could miscalculate. They read these headlines about one or two people in America saying something negative toward Israel, and they think that somehow we are weakening in our resolve. I know that sounds silly to us, but to people involved in that over there, it is not. They read into this, and they miscalculate it. They make errors. A miscalculation here could lead to an all-out war that could cost the lives of thousands of people and potentially lead to the destruction of Israel, along with other nations in the process.

It is important for us to make very clear that our commitment to Israel is unwavering. It is especially important in light of the decision to withdraw from Syria because what a lot of these countries—including Iran—are reading into this is, U.S. commitment to the Middle East is no longer very strong. Not only are they not committed to being involved in the region, they are actually withdrawing any of the assets they could be using to be supportive of their allies in the region.

So these statements of policy are important. What we put in this bill lays out a statement of policy that says:

It shall be the policy of the United States to provide assistance to the Government of Israel in order to support funding for cooperative programs to develop, produce, and procure missile, rocket, projectile, and other defense capabilities to help Israel meet its security needs and to help develop and enhance United States defense capabilities.

What that means is, this is a cooperation. Israel may be developing some of these technologies because they have an immediate need. We would benefit from that technology too. If Israel develops the next generation of missile defense systems, we would use that as well in the case where we were threatened by it. That is that statement of policy.

The bill also authorizes U.S. security assistance in foreign military financing at no less than \$3.3 billion a year for the next decade. That, by the way, is simply the language from a memorandum of understanding that was signed by the Obama administration and Israel. We put that in the statute, and we authorized it.

This is very important. It extends a war reserve stockpile authority and extends loan guarantees to Israel through 2023. Israel has never defaulted on a U.S.-backed loan guarantee, and this program helps provide rainy-day insurance on Israel's stability given the many threats it is facing.

It authorizes the President to transfer precision-guided munitions and related defense articles and services to Israel as necessary for legitimate self-defense. That means this weaponry wouldn't be sent, but it would be put on reserve status—assuming it doesn't impact our readiness—and it would be made available to Israel in case a war broke out and their reserves were quickly depleted. If they start running out of rockets, munitions, and defense apparatus, the United States has set aside weaponry that we are ready to rapidly send to them so they can defend themselves. They pay for this. But at least they know it is sitting there. We don't have to scramble to find it, it takes 2 weeks to get there, and by then, the war is over.

It has other requirements. It expresses the sense of Congress that the President should prescribe procedures for rapidly acquiring and deploying what we need to support production of these precision-guided munitions for our U.S. counterterrorism mission.

It requires the President to report no later than 120 days to the appropriate congressional committees on Israel's eligibility for the strategic trade authorization exception to certain export control licensing, including the reasons as to why Israel has not yet been included in the list of countries eligible for the strategic trade authorization exception.

This one is also very critical. This is a new threat that is emerging. It authorizes the President to enter into a cooperative agreement—meaning it benefits them and us—to counter unmanned aerial vehicles and the threat they pose. The reason for that is that

on February 10 of last year, an Iranian drone was shot down by Israel. Everyone has every reason to believe that these unmanned aerial vehicles are the next threat that will be deployed both in the battlefield and potentially by terrorists. We would work with Israel, which faces an immediate threat, to develop counters to that. Today, we don't have good counters to that.

Above all else, it makes one more very clear policy statement that has been the linchpin of our support for Israel, which is that it is the policy of the United States to ensure that Israel maintains its ability to counter and defeat any credible conventional military or emerging threat from any state or possible coalition of states or from nonstate actors while sustaining minimal damage and casualties through the use of superior military means possessed in sufficient quantities, including weapons, command, control, communication, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities that in their technical characteristics are superior in capability to those of such other individual or possible coalition states or nonstate actors.

Here is what this means: It is the policy of the United States to ensure that Israel's weapons and systems are better than anyone else's in the region. Whatever anybody else has we will sell to Israel and allow it to access and acquire something better so that it will always have an advantage. If anyone in that region believes it could beat Israel in a war, one will try to beat Israel in a war. That was the history from its very birth, and that was the lesson of 1967 and the lesson of 1973. We don't want that to happen again. That is what this bill does. That is why it has so much support. That is why it is so important for us to move to debate on this issue.

It also tackles this economic warfare. What is included in this is a bill we filed last year with Senator MANCHIN, called the Combating BDS Act. By the way, last year, the Banking chairman, Senator CRAPO of Idaho, and the ranking member, Senator BROWN of Ohio, discharged this bill from their committee, and they didn't even require a hearing. They did it late last year after running it by all of their members, and we tried to pass it in the Senate by a voice vote but were unable to because of one Senator who blocked it.

Let me start by thanking Senators CRAPO and BROWN for working hard to advance this bill last year, as well as for coauthoring with me last year the new Hezbollah sanctions law, known as the Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2018. We strengthened the sanctions on Hezbollah that we had passed in the 2 years previous.

First of all, let me tell you what it doesn't do. It does not outlaw BDS. If you are an American company and you want to boycott or divest from Israel, this doesn't make it illegal. It doesn't stop you from doing it. It only says

that if there is some city or county or State in this country that wants to support Israel, it has a right to say it is not going to buy services or goods from any company that is boycotting or divesting from Israel. That is all it does. It gives cities and counties like these—26 States—the opportunity to have their elected officials who respond to the people of those States or cities or counties who elected them to make decisions that they are not going to do business with people who don't do business with Israel and boycott Israel. In essence, it allows us to boycott the boycotters.

Some say that it is an infringement on the First Amendment. First, I will tell you that the First Amendment protects speech and actions that function in the form of speech. This is not an effort to silence speech nor is this an effort, by the way, to defeat an effort per se. It is an effort to defend the right to counterspeak. The First Amendment is a two-way street. You have a right to express your views on something, but others have a right to respond. You have a right to boycott a country, and people have a right to boycott you. That is what this law allows them to do. It is that simple.

By the way, this is not some domestic debate. They are not trying to influence some law that we are passing here with BDS. They are not trying to influence your opinions on a topic. They are trying to influence the foreign policy of another country. This is not traditional free speech. The courts have weighed in on this in the past, and the courts have given Congress and the executive branch extraordinary discretion on the setting of foreign policy. When a company weighs in on BDS, it is not trying to influence a domestic debate or a topic of opinion here in the U.S. political system; it is trying to punish a nation-state so that the state changes its policies in another country.

There is an open question about whether the First Amendment even covers that. The bill basically says, notwithstanding whatever is in the bill, nothing in the bill shall be construed to invade or to hurt anyone's First Amendment rights. So anyone who hides behind the idea that this is designed to silence speech isn't being truthful.

This does not outlaw BDS. If you want to boycott or divest from Israel, you can. It is legal. We are not outlawing that as that would be an infringement. All we are saying is, if you are going to boycott Israel, those who support Israel will have a right to boycott you. That includes cities and counties and States that don't want to buy stuff from you. That is what this bill does. That is why it enjoys this broad bipartisan support.

Some have asked me to take it out of this bill and have said it is the reason we are not moving to it. At least, that is what I heard earlier. Now there is another reason. It is absurd. Vote against it and then justify it, but if you

are trying to shield the boycotters, that is the de facto support of BDS, in my opinion, and I think it is important for us to pass it.

I emphasize again that this was not overly controversial 2 weeks ago. Look at the list of people who supported this bill last year: the majority leader, the minority leader, the Foreign Relations Committee chairman, the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, the Senate Finance Committee chairman, and the ranking member of the Finance Committee. Democratic and Republican leaders on multiple committees and at the very top of this Chamber support this bill. Yet, somehow, we can't even proceed to debate on this bill.

You may say, "Well, wait until the shutdown is over," because that is the argument that is being used now—that we shouldn't move to anything until we deal with the shutdown. I don't like the shutdown. I hope it ends tonight or tomorrow morning. Yet this is not just any other issue. There is a credible argument to be made that there is a time sensitivity to this because the enemies of Israel aren't sitting around, waiting. This could happen at any moment. These aren't the kinds of things that build up. Hezbollah's desire to destroy Israel is longstanding, and what they choose to do about it will not wait for the U.S. Senate to deal with other topics. This is an immediate threat. It is right before us, and it deserves our immediate reaction.

This could rapidly escalate, but I am not going to take up another 30 minutes to describe all of the scenarios under which that could happen. Yet I will give you one that is not out of the realm of possibility. Now that they know that the United States is going to be withdrawing from Syria, the Israelis could decide—and, I believe, rightfully so—that for their own defense, they will need to start attacking even more inside Syria. Regarding those supply lanes that Iran is using, every time they see a truck with rockets on it, they are going to blow up the truck. Every time they see IRGC or Hezbollah militias forming anywhere near their border, they are going to hit them. They are now going to step up those attacks because we are not there anymore. Iran is going to fill that void, so they are going to have to step up their attacks.

At some point, Iran and/or Hezbollah is going to respond to those stepped-up attacks with attacks of its own, at which point Israel is going to respond with even bigger attacks. Then the cycle of escalation will begin. Then very quickly—before you know it—in this region, we could have a shooting war, not a war of words and not a vote at the U.N., but rockets and missiles being fired at one another from Lebanon or from Syria into Israel, with Israel's responding back into Syria and Israel's responding back into Lebanon. In fact, Israel has said that all of Lebanon is on the target list since now

Hezbollah and the current President of Lebanon have created a political alliance. You also have these other countries running around inside Syria, including the Russians now and the Turks up to the north. There is the potential that their troops would get caught in the firefight in their eliciting a response back to Israel. Before you know it, we could have a multistate, multiparty, all-out war in the Middle East. The possibility of that happening is not farfetched.

I say this to you today with no pleasure. There will be another Israel-Hezbollah war. It is just a matter of time. Yet the next one will be far more deadly. It is incumbent upon us to do what we can. There are things we can't do, and there are things we can do. It is incumbent upon us to prolong it and to prevent it for as long as possible. One of the things we can do to help prevent that or to extend the time before that happens is to make it very clear to Hezbollah and Iran and everyone else that if they take on Israel, we will support Israel. That is what this bill is designed to do. It is not just to send that message but to put in place that reality.

Given the tinderbox that is the Middle East and given the unpredictability of the various actors involved, particularly those that hate Israel, why would we not move immediately to address something like that? Why are we not capable of voting on something that will probably get 80 votes here and still deal with the government shutdown?

The last time we had a government shutdown, we were still voting on bills that had nothing to do with the government shutdown. When the other party was in charge, we were doing that. There is no precedent for doing it. I believe that it is possible for us to do both, and that is what we should do. This isn't tax reform or healthcare reform. This is something that is urgent and immediate and requires our attention because of the unpredictability of foreign events today and because of the unpredictability of this part of the world.

I know, at some point here soon, that the leader will bring up for a second time a vote on the motion to proceed. It is not even a vote on the bill. It is a motion to begin debate on this bill. Nothing else is going on around here. Let them continue to meet and have a dialogue and talk about how to get us out of this shutdown. I hope we do. I hope that happens. Yet don't shut down the Senate, particularly on a topic of this importance, because these events will not wait for us. It is important for us to act.

Please don't go around asking people to stand up to this administration's foreign policies that we don't agree with—when we at least offer a counter or something to diminish its negative impacts—and respond with obstruction and not just obstruction because of policy but with obstruction in order to make a political point or to avoid a

vote that three or four Senators might not want to take. I don't think that makes a lot of sense.

I think, when it comes to the issues of national security and foreign policy, we should try, to the extent possible, to remove them from the daily grind and back-and-forth of American politics because the repercussions are dramatic. That is the one thing that makes national security and foreign policy different from domestic policy. You can always go back and change a bad tax law. You can always go back and change a bad healthcare law. You can always go back and make changes to a bad banking law. You can't undo history. You can't undo wars once they have started. You can't undo carnage once it has occurred. Foreign policy is often irreversible, and once mistakes are made, you have to do the best you can with the hand you have been dealt.

That is why I hope that on this one, we stop playing games, that we get on this bill, and that we pass it so that even as this debate about the shutdown continues, we will make clear to the world and we will make clear to her enemies that we stand with Israel. We always have and we always will across party lines. We may bicker and fight about many things, but when it comes to the support of Israel, we are united—House and Senate Republicans and Democrats and the White House—in the support of our strongest ally in the region and of one of our strongest allies in the entire world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to discuss President Trump's ongoing shutdown of the Federal Government—how we got here, the impact on the people of my State, and how we can make some progress.

It is past time for the President to stop holding the American people for ransom through this government shutdown. It is past time to stop the misinformation campaign and to stop making unwarranted demands for the ill use of American taxpayers' dollars. The President needs to open the government.

The Senate did its work on the budget. We have bipartisan, compromise bills that are ready for the President's signature. Chairman COLLINS and I worked together, on a bipartisan basis, to develop the fiscal year 2019 Transportation-HUD bill, which was reported out of committee unanimously. Our bill was then approved by the full Senate as part of a package that included three other bipartisan appropriations bills—Agriculture, Financial Services, and the Interior. Together, these bills passed by a veto-proof margin of 92 to 6.

I am very proud of the work that Chairman COLLINS did and that I was able to assist with during this process to provide an additional \$10 billion to rebuild our roads, our bridges, and our

airports and to develop new affordable housing opportunities to more than 5 million low-income Americans who strive to make ends meet. These investments will grow our economy, spur job creation, and improve communities across America.

The T-HUD bill—on an issue that both Chairman COLLINS and I care deeply about—will continue to make a major commitment to address homelessness among youth, veterans, and survivors of domestic violence. We are making real progress through the HUD-VASH Program, which has brought down homelessness among veterans by 49 percent since 2010 and is helping 64 communities in 3 States effectively end homelessness among veterans.

In September, a Senate-House conference committee that I served on had essentially reached an agreement on a final version of these four bills. They could have been passed and signed into law by the start of the fiscal year last October 1. It would have been a victory for the American people—both for the smart investments these bills would make and for the restoration of good government and regular order, which Chairman SHELBY and Vice Chairman LEAHY have both made it a priority to achieve. Instead, a final agreement was slow-walked and stalled by the House leadership and then the White House in order to give the President greater leverage for the shutdown he had been angling for over many months.

Here we are, 3 months into the fiscal year and 3 weeks into a shutdown, and 800,000 Federal employees have either been furloughed or forced to work without pay. Thousands of Federal contract employees are also out of work and may never be compensated. Trash is piling up at national parks, and damage is being reported. Employers can't access the government's E-Verify system to assure that they are hiring legal residents. Soon, the shutdown may prevent HUD from renewing project-based rental agreements. Press reports indicate that the shutdown is causing States to scale back in awarding highway and transit contracts.

Starting as soon as this Friday, many Federal district courts will start feeling the Federal shutdown pinch more acutely, with just skeleton crews or just a few people working without pay, making it harder for Americans and businesses to get their day in court.

Like everyone else, Federal employees—from Coast Guard officers and enlisted personnel to FBI agents, to air traffic controllers—have rent, mortgages, student loans, childcare, and healthcare bills to pay. Many work paycheck to paycheck.

The President has said that he is willing to continue this shutdown for months or even years without a care about the effect it will have on their lives. Indeed, during his speech last night, the President didn't even mention these Federal employees. In Congress, we hear their stories.

On Monday, air traffic controllers from T.F. Green Airport visited my office. They explained that this shutdown not only creates financial hardships for them, it also clogs the pipeline for the hiring and training of new controllers who are desperately needed to replace those who are eligible for retirement.

I am hearing from other constituents too. A USDA meat inspector from Chepachet, RI, sent me an email over the holidays saying:

I'm one of the Federal employees that will be impacted by the government shutdown/impasse. . . . I'm required to report to work without pay for the duration. I have 3 children under 5 and a stay-at-home husband, with no contingency plan for lack of pay, especially during the holiday season. I realize it's Christmas, and you all have families too. The holidays are stressful enough without additional financial stress.

I hope the President will act and reopen the Department of Agriculture, the FDA, and other Agencies that keep our food and medicine safe.

A Coast Guard lieutenant from Westerly, RI, also wrote me to say:

I respectfully implore you to represent the needs and values of servicemembers such as myself, as well as the hard-working Coast Guard civilians who work alongside me. During the shutdown, our missions are stunted and our dedication is disrespected. As the only household income and as I continue to fulfill my commitment to active duty service, my ability to meet financial obligations for myself and my two young children is at great risk if the shutdown continues. Likewise, the government is not living up to its end of the contract made with my crew of both active duty and civilian members. Please share this plea with your fellow Congress members.

Lieutenant, thank you for your service and for the additional sacrifice you and your colleagues are making today.

As we think about border security, let's remember the important job the Coast Guard is doing to protect our border, particularly to prevent illegal drugs from entering the United States. In 2017 alone, the Coast Guard seized illegal drugs valued at \$6.6 billion wholesale and detained 708 suspected smugglers for prosecution. So it is interesting to have the President talk about drug smugglers coming across our Mexican border while the Coast Guard is out there, unpaid, protecting us on all of the seas and oceans that abut the United States.

It is not just Federal employees. An executive at a small shipyard in North Kingstown, RI, wrote to me this week to say:

We do a great deal of work for the U.S. Coast Guard, and for the last three weeks, we have not been paid. We currently have about a half a million dollars due with an additional \$200,000 going in for review and payment in the next week or so. This situation is beginning to hinder our ability to pay our vendors, and it's created a cash flow deficiency that, if not resolved soon, will be difficult and costly to manage. Please feel free to share this message with whoever needs to hear about this.

This is a small business in Rhode Island, repairing ships for our Coast

Guard, that is facing financial distress—in fact, perhaps, disaster. Those are the people who are being harmed by this shutdown.

Certainly, I hear this message, and I know my colleagues are listening, but for whatever reason, the President doesn't seem to be listening.

So how does this get resolved? Democrats have offered several paths forward, but now the President—the person who caused this shutdown, who proudly declared on television he would take full credit for it—needs to commit to reopening the government without precondition.

I know that many people say: Why can't you just make a deal with the President? Unfortunately, the President can't stick to basic facts, numbers, or a bargain.

Originally, Mexico was going to pay for his border wall. Then he decided that American taxpayers should pay for it, so he asked Congress for \$1.6 billion to build 65 miles of wall. Last Sunday, his request became \$5.7 billion for more than 230 miles of wall. By Monday, he was considering declaring a national emergency and using national defense dollars without congressional approval.

To the idea that the President would use defense dollars to build a border wall, let me say that his proposed wall has no core defense function. We are not at war with Mexico.

In fact, the Pentagon's most recent national defense strategy doesn't mention the southern border as a national defense priority. Meanwhile, the Pentagon has billions of dollars in infrastructure backlog, ranging from military construction projects for new missions to deferred maintenance in facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization. There is no credible argument that a border wall takes priority over any of these.

Of course, the President doesn't have a real plan for building the border wall. In July, the Government Accountability Office warned that the Trump administration's approach increased risks that the wall—in their words—"will cost more than projected, take longer than planned, or not fully perform as expected." Is there any wonder congressional GOP leaders rejected his wall when they controlled every branch of government in the last 2 years?

The President has not been honest with the American people. He hasn't even been straight with members of his administration or Members of his own party in Congress, who are often hung out to dry.

In fact, 2 days before the shutdown, the then-Senate majority whip told CNN, after a meeting with Vice President PENCE, that the President would sign a clean continuing resolution to keep the government open until after Christmas. Less than 24 hours later, that position was reversed by a Presidential tweet.

Even when the President makes a deal, he has trouble keeping it, especially when he is under criticism from

rightwing talk radio and TV personalities. After negotiating overall funding levels for defense and nondefense spending last year, the President nearly vetoed the final 2018 Omnibus appropriations bill because he was criticized for the size and scope of the bill. Secretary Mattis had to be summoned to the White House to explain how important the bill was to the Pentagon before the President grudgingly agreed to sign it.

Now there is no Secretary Mattis or anyone of his stature to give the President good counsel. If the President remains implacable about his wall, it will be up to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join with Democrats to pass the bipartisan bills we have already agreed on together and reopen the government.

I hope they do so, and soon, as the lives of our constituents and the health and businesses of our States are at stake.

The answer we have to give is not to the President. The answer is to that young woman working every day without pay to protect the American public by inspecting foods that we eat. The answer we have to give is to that young Coast Guard officer who is working every day, trying to pay for and to afford things for a young family without being paid. The only answer we can give them is that we are opening up this government immediately.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to 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.

“ENOURA MARU” ANNIVERSARY

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, today, we remember the 400 American and Allied prisoners of war who died 74 years ago from friendly fire aboard the Japanese hell ship *Enoura Maru* docked in Takeo Harbor, Formosa—modern-day Taiwan.

Among the dead were men who left their homes in America, Australia, Canada, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, and Czechoslovakia to fight an enemy they did not know, in places few of them had heard of, all in pursuit of a common cause: freedom, justice, and equality. These heroes were part of the infamous 45-day odyssey of the last transport of prisoners of war from the Philippines to Japan—captive since the American territory fell to Imperial Japan in the spring of 1942 after fighting to defend the Philippines.

On the morning of January 9, 1945, dive bombers from the USS *Hornet* at-

tacked the unmarked freighter holding 1,300 prisoners of war docked in the Japanese colony’s harbor. Two hundred died instantly. Nearly everyone else was wounded. For 2 days, the men were left in the floating wreckage before the Japanese permitted the dead to be removed. Their remains were buried ashore in mass graves.

After the war, the 400 victims of the bombing of the *Enoura Maru* were exhumed and eventually brought to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii. They rest in 20 mass graves marked only as “Unknowns January 9, 1945.” Their families did not learn the final fate of their loved ones until 2001.

This past August, we remembered these brave men with a memorial stone on the Memorial Walk at the Cemetery honoring the prisoners of war aboard the hell ship *Enoura Maru*. The American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society, an organization that represents the American prisoners of war of Imperial Japan and their families, organized the commemoration in Hawaii.

That memorial stone is a monument to their courage, suffering, and sacrifice. It commemorates their tragic death 74 years ago and marks their final return home. Let that stone and our remembrance of the prisoners of war on the *Enoura Maru* remind us of our sacred commitment to veterans of all eras to “never forget.” May they rest in peace.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DICK TRAMMEL

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to acknowledge the remarkable career and service of a man who has played an instrumental role in the growth and development of northwest Arkansas over the last four decades.

Dick Trammel, a pillar of the community and a leader who has been involved in almost everything positive that has happened in and around my hometown of Rogers, AR, has concluded his service at Arvest Bank after 43 years. He is also ending a 10-year term on the Arkansas Highway Commission this month.

Dick is a homegrown Arkansan. A native of Pocahontas, he attended the University of Arkansas where he was a cheerleader for the Hogs football team and earned a bachelor of science degree in business administration in 1960. After graduation, Dick returned home to work in the cotton gin and grain elevator business and became an active member and leader in Pocahontas and Randolph County.

As we all now know, the 1960s saw the founding of retail giant Walmart by Sam Walton. As Walmart was headquartered in Bentonville, Sam was able to entice Dick to relocate to the region and join First National Bank & Trust Company in Rogers in 1975. First

National Bank eventually became part of Arvest Bank and Dick worked for the company for over four decades, retiring as executive vice president, member of the board of directors and board secretary of Arvest Bank, Rogers.

While enjoying a successful career at Arvest, Dick also played an outsized role in northwest Arkansas. He served as president and board member of the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, was a board member at a local United Way, founded the Single Parent Scholarship Fund in Benton County, was a charter member of the Northwest Arkansas Community College Board of Trustees, and served on the Rogers Youth Center Board of Directors, among so many other philanthropic and civic endeavors.

He is also a board member of the U.S. Marshals Museum Foundation which is incredibly meaningful given the importance of the Marshals Service to the region and the work we have done to help make the U.S. Marshals Museum in Fort Smith a reality. We worked together not only in that capacity, but in many other ways to help the region grow as Dick has spent the last 10 years on our State’s highway commission following his appointment to the panel by former Governor Mike Beebe in 2009.

Just recently it was announced that, through many years of persistent work between members of Congress from Arkansas and Missouri and the respective legislatures and State government agencies in both States, that a multi-million-dollar grant has been secured to complete the Bella Vista Bypass on Interstate 49. Dick and his colleagues on the highway commission understood just how important this was for the region and worked hand-in-hand with the congressional delegation to reach this outcome.

As Dick’s service at Arvest and on the Arkansas Highway Commission comes to a close, it is only fitting to recognize his enormous impact on a region in Arkansas that has experienced so much growth and transformation throughout his career. Throughout all this change, Dick Trammel has remained a constant source of stability, leadership, and willingness to do whatever it takes to improve the quality of life for everyone in the community.

When my brother and I moved to Rogers to establish a medical practice in 1977, Dick was one of the first people we met. During that time and over the decades that have followed, he has been a steadfast friend and mentor. I greatly admire and appreciate his many contributions to a place we both love and have served in different capacities over the years.

I wish Dick and his wife Nancy well as he begins a well-deserved retirement. He has always been dedicated to helping people, and his lengthy career has demonstrated that commitment many times over. I am grateful to Dick and his entire family for the way they