

particular, would say, if they were here today: Ron, this is a special day for showing our deep respect and gratitude for those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and we are never going to miss a Memorial Day without expressing that sentiment.

I am going to be, this weekend, thinking about how much I want to be back in Eagle Point and Central Point to celebrate Memorial Day, and I am going to be thinking about how now we have to find a way to honor and remember our fallen servicemembers a little bit differently than before.

I would close—and perhaps I am the last speaker today in the Senate. I think I can speak for every Member of the Senate that this is especially important now to keep in our hearts all of those who have died serving our country, and let's do right by their families who are still with us.

I close my remarks by wishing all Oregonians and Americans from sea to shining sea a healthy Memorial Day.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the past couple of months, our country has gone into a lockdown but then slowly but surely has begun to adjust to the new normal brought on by COVID-19.

Many of us have been working safely from home, as kitchen tables have been transformed into makeshift office spaces and, in many cases, classrooms as parents and students navigate the challenges of remote working and learning. But many of the most critical jobs in our country can't be done with a laptop and an internet connection—defense contractors, for example, the intelligence community, law enforcement agencies, and, of course, our heroic healthcare workers. They have to be on the frontlines doing their job each and every day no matter what the risk is because their work is considered to be essential.

Our healthcare workers continue to fight this virus on the frontlines, delivering lifesaving care and comfort to those isolated from their loved ones. Our farmers and ranchers are producing the food, truckers are transporting it, and grocery store employees are stocking shelves so that amidst all of this uncertainty, we don't have to worry about not having enough to eat. Then there are the postal workers, the delivery drivers, the waste collectors, and an entire network of people we depend on who are keeping the cogs of our society running.

Whether working from home or heading out the door each morning, these

men and women are doing their jobs, even when it isn't easy or convenient, and they expect their elected officials to do the same thing.

Just because a pandemic has brought our society to a screeching halt doesn't mean the U.S. Congress should pack up shop. Just as the men and women across the country continue to show up for work each day, Congress should do the same. After all, our responsibilities during this crisis have become more important, not less. That is why we moved quickly to pass four coronavirus response bills, totaling nearly \$3 trillion—something none of us imagined we would do just a couple of months ago—and provided vital support for our country amidst so much uncertainty.

This, of course, came in the form of additional resources, including equipment for our healthcare workers and funding for ongoing research into vaccines and treatments. We also sent aid for what I consider to be a lifeline to those workers who, through no fault of their own, had no job and no paycheck, and then we have also provided serious resources to help small businesses and their workforce stay afloat.

A financial investment in our fight against this virus was desperately needed, and that is precisely what we delivered on a bipartisan basis, but our response to this crisis cannot begin and end with blank checks. We need to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent responsibly and that we are making the changes needed to recover from this crisis.

Every day I hear—usually through a videoconference—my constituents in Texas telling me how these bills are being implemented, what is helpful, what isn't, and what is needed from Congress. This feedback has been incredibly valuable as we look for more effective ways to strengthen our response and speed our recovery. So the Republicans in the Senate believe it is wise—it is prudent—to take stock of everything we have done before passing another relief bill.

I believe the Presiding Officer and I heard the same report at lunch today; that only about half of the money that we have appropriated is actually out the door, and yet here people are clamoring for more and more money. And Speaker PELOSI, in really an unfortunate act of showmanship, rammed through a \$3 trillion bill that has no prayer of being passed or becoming law. It is safe to say that House Democrats are taking a different approach than we are here in the Senate.

They passed the \$3 trillion bill, and they call it the HEROES Act, expressing their support for our Nation's healthcare heroes. We would join them in that sentiment, but the fact is, their priorities are much different. This bill mentions cannabis more times than it mentions doctors, hospitals, and nurses combined. It is an interesting tribute, if you ask me.

If this bill were to become law, taxpayers' money wouldn't be going to

coronavirus response; they would be funding a range of completely unrelated pet projects like environmental justice grants, soil health studies, and not one, but two studies on diversity and inclusion—again, in the cannabis industry. It is interesting: two more studies on diversity and inclusion in the cannabis industry. The list of absurdities in this legislation is as big as this bill itself.

Here is another one. They want to make sure that the wealthiest Americans pay less in taxes. This is from our Democratic friends who say that the top 1 percent don't pay enough, yet they present them with a huge tax cut for the wealthiest people in America.

It also would complicate the hiring that our struggling businesses are already facing and rapidly dig our Nation deeper and deeper into debt. Is this all to attack the coronavirus, to come up with a treatment or a vaccine? No. This is a liberal wish list that has consumed all the time and energy of House Democrats over the last several weeks. This is what they think is more important.

Rather than returning to Washington for more than a drive-by, which is what they did last Friday, to work on bipartisan legislation that might actually have a chance of becoming law, they chose to put together this partisan bill without consulting with the White House or the Senate. It doesn't address the crisis at hand, let alone the national security challenges that cannot be ignored.

The threats we faced before this virus ever reached our shores, both on land and in cyber space, have not gone away. From Beijing to Tehran, Moscow to Pyongyang, and in nearly every corner of the globe, our enemies and adversaries are watching and continuing their efforts to work against our interests. They are not going to politely pause their efforts so that we can focus our efforts on COVID-19; if anything, they are doubling their efforts. We cannot afford to be caught flat-footed.

Unfortunately, our counterintelligence and counterterrorism experts are already without some of the key tools they need in order to carry out their duties. In mid-March, the House refused to vote on a clean, short-term extension of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act under section 215 that would preserve these tools while we discuss long-term changes that might need to be made. Had they agreed at that time in mid-March, these authorities would still be intact through the end of this month. Instead, House Democrats chose to let those authorities lapse. For 2 months now, our counterintelligence and counterterrorism experts have been forced to work without some of the most powerful tools in their toolboxes.

Fortunately, last week, the Senate was able to pass a bill to reauthorize these critical provisions that expired in mid-March. This legislation would not only restore those authorities but

strengthen oversight of our Nation's intelligence activities at a time when it is desperately needed.

This bill passed the Senate with broad bipartisan support, but we are still waiting for the House to show up for work and to take it up and pass it. They are not coming back until the 27th, I think, of this month, after what can only aptly be described as a drive-by vote last Friday after not having been in town for 2 weeks and leaving promptly thereafter.

Now that they have completed their work on their \$3 trillion wish list, I hope we will see some action soon on things that will keep our country safe.

That is only part of the critical national security work we have done here in the Senate since we returned to Washington earlier this month.

I applaud Majority Leader McCONNELL for bringing us back. People are hearing all sorts of scary things on social media and cable news and even conscious disinformation campaigns by some of our adversaries about this virus and about how we ought to conduct ourselves. The best thing we can do as Members of the Senate is to demonstrate that with a little bit of personal responsibility and respect for others—maintaining social distancing, masking when you can—we can actually still function. We can show up for work like those healthcare workers, those law enforcement officers, and others I mentioned a moment ago.

One of the things our majority leader likes to say is that the Senate is in the personnel business. Today, we confirmed a fellow member of the Texas congressional delegation, Congressman JOHN RATCLIFFE, to be the Director of National Intelligence. I have known JOHN for about 10 years—or more maybe. He is prepared to continue the legacy of outstanding leadership we have come to expect and count on in our Director of National Intelligence. I am confident in his ability to serve as a leader and advocate for the intelligence professionals in the intelligence community.

We also confirmed other important nominees for critical positions, including the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, and the Department of Homeland Security. Just as the work of the country has waged on in the face of these challenges, so must our work.

The American people are not just counting on healthcare workers and first responders and farmers and deliverymen and grocery store employees to do their jobs—as important as they are. They are counting on us, too, not only to continue to respond to this pandemic—to stay nimble and adapt, to watch and listen and learn on how we can do better—but also to strengthen our national security, keep an eye on our national debt, and do it all on a bipartisan basis.

Like workers across America, Congress needs to show up, especially when

it isn't easy or convenient. This pandemic may have temporarily halted the daily functions of many people in this country, but it cannot stop the critical work of the U.S. Congress on behalf of the people we are privileged to represent.

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.

Ms. COLLINS. 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 remarks of Senator COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 3833 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

#### SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, a few announcements for the information of all of our colleagues.

When we reconvene after meeting with our constituents and monitoring the pandemic response in our States, the Senate will first continue to fill critical vacancies in the executive branch.

This week, we confirmed a new Director of National Intelligence. In just a moment, we will confirm a new Secretary of the Navy.

But our Democratic colleagues would not let the Senate fill several more posts over at the Pentagon. So, as has sadly become the norm over the last 3 years, the Senate will be spending floor time and multiple rollcall votes on each of the following: an Assistant Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

If you can believe this, I also had to file cloture on the incoming Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery. If we had a nickel for every time our Democratic colleagues have claimed that congressional oversight of the recovery programs was important, the CARES Act would have paid for itself. Yet Democrats blocked the confirmation of the special inspector general to look over the program this week.

The Senate will prepare to confirm these qualified people the hard way. Three years and counting of Democratic heel-dragging continues.

Of course, there will be plenty of legislative business before us as well. Senators will continue to monitor the pandemic response and discuss ways to help the Nation pivot toward reopening and economic recovery.

In addition, thanks to the hard work of Senators GARDNER and DAINES, we will be able to take up their bipartisan Great American Outdoors Act in the next work period. It is a milestone achievement to secure public lands and ensure their upkeep well into the future.

We will have the National Defense Authorization Act so that we do not let this pandemic take our eye off the ball of our Nation's security.

We will have much work to do in our home States next week. We will have much to do when we get back here after that. All around the Nation, Americans are taking precautions, but they are continuing to show up to do essential jobs and keep the Nation going. The Senate is not going to be any exception to showing up.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 654.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kenneth J. Braithwaite, of Pennsylvania, to be Secretary of the Navy.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Braithwaite nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be discharged from further consideration of PN1608 and PN1333, and the Senate proceed to the consideration of the nominations en bloc.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Christopher T. Hanson, of Michigan, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of five years expiring June 30, 2024; and David A. Wright, of South Carolina, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of five years expiring June 30, 2025.

There being no objection, the Committee on Environment and Public