

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING JOHN LEWIS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on Friday, July 17, after six decades as one of our Nation's most preeminent civil rights leaders, Congressman JOHN LEWIS—the conscience of the Congress—passed away at the age of 80. His trials and tribulations and, ultimately, his triumphs are well known to all of us.

At the ripe old age of 25, he led thousands of marchers across a bridge in Alabama. They risked their lives for their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote and, in doing so, shook the conscience of a nation and hastened the demise of Jim Crow. On that fateful Sunday, battered and bruised, his head dizzy and bleeding from the policeman's rod, JOHN LEWIS found the courage and the strength to reach the other side of that bridge, and he never stopped marching.

From the Freedom Rides to Selma, from his leadership of the SNCC, to his four decades in Congress, JOHN LEWIS never stopped marching. His actions as a young man helped change the trajectory of a nation and brought about the Voting Rights Act, and then JOHN LEWIS went to Congress and renewed that law again and again. He sat in against segregation at lunch counters in the Jim Crow South and, over 40 years later, led another sit-in on the House floor against gun violence. He spoke out for marriage equality long before it was popular. He challenged those who walked the corridors of power and then trod those corridors himself to bring quality healthcare, fair wages, and social justice to Georgians and Americans everywhere.

It is one thing, inflamed with the passion of youth, to join in brave endeavors and challenge the status quo. It is a good thing. Yet it is even beyond that to sustain that activism and vision and efforts and, yes, that "good trouble" he talked about getting into over the steady and persistent dedication of a lifetime. That is who JOHN LEWIS was deep in his soul—a man on a mission, who forcefully but gently led us all to do more and to do better, who loved his country so much that he risked his life and then spent his life trying to change it.

We are an imperfect nation, for sure, but we have a tremendous ability to reinvent ourselves. The story of America

is one of constant renewal, but that renewal has never been preordained. It is because Americans have pushed and prodded, used their voices and their votes to force our country to change over time to move ever closer to our highest ideals.

In the story of America, there are certain heroes whose moral clarity has shone out like a beacon for others to follow—North Stars who have inspired their fellow Americans to join them in the glorious work of bending the moral arc of the universe toward justice. JOHN LEWIS was one of those special heroes. He paved the road, lit the path, and pointed the way toward other bridges for us to cross. It was not by always being the loudest voice or the most intemperate; he led by the moral force of his example. Whether he would admit it or not, he inspired millions.

At President Obama's inauguration, JOHN asked the new President to sign a commemorative photo of the event. President Obama simply wrote: "Because of you, JOHN."

I don't know how many people must have said that over the years—"because of you, JOHN"—and I could never guess at the number who didn't even know to say it but whose lives were forever altered, whose dignity and freedom was made whole because of you, JOHN.

As a new generation of young people lift up their voices to proclaim "Black lives matter" and to fight for the Justice in Policing Act, the memory and legacy of JOHN LEWIS lives on in each and every one of them.

There are very few people who have changed the world for the better. JOHN LEWIS is one of them. His life is a reminder of all that is the best in us and that we are all capable of doing that best.

As we mourn his loss, I would ask my fellow Americans, including my colleagues in this body, to take up his mission. Many of the old enemies JOHN faced down have not been vanquished. Racial disparities persist and gnaw at the fabric of our society, and so does the police violence that met a young JOHN LEWIS and thousands of law-abiding Americans on that bridge over 50 years ago. The bridge he crossed is still named for the Confederate officer, not for the man who led a righteous movement for equality. The law he nearly died for has been gutted by the Supreme Court. Congress has the power to restore it, but only one political party seems interested in doing so.

At the 50th anniversary of the march on Selma, Congressman LEWIS acknowledged that his mission was not yet complete. "There is still work left to be done," he said. "We must use this moment to recommit ourselves to finish the work." He told us to "get out there and push and pull until we redeem the soul of America."

As we confront our turbulent present—a pernicious disease, vast economic hardship and inequality, the ancient evil of racial injustice—the loss

of JOHN LEWIS feels even more devastating and leaves many searching for answers. But JOHN LEWIS has already pointed the way. "There is still work left to be done," he said. "Finish the work. Get out there and push and pull until we redeem the soul of America."

May he forever rest in peace.

CORONAVIRUS

On another matter, it is rare we gather at the start of a work session with so much to do in so little time. As we speak, our country faces the greatest public health crisis since 1918 and the greatest economic challenge since the Great Depression.

Earlier this year, COVID exploded through the Northeast and the Pacific Northwest before finally subsiding. The economic pain of those first few months—over 40 million newly unemployed—was incomprehensible. Now, States throughout the South and West are experiencing a similar surge in cases, hospitalizations, and, sadly, deaths, as the economic pain deepens.

While all of us have watched in horror as this crisis unfolds, Senate Democrats have repeatedly called for action on crucial issues like aid for State and local and Tribal governments, hazard pay for essential workers, funding for coronavirus testing and tracing, rental assistance, and support for our Nation's childcare and education systems.

Each time we sought to pass legislation on these issues, Senate Republicans blocked our attempts. Senate Republicans said that we should, in the words of Leader McCONNELL, "hit the pause button." Our Republican friends said they wanted to "assess the conditions in the country" before providing any more relief.

Our House colleagues passed the Heroes Act over 60 days ago. It has been well over 3 months—3 long months—since we passed the CARES Act. And what has happened in those 3 months?

Three months ago, on April 20, the United States reported 775,000 total cases of COVID-19, with 42,000 deaths. Today, we have nearly 3.8 million confirmed cases and 140,000 deaths.

Just over 3 months ago, 30 million Americans had filed for unemployment claims. Today, that figure is nearly 50 million. More unemployment claims were filed in the last 17 weeks than in the entire 18-month stretch of the great recession.

Today, the State of Florida has more infections per week than China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, and the European Union combined.

That is what has happened while Senate Republicans have been "assessing the conditions in the country." That is what has been happening while Senate Republicans have hit the "pause" button. And now we know the real reason for Republican inaction, why they have hit the "pause" button: They can't come to agreement among themselves. The Nation is raging in crisis, and the Republican Party has been paralyzed—stopping and blocking action that

Democrats have sought to deal with the problem.

We may never know the true cost of Republican inaction over these past 3 months, but we know the time for waiting is over. We must consider another major COVID relief package this work period. Enhanced unemployment benefits expire at the end of the month, protections against evictions expire this week, and schools are preparing for the fall without the necessary guidance and resources to open safely. The country is crying out for relief. The needless delays, the partisan politics, and the infighting between the President and Senate and House Republicans have to stop.

But it seems that Leader MCCONNELL has still not received that message. The Republican leader has said he is writing the next bill behind the closed doors of his office and he will present it to his party first before dropping it on the Senate's lap.

This one-party approach is the same approach that delayed the passage of the CARES Act, delayed the passage of subsequent emergency relief legislation, and utterly failed on policing reform, where the Republican bill was opposed by 136 civil rights organizations. For Leader MCCONNELL to then get up and talk about that bill, when the people were marching for a much stronger bill—the Justice in Policing Act—when civil rights organizations were urging that we not move forward on that bill, is twisting history in a way that no one is going to believe and history will never accept.

Each time Congress passed COVID relief—all four times—we did it by coming together in a bipartisan fashion between our two parties, between our two Chambers. Leader MCCONNELL three times tried to force a partisan bill down the Senate's throat, and it backfired every time.

Leader MCCONNELL, it won't work this time either.

Leader MCCONNELL called for bipartisanship this morning. That is great.

But, Leader MCCONNELL, sitting in your own office, writing a bill, and demanding the other side support it, is not anyone's idea of bipartisanship.

Even worse, it appears that the Republican proposal is unlikely to meet the moment. From what we understand from press reports, McConnell's bill will prioritize corporate special interests over workers and Main Street businesses. It will fail to adequately address the worsening spread of the virus.

There are currently between 20 and 30 million unemployed Americans, and from all accounts, the Republican bill will not do nearly enough for them.

As Americans struggle to keep up with the rent, we are facing an avalanche of evictions. From all accounts, the Republican bill will not address that.

According to reports, the Republican bill will come up short on hazard pay for essential workers, aid to State and

local and Tribal governments, and investments in communities of color ravaged by the virus.

If the reports are accurate, the Republican bill will not come close—not even come close—to meeting the moment of this great crisis.

The truth is, we have a good product to start with—the Heroes Act. It has already passed the House.

By the way, Leader MCCONNELL, we need the House to make a law.

Unlike the bill Leader MCCONNELL is preparing, it actually matches the scale of the crisis and will put workers and small businesses and our health needs before special interests.

Just to give an example of where Republican priorities are right now, late last week, it was reported that the Trump administration wants to block tens of billions of dollars in the next COVID bill for States to conduct testing and contact tracing. Let me repeat that. When every expert says our lack of testing and contact tracing has led to the crisis being much greater in the United States than in most other countries, Trump wants to block that money for testing, for contact tracing. If past is prologue, our Republican colleagues—so afraid of offending Donald Trump even when they know he is wrong—will let him win the day or at least greatly whittle down the needs we have on tracing and testing.

This report came days after we heard that the administration ordered hospitals to stop reporting COVID data to the CDC and instead report them to State health departments or other portals more easily controlled by the White House. If there was ever positive proof that the President is more worried about his image and political interests than the health and safety of the American people, this is it—hiding data from the Centers for Disease Control. It is hard to believe.

This man is not a leader. You can't hide from the truth. The coronavirus will continue to ravage us whether or not the reports are public. But if the reports are public, we will all know more what to do.

Has not President Trump learned? Have not the Republican Senators learned that hiding from the truth just makes things worse? That is why so much of the blame, according to the American people, for what has happened falls on the shoulders of the President and the Republican Senators who follow him blindly and obeisantly.

This, unfortunately, is hardly the only example of the President's abject failure to lead our Nation through this awful crisis.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, during these last couple of weeks, like the rest of my colleagues, I was glad to get back home and spend some time talking to the men and women who are continuing to deal with the hurdles brought on by this pandemic.

As our battle against COVID-19 has waged on, I have looked to folks across different industries in Texas to provide us an honest readout about the challenges they are facing and whether what we have done for them is working. Over these last 3 months, again, like all of us, I have heard from medical professionals on the frontlines of this fight, researchers and scientists who are racing to find treatments and vaccines, small business owners just hanging on by the skin of their teeth trying to keep their businesses afloat and their employees' jobs intact, as well as countless other men and women who are doing everything in their power to support their neighbors and to protect their communities. Their feedback has been invaluable, as always, to the work of the Senate as we have worked to pass four coronavirus bills to support them during this challenging period.

As we prepare to work on the next response package, I was glad to hear from them about what they would like us to include in that. I have spoken with faculty and staff from community colleges across the State who are working to keep their students healthy while continuing to provide them with quality education. Like school leaders at all levels—from K-12 to other colleges and universities—they are constantly reevaluating the situation and preparing to make decisions about returning to onsite working and learning. I know these are difficult conversations that are happening across the country, and I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of incredible educators who are figuring out how to keep our children safe while continuing to give them the education they deserve and they need.

Last week, I spent some time hearing from mental health advocates who are fighting to ensure that Texans have the support and resources they need amid so much stress and uncertainty. Over the last several months, everyone in our country has experienced some substantial shift in their daily routine. No matter how major or minor these changes, combined with the stress that comes from living through a pandemic, this is all taking a toll on America's mental health.

I was glad to hear from more leaders with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute about how funding from the CARES Act has strengthened access to mental healthcare and how we can continue to support mental health services in Texas and across the country.

I also valued my time with Texas veterans and talked to them about how the CARES Act can help them and their families and their businesses. We

discussed the VA-specific funding that is strengthening access to healthcare for many veterans, and I appreciated the opportunity to hear more about some of the challenges they are facing and how we can do more in the Senate to support them.

Over the last few weeks, I have enjoyed connecting with these Texans virtually, but I was also glad to join Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue for in-person visits with some of the men and women keeping America fed and clothed during this time of increased need. This pandemic has dealt a serious blow to Texas agriculture, and I would dare say to the Presiding Officer; I am sure it is true in her State as well. From livestock to row crops, to dairy, producers have seen their markets shrink and nearly disappear.

Last Thursday, Secretary Perdue, Congressman JOHN CARTER, and I participated in a roundtable in Coupland, TX, to discuss the impact of the pandemic on Texas agriculture. The CARES Act provided \$16 billion in agricultural assistance, and so far Texans have received more than \$300 million to support our producers. I was glad to learn more about how this funding is helping them through these difficult times and learning more about what should be included in the next bill.

Secretary Perdue and I also had the chance to see how two incredible organizations in Texas are keeping families fed. First, we visited the Houston Food Bank, which is the largest food bank in the Nation. Under normal circumstances, the Houston Food Bank and its volunteers provide food to families across 18 counties in Southeast Texas. As the impact of COVID-19 has grown, so has the need for assistance, so much so that our National Guard troops have been lending a hand for months, but this week that will come to an end.

Compared to the same time last year, the Houston Food Bank has seen up to a 171-percent increase in the need for food assistance. In June alone, the Houston Food Bank delivered more than 27 million pounds of food. It was a pleasure to join Secretary Perdue in volunteering for this incredible organization and being able to thank the men and women who are keeping our families fed in person. We were also able to visit one of the homes of the USDA Meals-to-You Program, which provides nutritious meals for low-income students in rural areas across the Nation.

These are two incredible examples of how organizations throughout the State are supporting those who have been hardest hit by the pandemic. Support for our farmers, our ranchers, producers, food banks, and other organizations keeping Texas fed was a big part of the CARES Act, and I hope we will continue to strengthen that support with the next coronavirus response package.

Senator MURPHY and I introduced the SERVE and CARRY Act, which will provide additional opportunities to

help low-income and unemployed Texans access food during the pandemic. It would establish three new programs to not only help put food on the table of Texans in need but also support the farmers, restaurants, and their workers who are suffering as a result of the economic impact of this pandemic.

This legislation has been endorsed by the National and Texas Restaurant Associations, the California and Texas Food Banks, and a number of other anti-hunger organizations. It is time we put our restaurants and their employees back to work in feeding people, and let our men and women in uniform volunteering at the food banks go home to be with their families. The SERVE and CARRY Act will do just that, and I urge my colleagues to look at it and hopefully support it.

As we dive into discussions on the next coronavirus response package, the feedback and ideas provided by these Texans during this last 2 weeks could not have been more timely. I want to thank each of them for taking the time to share their ideas and feedback with me. I come back to Washington with fresh ideas, and I am eager to get to work so we can provide additional support for the Texans who have been impacted so dramatically by this virus.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Madam President, on another matter, before the Senate begins consideration of the next coronavirus response package, we will finish our work on the National Defense Authorization Act. If we are able to get this bill to the President's desk, which I hope we will, it will mark the 60th consecutive year in which Congress has passed bipartisan legislation to fund and support our Nation's military.

Each year, this is how we maintain our military bases, modernize our equipment, and invest in the next generation of weaponry. It is how we strengthen our relationships with old allies and forge new partnerships with new ones. It is how we take stock of the global threat landscape and ensure our troops have the training, equipment, and resources to counter even our most aggressive adversaries.

In recent years, China and Russia have emerged as two of the greatest threats to the world order. China, in particular, has been increasingly belligerent and well resourced and continues to demonstrate a lack of respect not only for the United States and our closest allies but for basic human rights.

A few weeks ago, China moved quickly and under a veil of secrecy to pass a law taking aim at the freedoms and autonomy of Hong Kong. What they are calling a national security law is nothing more than an effort to extinguish opposition to the Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong. They are using this law to silence protesters and prescribe harsh penalties for those who have the temerity to speak out against the Communist Party. While devastating, this is certainly not sur-

prising, given China's repeated human rights violations.

The Chinese Communist Party continues its disturbing ethnic cleansing campaign against the Uighur people. The so-called political reeducation camps are nothing more than detention camps where the Uighurs are tortured. Recent reporting found that the treatment in these camps often includes forced abortions, birth control, and sterilizations. I have spoken and will continue to speak out against the methods and motivations of the Chinese Government, operating through the Communist Party, to disrupt the world order.

China does not stand alone as one of the great threats facing our country today. Russia has become increasingly aggressive with its efforts to wreak chaos and sow discord. Since their attempts to interfere with the 2016 election, we have witnessed aggression after aggression by Russia. From Russia-backed mercenaries fighting in the Middle East to state-launched cyber attacks targeting banks and energy firms, to its hybrid warfare and assassination campaigns in Europe, Russia continues to undermine the United States and our allies.

Just last week, we learned that Russian hackers have attempted to steal coronavirus vaccine research. It is becoming increasingly clear that China and Russia adhere to no rules and no principles but their own. As the national defense strategy outlined, the threats posed by China and Russia are only growing more important by the day, and countering these threats requires a clear and concerted effort from Congress and the U.S. Government.

That is precisely why passing a strong Defense authorization bill is so important. This legislation prioritizes strategic competition with China and Russia and takes a strong approach to counter the threats posed by adversaries around the world. It will build on the progress we have made in recent years to strengthen our military and achieve peace through strength.

As we work to counter increasingly sophisticated adversaries around the world, I am glad Congress has taken the opportunity to deliver on one of our most critical responsibilities and pass the NDAA, which we will this week.

I thank Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED for working to get this bill passed with broad bipartisan support, and the provisions will prepare our military for the threats both of today and of tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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