

on the far left is sparking some truly extraordinary behavior among our Democratic colleagues.

Case in point, later today, we will vote on an amendment that was advertised in an opinion essay by the junior Senator from Vermont titled “Defund the Pentagon: The Liberal Case.” This is the junior Senator from Vermont—an essay titled “Defund the Pentagon: The Liberal Case.”

You heard correctly. We have moved on from defunding local police to defunding the U.S. Armed Forces. Maybe we will be sending social workers on overseas deployments, when they aren’t too busy responding to violent crimes. I am not sure. Senator SANDERS’ amendment would literally decimate the defense budget. It would rip 10 percent of it right out and pour the money into all the socialist fantasies—free rent, free college, free everything for everyone.

Now, in light of the long-held views of our colleague from Vermont, a proposal like this may not be particularly shocking. What is remarkable is that the Democratic leader—the leader of their caucus—felt pressured into endorsing it.

Let me say that again: The Democratic leader, who in almost every floor speech tries to accuse this administration of being too soft on America’s adversaries, wants to literally decimate our defense budget to finance a socialist spending spree.

This turns out to be something of a pattern. On the Democratic side, it sometimes seems like we have hawks when it comes to speeches but chickens when it comes time to make policy. When they are on the sidelines, there is plenty of bark, but whenever they actually call a shot, there is zero bite. Lots of bark, little bite; all hat, no cattle.

That is how we end up with spectacles like the Democratic leader playing as a Russian hawk, when about a decade ago, he was publicly arguing we should cozy up to Putin, send Russia billions of dollars of cash, pull the plug on NATO missile defense pacts that hurt Putin’s feelings, and concede to him, “Russia’s traditional role” in the Caspian Sea region.

That was the Democratic leader in 2008. Pay off Putin, and let him have his sphere of influence. And now today, he wants to decimate defense spending. But in between, he spent years insisting that Democrats want to get tough—want to get tough on foreign policy.

You see how the game works: sound like hawks on television, act like chickens when making policy.

Defense spending demonstrates our will to defend ourselves and our interests in a dangerous world. Keeping our Nation safe is our foremost constitutional duty. We cannot shirk it.

My colleagues who profess concern over Putin’s efforts to interfere in our politics, or Xi’s efforts to rewrite the rules of the international system, must

know that we will never—never be able to deter such behavior if we sell our own soldiers short and surrender our technological edge.

I assure you, Beijing and Moscow will be watching this vote. I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to reject this far-left fantasy. Defeat this amendment. Throughout the Cold War, we maintained a bipartisan commitment to American strength, American alliances, and a global peace built on American values. We will reinforce that stand when we sink—sink the reckless Sanders-Schumer amendment and again when we pass this bipartisan bill.

FREE SPEECH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on a final matter, since the spring, our Nation has engaged in important conversations about racial justice in policing.

Most people understand that continuing our Nation’s tremendous progress toward justice does not mean battling against American principles or American history. Progress means fulfilling our values, not attacking them.

Yet a group of radicals have latched onto this moment to say we should repudiate our country itself. We have watched as mobs have dragged statues of Washington, Jefferson, and Grant through the dirt. And, in parallel, inside many elite institutions, self-styled intellectuals say we should similarly discard the basic principles they fought for.

One of the key pillars of our Nation is the rule of law. In a civilized society, the same laws need to apply to everyone. The times our Nation has fallen short on this score, particularly for all the years when Black Americans were completely denied the equal protections of law, it has been to our great shame. This has been central to the cause of civil rights. There is a reason the 14th amendment insists on “the equal protection of the laws.”

Yet, in recent months, local leaders have violated this basic tenet. As riots rocked major cities, we saw politicians decline to act. They seem to fear far-left critique more than looting and chaos. And we saw the uneven application of other rules, like when mayors cheered on mass demonstrations but continued to prohibit religious gatherings. That is the rule of law in jeopardy. Of course, the last example is also a First Amendment issue. And the freedom of expression itself is another principle that has come under threat.

As I said a few weeks back, this goes deeper than just constitutional law. America has always prized the spirit of the First Amendment. We citizens must want to protect an open, civil discourse—a true marketplace of ideas. But, lately, the political left has embraced something totally different.

Today’s far left is not interested in winning debates with better arguments. They prefer to shut down de-

bate all together. They don’t try to win the contest. They just harangue the referees to stop the game. If they don’t like an op-ed, they want it unpublished. If they don’t like a tweet, they want to track down the author and get them fired. If they don’t like a tenured professor, they throw around Orwellian accusations that his or her ideas make them feel unsafe.

This hostile culture is getting results. According to one brand-new survey, it is only the far-left Americans who do not feel compelled to self-censor their views because of a hostile climate. Everyone but the left feels the threat.

And 50 percent of self-identified strong liberals say that simply contributing to the Republican Presidential candidate ought to be a fireable offense for a business leader. Let me say that again. Fifty percent of self-identified strong liberals say that simply contributing to the Republican Presidential candidate ought to be a fireable offense for a business leader. In this country?

We recently saw the New York Times apologize for publishing a straightforward policy argument from a U.S. Senator. Since, an editorial staffer resigned from the paper because even center-left opinions were not liberal enough and led to her constant harassment. That was a recent editorial staffer resigning from the New York Times because her center-left opinions were not liberal enough and led to her constant harassment at the times. You see, the safe spaces only go in one direction.

On elite campuses such as Princeton, we see faculty turning on their tenured colleagues and even administrators weighing in to chastise people with unpopular views.

We see online platforms such as Facebook threatening to ban political advertising altogether, chilling our democracy, because far-left employees and outside pressure groups berate them for letting the very speakers use their platform.

Even at a time when there is significant appetite in Congress to take a second look at the legal protections afforded to those supposedly neutral platforms, they still contemplate giving an angry minority of agitators a veto over Americans’ political speech.

The author Salman Rushdie, who was himself threatened with death for controversial speech, once said this:

Two things form the bedrock of any open society—freedom of expression and rule of law. If you don’t have those things, you don’t have a free country.

Free expression and the rule of law—exactly the two things we have seen eroded in recent months.

Rushdie recently signed an open letter with other intellectuals—many liberals—sounding the alarm on this cultural poison. “Editors are fired,” they wrote, “books are withdrawn . . . journalists are barred from writing on certain topics . . . professors are investigated . . . steadily narrow[ing] the

boundaries of what can be said without the threat of reprisal.”

Well, you can guess what happened next. The grievance industrial complex came after the letter itself. The authors were accused of advancing bigotry and the cycle of nonsense started all over again.

The United States of America needs free speech. We need free expression. And all of us, from all perspectives, need the courage to speak up and defend it.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 4049, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4049) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Inhofe amendment No. 2301, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Portman) amendment No. 2080 (to amendment No. 2301), to require an element in annual reports on cyber science and technology activities on work with academic consortia on high priority cybersecurity research activities in Department of Defense capabilities.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, Democrat Senators returned to Washington on Monday prepared to work in a bipartisan way on the next phase of coronavirus relief.

After stalling for months while COVID-19 surged in more than 40 States, Senate Republicans finally said that now—the end of July, more than 3 months after the CARES Act passed—would be the time for another emergency bill. But here we are. It is in the middle of the week, and the Republican Party is so disorganized, chaotic, and unprepared that they can barely cobble together a partisan bill in their own conference.

Indicative was Leader McConnell's speech. He rants and raves about the

New York Times and cancel culture, but there is not a word about COVID. People are ready to lose their unemployment benefits, to lose their apartments and be evicted. Local governments are laying off people because they don't have the dollars. We are in a national crisis.

We don't hear a word out of Leader McConnell as we are on the edge of so many cliffs. Instead, there is lots of talk about the New York Times and cancel culture. That may be fodder for the far right. That is not what America needs.

When Leader McConnell, at this crucial moment, can't even mention COVID-19, it shows what a knot the Republicans are tied in. The bottom line is this: The White House Chief of Staff said Republicans “were on their own 20 yard line” when it comes to their legislative proposal—their own 20-yard line, 2 months and a week after we passed the COVID 3 bill, after millions more Americans applied for unemployment, after many small businesses went under, and many more died and were hospitalized as COVID-19 rages in many Southern States. We are still on the 20-yard line? Where have the Republicans been?

I have never seen a political party in the middle of a crisis so tied in a knot that the majority leader can't even mention it in his speech and spends time ranting against favorite targets of the far right and can't come up with a proposal.

This is not a game. This isn't typical Republican dysfunction about whether or not they did or didn't see the President's last tweet. The disarray on the Republican side has real consequences. Americans will suffer unnecessary pain and uncertainty because of it.

The only reason there hasn't been another relief package in Congress already is due to this Republican incompetence and reckless delay. Even after all of these months, the White House and Senate Republicans are starkly divided about what to do. The White House is insisting on policies, like a payroll tax cut, that would do nothing to help millions of unemployed Americans and that many Senate Republicans don't even support. The Republicans can't even seem to agree on whether to provide any new aid for State and local governments or if the States should be able to more flexibly use the support we have already given.

A few of my friends on the other side of the aisle hardly want to spend any more money to help our country in this once-in-a-generation crisis because it might add to the national debt. Giant corporate tax cuts—\$1.5 trillion to \$2 trillion of them—are OK, but fighting the greatest public health crisis in a century and forestalling a depression is a bridge too far? Where are the priorities on the other side of the aisle? I guess they are for helping big corporate fat cats—wealthy people—but not average people who are hurting. That is the trouble with the Republican Party.

Seriously, there are only 3 weeks left until the August work period, and the Republicans are still in the opening phases of preparing their bill. We don't have time for this mess that the Republicans are in. The moratorium on evictions that we passed in the CARES Act expires in 2 days. The Wall Street Journal reports that nearly 12 million adults live in households that missed their last rent payments and that 23 million have little or no confidence in their ability to make the next ones.

Next week, the enhanced unemployment benefits we passed in the CARES Act will expire while 20 to 30 million Americans will still be without work. A recent study showed that those enhanced benefits prevented nearly 12 million Americans from slipping into poverty—12 million. Yet, because the Republicans can't get their act together, those benefits might expire next week.

Congress needs to act quickly. The Senate Republicans and the White House need to get on the same page, produce a proposal—not just drop it on the floor but start negotiations. Better yet, we could start negotiations on the Heroes Act, which already passed the House, and, unlike the developing Republican proposal, it would actually match the scale of this crisis.

Speaker Pelosi and I met yesterday with Chief of Staff Meadows and Secretary Mnuchin. Even with all of this chaos, we have had some indications about what the Republicans are trying to do in their bill. Over the weekend, we heard that the administration was trying to block additional funding for coronavirus testing and contact tracing. President Trump has also ended the CDC's data collection efforts, potentially risking access to data that public health experts so vitally need. So, when we met with Chief of Staff Meadows and Secretary Mnuchin, Speaker Pelosi and I told them to back off these counterproductive and dangerous ideas.

In addition, we will be sending a letter to the administration to demand answers on how data is being reported to the White House, as well as pushing for legislation in the upcoming bill to ensure that COVID-19 data is fully transparent and accessible without there being any interference from the administration.

We know Donald Trump likes to hide the truth. He thinks, when the truth doesn't come forward and when he muzzles government officials, that it changes things. It doesn't. The virus still rages and will rage unless we do something about it, not simply hide the statistics that show his depth in mendacity. We will make sure that those statistics are made public so all of America, including the President, will know how bad the situation is, because that is what we need—the truth to set us free and then to act on it. Let me repeat: If the administration refuses to reverse course, the Democrats will insist on data transparency in the next COVID relief bill.