

officials from the intelligence community, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security will brief us on foreign efforts to influence our politics and elections and how the administration is defending us. Every one of our colleagues should attend one of these sessions.

Sharing sensitive threat information with Congress is just one of the ways this administration has outperformed its predecessor. The intelligence community kept Congress much more closely informed about these threats in 2018 and now in 2020 than it did in the runup to 2016. I am sure these briefings will contain details that might seem ripe for cherry-picking and partisan leaks from both sides, but it is essential that Congress remain a place where the word “classified” actually means something. Leaking intelligence jeopardizes sources and methods.

If we learned anything from studying Russian interference in 2016, it is that our adversaries’ ultimate objective is to leave America more divided and less confident in our institutions. Members of Congress must take special care not to do Putin’s work for him.

Foreign adversaries have long sought to interfere in our politics and elections. That didn’t start in 2016, and it will not end in 2020, but this administration has put us in a far, far better position than in 2016. There is, simply, no comparison. The intelligence community is better aware of the threat. Government agencies are more transparent with Congress, the State and local jurisdictions that actually run elections, the private sector, and the public.

In 2016, the Obama-Biden administration had to lean on congressional leadership to act as a bridge to the States because the States so distrusted their Department of Homeland Security. Over the last 4 years, this administration’s DHS has developed its own deep relationship with State officials. In 2016, only 14 State or local jurisdictions had received high-tech Albert sensors to alert them to cyber intrusions. They are deployed in all 50 States today. There were 14 States that had them in 2016, and every State has them today. It was this administration that stood up the new Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center, with participation from more than 2,600 local jurisdictions and counting.

This administration has imposed real, hard costs on election interference and Russia’s other misdeeds: shuttering the Kremlin’s consulates in San Francisco and Seattle; kicking out intelligence officers; sanctioning oligarchs; helping European partners defend their own elections against Russia; and sending weapons to Ukraine and Georgia, which the Obama-Biden administration did not supply.

This administration has also confronted China for what the State Department described as “massive espionage and influence operations,” including closing Beijing’s consulate in Houston.

As the Democratic vice chairman on the Senate Intelligence Committee stated in 2016, “We were caught flat-footed.” Not anymore. Congress has provided more than \$800 million for States and localities to shore up election security and has passed a number of targeted new laws. Since foreign political interference is so often aimed at private sector platforms, like social media sites, we have encouraged those businesses to step up vigilance as well.

Through all of this, we have also carefully avoided things that look like quick fixes but which would undermine our own institutions. In the United States of America, it is the States and localities, not the Federal Government, that run elections—period. Our lack of a one-size-fits-all national system isn’t just constitutionally appropriate; it also acts as a further safeguard. We lack a single point of failure.

So, in closing, I urge all of our colleagues to attend these important briefings with an eye toward our real adversaries—not our fellow Americans but the foreign agents who love to see us at one another’s throats.

Back during the impeachment trial, a leading House Democrat asserted that, if President Trump were to win reelection, the people’s vote would be presumptively invalid.

Just a few days ago, it was reported that a leading Democratic strategist who was war-gaming this election decided to experiment with what would happen if Vice President Biden were to lose the election but were to, simply, fail to concede.

Once again, this kind of recklessness achieves our adversaries’ missions for them. So I urge my colleagues to listen to the civil servants who are defending our democracy. Let’s stay united, focus on the real dangers posed by foreign intelligence, and resist the urge to politicize these vital subjects.

HEALS ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, last week, the Senate Democratic leader brought an end to the additional Federal benefit for unemployed workers. The Republicans tried multiple times to extend the money, including at the same dollar level that our colleague himself said he wanted, but the Democratic leader blocked it all.

This is the dynamic on the Democratic side that killed the subject of police reform back in June, and it has now jeopardized more coronavirus relief as well. The Democratic leaders insist publicly that they want an outcome, but they work alone, behind closed doors, to ensure a bipartisan agreement is, actually, not reached.

We are about a week into the Speaker’s and the Democratic leader’s discussions with the administration—a week into the Democratic leadership’s cutting out all of their Members—all of them—cutting out all of their committees, and saying that only they can participate.

So how is it going?

Well, the Democratic leader is still refusing to let struggling Americans get another dime unless he gets a massive tax cut for the wealthy people in blue States that has nothing to do with the coronavirus. I am not kidding. This is his position. There is nothing for schools, nothing for kids, nothing for the PPP, nothing for the healthcare fight. Nobody gets a dime unless the Democratic leader gets a massive tax cut for the rich people in New York and California. That is what he is saying.

The Speaker of the House and the Democratic leader are continuing to say “our way or the highway” with the massive wish list for leftwing lobbyists they slapped together a few weeks ago and called a coronavirus bill—stimulus checks for illegal immigrants, diversity studies for the legal pot industry, and on and on.

When they put out this proposal, even the media and their fellow Democrats pronounced this thing dead on arrival.

Here was one report: “Neither this bill nor anything resembling it will ever become law—it’s a Democratic wish list filled up with all the party’s favored policies.”

Remember how Speaker PELOSI’s own Members felt about this absurd proposal: “Privately, several House Democrats concede their latest bill feels like little more than an effort to appease the most liberal members of the caucus.”

Even Democrats knew Speaker PELOSI’s bill was unserious.

But now, with the additional unemployment benefit disappearing, with families still struggling, they are going back to this unserious position and refusing to budge.

I can’t imagine this is how Democratic colleagues really all want this to play out.

In March, we built the CARES Act by Republicans and Democrats working together at the committee level. This time, again, Republicans introduced a serious proposal written by our own chairmen and our own Members. But this time, the Democratic leader has cut Senate Democrats out entirely. He has forbidden their committees from even talking to Republicans. He is digging in on a House messaging bill, written with no input from his own Members, that even House Democrats themselves called absurd.

These are not the tactics that would build a bipartisan result. These are not the tactics that will get more cash in Americans’ pockets, more help to the unemployed, more assistance for schools to reopen.

It is time for the Democratic leadership to get serious about making a law—making a law—for the American people.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Mark Wesley Menezes, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.

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 DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic Leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I just heard the Republican leader speak out on the floor. Leader MCCONNELL is busy giving partisan speeches while for the last 2½ hours Speaker PELOSI, myself, Secretary of Treasury Mnuchin, and Chief of Staff Meadows were sitting in a room working hard, trying to narrow our differences and come to an agreement. We all want to come to an agreement. We know the gravity of the situation demands it. We will continue to work and work at it.

We had a productive meeting. We narrowed some differences. Frankly, there are many that remain, but we must not give up. We must not resort to stark partisanship. We must come together and find a solution.

If I had to characterize the major difference between our side and the Republican side, we believe the gravity of the situation—the economic problems, the health problems—demands a bold, strong, vigorous solution by the Federal Government. We believe we must meet those needs. And it will cost money, but mark my words—if we spend less money now, it will cost us more money later.

We hear from our schools. They very much want to reopen. We hear from the parents of children. They very much want their kids to go back to school, but they want to do it safely. It costs a lot of dollars to make a school safe in this COVID crisis—not only the money for masks and PPE, but you can't sit two kids next to each other on a bus, so there have to be many more bus routes. Because some of the learning will be distant, you need hotspots, and a lot of the kids don't have them in their homes. You may need new ventilating systems because COVID demands it for a healthy classroom. You may need to convert gymnasiums and cafeterias into new classrooms. Teachers may have to teach longer, and we may even

need more teachers. These are very important things we need to do to open schools safely, but they demand more dollars. As we sat in a room today, we discussed our views as to how many dollars are needed.

The same thing with food safety—we Democrats believe that during this crisis, children and adults should not go hungry, and we proposed money to ensure that there are SNAP benefit increases to help people to feed themselves, that there is enough money to feed the kids who used to get school breakfasts and lunches, and that there is enough money at food banks and other places so they can feed their families. That costs money. The Senate Republican proposal here proposed a tax break for a three-martini lunch and a \$20 billion slush fund for big agribusiness but no money for these kids who need to be fed. That is a significant difference. There are many. There are many.

We Democrats believe strongly that we have to have free and fair elections and that the mail must be delivered in a timely way because so many more people are going to vote by mail. So many polling places need to be set up because, with COVID, you can't be close together.

There is a long list of things that are needed. The good news is, our Republican colleagues agree with a few of them, but some they don't agree with, and we are discussing why we think they need them, and they will counter with us in the room—Mnuchin and Meadows. But the discussion is necessary, the discussion is productive, and we will continue it.

Again, the anomaly of the Republican leader making a partisan speech on the floor while we—Speaker PELOSI, myself, Mnuchin, and Meadows—are trying to negotiate and move forward is really a contrast that I think most people see.

So let's keep moving forward. There is a real crisis here. There are people who are unemployed, and they don't deserve a pay cut as they go forward. There are small businesses that need help desperately. There are schools that have to open. There are State and local governments that must have funding. This is not an abstract concept; these are firefighters, our teachers, our healthcare workers, our bus-drivers and sanitation men and women. If the State and local governments don't get money, they are going to be laid off, and services will be much worse.

Again, we have a wide disparity on what kind of dollars and how to deal with treatment. It is our belief that this administration's program on treatment has been a failure, that we don't have enough treatment, and that we have to redouble our efforts to put more money into treatment.

These discussions are continuing because we hope we can reach an agreement. We will keep at it and at it and at it because the Nation demands a so-

lution—a bold, comprehensive solution that will slay this awful virus and its consequences once and for all.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF EL PASO SHOOTING

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, 1 year ago, a gunman stormed into an El Paso Walmart and opened fire. There were 46 people shot; 23, tragically, died; and the devastation in this tight-knit community was beyond imagination. The heartbreak and confusion quickly turned to rage when we learned that this out-of-town shooter was a white supremacist whose crime could only be described as domestic terrorism.

As my good friend El Paso Mayor Dee Margo has said many times over the last year, we will not let this evil define us. He wrote in an op-ed this weekend: "El Paso will not be known for tragedy but for our strength and grace in the midst of tragedy."

That strength comes to mind when I reflect on this terrible anniversary. When I visited El Paso the day after the shooting, I saw the makeshift memorial that was created to honor those who died. On that first day, the collection of photos, flowers, and mementos was relatively small—maybe just a few feet wide—but by the time I came back 3 days later, it had grown to over half a mile. This massive memorial, the long line of folks waiting to donate blood, the generous donations made to support the victims and their families, these were the real reminders of the power and resilience of the El Paso community.

As we remember this anniversary amidst a pandemic, there will not be groups of strangers hugging, crying, or holding hands like I witnessed in the days following the shooting. Instead, we will have socially distanced memorials, like the vigil held yesterday, that will allow El Pasoans once again to prove that hate will not win.

Together, we will remember the 23 lives which were lost 1 year ago, as well as those who were wounded, and we stand in solidarity with El Paso, a border community that has looked hate in the eye and unequivocally chosen strength, grace, and love for one another.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, with August here and the start of school just around the corner, school districts, colleges, and universities in Texas and Iowa and everywhere else are in the process of making very difficult decisions about how to begin the school year. The teachers, the professors, the faculty, and the administration of these schools