

All of the Senate's thoughts and prayers are with our distinguished colleague, who reported yesterday evening that he still feels fine. We hope that will remain the case. Certainly, if any Member of this body has the good health and stamina to kick the virus to the curb, it is Senator GRASSLEY.

So we will look forward to seeing him soon.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, now on an entirely different matter, Senate Republicans have spent months—months—trying to get another bipartisan rescue package passed and signed into law for the American people.

For months, our position has been entirely consistent. We want to reach agreement on all the areas where compromise is well within reach, send hundreds of billions of dollars to urgent and uncontroversial programs, and let Washington argue over the rest later.

There is no reason why doing right by struggling families should wait until we resolve every difference on every issue. But, unfortunately, both Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leader have been equally consistent, and they don't think Congress should do anything at all—anything, unless they get to cash out a far-left ideological wish list, including things with zero relationship to the present crisis.

They have continued to insist that Congress must pass their so-called Heroes Act or do nothing at all.

The problem is that their proposal is a multitrillion-dollar laughingstock that never had a chance of becoming law.

Let's recall what Speaker PELOSI's own Members said when she first released this proposal:

I think the Heroes Act went too far. It got loaded up with a bunch of political wish list things.

This is Washington politics at its worst . . . a partisan wish list.

It's a middle finger to the American people.

These are all reactions of House Democrats. And no wonder, because here are just some of the demands the Speaker will not drop: a massive tax cut specifically for wealthy people in blue States; a colossal slush fund for consistently mismanaged State and city governments, with no linkage to actual pandemic needs.

These things are included, but they managed to completely leave out—listen to this—leave out entirely any new funding for a second round of the job-saving Paycheck Protection Program—something we made sure to include in every Republican offering. They want to spend \$3 trillion but couldn't find one cent—one cent—of new money for the job-saving program that has kept small businesses afloat from coast to coast.

Oh, and by the way, because the far-left decided in the summertime they didn't much like the men and women of law enforcement anymore, between the first and second version of this propo-

posal, the Speaker literally took out—listen to this—took out hundreds of millions of dollars for hiring, equipping, and training local law enforcement. I guess by their account, the police don't count as "Heroes" any longer.

By playing all-or-nothing hardball with a proposal this radical, our colleagues have thus far guaranteed that American workers and families get nothing at all.

The pace of our economic recovery and the promise of vaccines on the horizon give us reasons for major hope, but we are nowhere near—nowhere near—out of the woods yet. Vaccines will need to be distributed nationwide and quickly. Republicans' targeted proposal provided billions of dollars to make that happen, but Democrats blocked it.

The PPP has helped millions of American workers and small businesses hang on thus far, but now, in the home stretch, they need more help. Republicans' targeted proposal would have renewed that lifeline for the hardest hit small businesses, but again, Democrats blocked it.

So think about it. We moved Heaven and Earth and spent mountains of money to help workers keep their jobs and help small businesses keep the lights on from the springtime all the way up to now, but now, after all that, with the end seemingly in sight, we might lose the hardest hit small businesses in the home stretch because Democrats have refused—refused—to let us continue helping. We kept family businesses alive for months and months, only to see some of them fail now, with vaccines on the horizon, because Democrats have blocked another round of PPP.

Well, it is not too late to make a difference. Republicans stand ready to deliver this urgent aid. Let's fund all the programs where there is not even real disagreement—just the ones where there is no disagreement—and let's do it now. We just need Democrats to finally get serious about this.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

2020 ELECTIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, let me join all of my colleagues in wishing the Senate pro tempore, the senior Senator from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, a speedy and quick recovery. We know he is a strong man, and we have every confidence he will beat this back, as he has beaten many other adversities back in the past.

Now, it has been nearly 2 weeks since every major news network called the Presidential election for Joe Biden. Preparations for the incoming Biden administration are well under way, and still—still—President Trump refuses to accept reality.

This morning brought a fresh series of Presidential delusions on Twitter. President Trump declared—sometimes in capital letters—that the election was a fraud, a joke, and even unconstitutional. Imagine that, an unconstitutional election. That is because Trump's ego is such, when he doesn't win, everything is wrong, false, et cetera.

President Trump, get out of your bubble. You lost. Joe Biden will be sworn in as the next President of the United States on January 20. There is nothing you can do to stop it. Get out of the bubble and work on a transition.

Last night, continuing President Trump's outrageous and dishonest behavior, President Trump fired our country's chief election security officer, Chris Krebs, an honorable public servant, because he confirmed that our elections were secure. This reinforced the No. 1 rule of working for Donald Trump: You can never tell the truth.

But no matter whom he fires or how many times he tweets, President Trump cannot change reality. He lost the Presidential election. Joe Biden will be the next President of the United States, and it is time for President Trump to quit the nonsense, admit the truth, and move on. Anytime my Republican colleagues want to tell him that would be fine by me.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, now, on another matter entirely, the country is facing the worst phase of the pandemic. As the number of new infections and hospitalizations threaten, once again, to overwhelm the capacity of our healthcare system, we have to make sure that our nurses and doctors and all of our healthcare professionals have the PPE they need to protect themselves and their patients safely.

We all remember the early days of the crisis, when healthcare professionals in some parts of the country were forced to jury-rig masks and gloves from spare clothing and bits of string. In my home State of New York, nursing homes alone were burning through 12 million pieces of PPE a week during the height of the pandemic in April. The recent surge in cases might bring us all back to or beyond the peak levels we saw earlier this year. We must do everything—everything—in our power to avoid a repeat of the widespread PPE shortages.

So I am joining Senators MURRAY, PETERS, BALDWIN, and MURPHY to introduce new legislation that authorizes \$10 billion for the Strategic National Stockpile to purchase large quantities of PPE, including N95 respirators, gloves, gowns, face masks, face shields, and surgical masks.

The N95 masks don't need to be worn by every American on a daily basis, but

they provide a much higher degree of protection to our healthcare professionals and frontline workers who are exposed to the virus more regularly. That is why we need the Defense Production Act and get those N95 masks in the hands of any healthcare professional who needs it.

We are calling, once again, for the Defense Production Act, grossly underutilized by the current administration, to be invoked in order to expand industrial capacity to meet surging demand. Our bill will create a \$1 billion grant program for small business to retool their facilities to assist in the production of PPE.

For months, our communities have been held together by the quiet heroism of nurses, doctors, caregivers, and essential workers. We call them frontline workers because they are like our soldiers, putting their own lives at risk to protect the lives of others. And just as we would never send our troops into battle without helmets or bulletproof vests, we must never leave our frontline workers to battle diseases without the N95 masks they need, as well as other PPE like gloves and gowns that serve as their armor.

So, our bill, the Protect our Heroes Act of 2020, should be part of the bipartisan discussion on the next COVID relief bill. Our bill will allow frontline workers to get the N95 masks they need and deserve. We urge bipartisan support for this proposal. The truth is, there should be a great urgency to get something done here in Congress to defeat the virus, save American lives, and forestall even greater pain for our workers and businesses.

Speaker PELOSI and I had negotiated for months, in good faith, with the Trump administration to find an agreement on a COVID relief bill. Democrats lowered our proposal by \$1.2 trillion to move closer to our Republican counterparts. Meanwhile, Leader MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans refuse to take part in those negotiations. Instead, the Republican leader has asked the Senate to accept several inadequate partisan proposals. In every version of the COVID relief legislation that the Republican majority has put on the floor, there have been poison pills included to ensure the bill will fail.

Many Members of the Republican Senate caucus want to spend no dollars, so Leader MCCONNELL has to twist himself in pretzels to put any bill on the floor, and the only way he can get support of his caucus is to put poison pills in so he can wink at them and say: Hey, this won't pass.

So Senate Republicans are seeing this pandemic as an opportunity to try and make it harder to hold corporations accountable when they put their workers at risk. I heard the Republican leader this morning give the same long, tired speech that pretends as if Democrats haven't been trying to negotiate with our colleagues and that we haven't been trying over and over again to get our Republican colleagues to talk with us.

The leader's position hasn't changed over the past few months. He said it again this morning. It is the Republican proposal or nothing at all. I would remind the Republican leader that the House has passed a bill. The Senate has not, and the only Senate bill that the leader brings to the floor gets zero Democratic support. And yet the Republican leader's position is, if you don't take my bill, get nothing, when he knows his bill can't pass the Senate and can't pass the House. It is a feeble position, as the pandemic rages, and it just doesn't fly.

We Democrats lowered our proposal by over \$1 trillion to move closer in negotiations, and what did Senate Republicans do? They didn't move in our direction. They moved further away by cutting their already inadequate proposal in half, making compromise even more difficult.

So, look, we need to reset the conversation here. The country is in desperate straits, maybe more desperate than it has ever been in this crisis. The consensus view of economists and experts is that the country requires a substantial injection of aid: meaningful relief to our schools, small businesses, the unemployed, State and local governments, our healthcare system, among other things. These are not frivolous. These are not someone's whim. These are the desperate needs of people crying out for help. Almost none of them were covered adequately in the Republican leader's bill.

This morning, New York's MTA announced a cut to subways and buses—a flashing warning sign about how desperately we need transit relief. We are going to fight hard for transit relief. None of it is in Leader MCCONNELL's bill.

The two vaccines in development must be produced and distributed on a massive scale, and they must reach underserved and minority communities. The House Heroes bill goes much further in getting that done than the McConnell bill. It is time for our two parties to sit down together and hash out a compromise on a bill that meets the needs of the American people. We have been going around in circles—the Republican leader, in particular—for far too long with nothing new added to the conversation.

So Speaker PELOSI and I have formally invited the Republican leader and our Senate Republican colleagues to join us in bipartisan talks. Our colleagues face a simple choice: They can put the election behind them and work across the aisle to get something done or they can remain in their partisan corner defending the poisonous lies of a flailing President refusing to do the people's desperately needed business.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip is recognized. Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I think it is important to point out that as we discuss the issue of coronavirus relief, that Senate Republicans have

now not once but twice brought a bill to the floor of the U.S. Senate that enjoyed the support of a majority of U.S. Senators. There were 52 Senators who voted for coronavirus relief not once but twice—once in September and once in October. Not a single Democrat voted for it.

The Democratic leader was just talking about the House of Representatives, where they passed a bill. Yes, they passed a bill. It didn't have a single Republican on it. It was a massive multitrillion-dollar bill, liberal wish list, that included all kinds of things like bailouts for blue States the taxpayers would have to finance, including tax cuts for millionaires in places like New York and California, and left a lot of the American people who are really suffering from the coronavirus holding the bag.

We believe that there are things that need to be done, and just because we can't do everything that the Democrats want to do on their liberal wish list, that we should do something, and Republicans came together behind a bill. They increased the support above and beyond what unemployed workers would normally get through unemployment insurance—increased that benefit by \$300 a week. It also provided a significant amount of funding for schools as they continue to deal with the cost of trying to stay open safely. It put significant investments into vaccines, testings, therapeutics, support for providers, and all the things that will help on the healthcare front to defeat this virus. And, of course, it provided infusion of additional dollars for the Paycheck Protection Program, which has been so successful in assisting our small businesses as they weather and survive this crisis to try and keep their workers employed and keep their businesses up and operating and keep our economy operating in this country.

Those are all things—all things—for which there is bipartisan support and on which there should be votes, not just among Republicans in the Senate but among Democrats as well, but unfortunately the Democrats have opted not to sit down in a reasonable way and come up with a reasonable proposal.

The bill that came over from the House of Representatives that they continue to tout is something that would never pass in the Senate, and it would never get signed into law.

The bill that Senate Republicans passed—I shouldn't say passed but got majority support for here in the Senate not once but twice—would, in fact, get signed into law and is something that could pass here in the Senate and I believe in the House of Representatives, too, because they are all things that enjoy broad bipartisan support.

The difference is that our bill was targeted to those areas which need the support the most. It was fiscally responsible, recognizing that we have a \$26 trillion debt growing by the day and that every dollar we spend is a borrowed dollar from our children and grandchildren.

It is so important that when we do this, we do this in a way that is thoughtful, deliberative, reasonable, and with an eye toward making sure we are getting a good return for the American taxpayer and delivering assistance in a targeted way to those folks who need it the most—unemployed workers; those who are employed; the small businesses that employ them; the healthcare frontline workers who are out there every day fighting this fight against this virus, making sure they have the PPE to protect them—and then, of course, the important investments we are making in vaccines and therapeutics and testing and all the things that will help defeat this; money for schools, colleges, universities, elementary and high school students and faculty and administration—those who are trying to keep our kids in school, keep them educated by dealing with a lot of additional costs related to providing that education in a safe way.

Those are all things on which there is broad bipartisan agreement. We could pass it today. We could pass it today in the Senate, but the Democrats insist on a liberal wish list, which includes a multitrillion-dollar proposal—multitrillion-dollar proposal—with a liberal wish list, an agenda that in many cases has nothing to do with combating or fighting the coronavirus but simply is an attempt to deliver on a liberal agenda for their political base. So let's just make that point very clearly here when we talk about what we should be doing.

I believe what we should be doing is sitting down and working on a reasonable bill, a targeted bill, a fiscally responsible bill. Republicans have been more than willing to do that and more than willing to compromise, but the Democrats both in the House and the Senate continue to insist upon a multitrillion-dollar bill that consists, again, of a bunch of liberal wish list items—taxpayer bailouts for blue States, tax cuts for millionaires across this country, putting money into diversity studies on cannabis—instead of the targeted things, the things that are really going to be necessary to help the American people and our economy recover from the coronavirus.

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY

Madam President, as I begin today, I just want to say that our thoughts are with Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY after his coronavirus diagnosis. It was a strange day in the Senate yesterday with CHUCK GRASSLEY not voting, because he broke a 27-year-long streak of showing up for every single vote. We are praying for his swift recovery and his speedy return to the Senate.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Madam President, a couple of weeks ago, we confirmed one of the most qualified Supreme Court Justices in living memory. This week, we are confirming more district court judges, bringing the total number of judges we have confirmed over the last 4 years to nearly 230.

Confirming good judges is one of the most important responsibilities that we have as Senators, and it is a responsibility that I take very seriously. In fact, one of the main reasons I was first elected to the Senate was to make sure that outstanding judicial nominees were confirmed to the Federal bench.

It is hard to imagine now, but confirming judges used to be a pretty bipartisan affair. Presidents of both parties generally got the majority of their judicial nominees confirmed to the bench. But all of that changed back in the early 2000s.

After President George W. Bush's election, Democrats decided that the President's judicial nominees might not deliver the results that Democrats wanted, and so they decided to adopt a new strategy: blocking judicial nominees on a regular basis. That became the routine here in the Senate.

I was one of the many Americans who were upset by the blockade of impressive, well-qualified nominees, and it was one of the main reasons that I ran for the Senate in 2004. I promised South Dakotans that if they elected me, I would help put outstanding, impartial judges on the bench. I am proud to have delivered on that promise.

The list of outstanding judicial nominees we have confirmed over the past 4 years is long. We have confirmed brilliant, accomplished men and women with superb qualifications, but most importantly, we have confirmed men and women who understand the proper role of a judge, who know that the job of a judge is to interpret the law, not make the law, to call balls and strikes, not to rewrite rules of the game.

It is here that Republican judicial philosophy diverges from the judicial philosophy of a lot of Democrats. Republicans believe that the job of a judge is to look at the law and the Constitution and then rule based on how those things apply to the facts in a particular case. Judges, we believe, should leave their politics and their personal opinions at the courtroom door and base their opinions solely on what the law and the Constitution say.

For Democrats, on the other hand, what matters most is not how judges reach their conclusion, not whether they apply the law, but what outcomes they deliver. If a judge can deliver the right outcome by following the plain meaning of the law, then great, but if she can't, then Democrats want a judge to reach beyond the plain meaning of the statute to deliver what Democrats see as an appropriate result.

Then-Presidential candidate Barack Obama back in 2007 said:

[What you've got to look at is, what is in the justice's heart? What's their broader vision of what America should be?

Well, that is a very dangerous standard. It is not the job of a judge to impose his or her "broader vision of what America should be"; it is the job of a judge to determine what the law says and then apply the law to the particular case before him.

President Obama famously said that he wanted judges with empathy. Well, that is all very well until you are a party in a case, and you have the law on your side, but the judge empathizes with the opposing party. What happens then?

The only way to preserve the rule of law in this country is to confirm judges who understand that their allegiance must be to the law and to the Constitution, not to their personal feelings, their personal beliefs, their political beliefs, or their "broader vision of what America should be." Otherwise, you replace the rule of law with the rule of a bunch of individual judges.

So I am very thankful that we have confirmed so many judges who understand that the job of a judge is to apply the law, not make it, and who won't try to usurp the role of Congress by legislating from the Federal bench. I thank the majority leader for making judicial confirmations such a priority. I look forward to confirming more outstanding judicial nominees this week.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Vaden nomination be waived.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Stephen A. Vaden, of Tennessee, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade.

Mitch McConnell, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Thom Tillis, John Thune, Mike Crapo, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Kevin Cramer, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, Todd Young, John Boozman, David Perdue, James E. Risch, Lindsey Graham, Roger F. Wicker.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Stephen A. Vaden, of Tennessee, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade, shall be brought to a close?