

foreign leaders. As the foreign policy gravitational pull rightly moved to the Indo-Pacific in recent years, CORY brought the top policymakers, human rights defenders, and government witnesses to the fourth floor of the Dirksen Senate Office Building—not exactly the Diplomatic Room of the White House.

In the 115th Congress, we held 11 hearings. It was a constant beat of meetings and hearings that CORY would be leading. I was always honored to be partnered with him in organizing those efforts.

CORY grew up on a farm, so it is no wonder that he is a workhorse. Each time he gaveled in a hearing, he was professional, prepared, good-humored. And he, on more than a few occasions, allowed particularly verbose Senators to blow past their allotted time.

Nowhere did I enjoy our work together more than in the drafting and the ultimate passage of the landmark Asia Reassurance Initiative Act. Our bill, which is now the law of the land, adopts a long-term U.S. strategy for the most consequential region in the world, the Indo-Pacific. It was a credit to our foreign policy staffs—led by Igor in CORY's staff and Zack in mine—that we were able to get it past the finish line.

A fully resourced ARIA will ensure that the United States will remain a Pacific power. Investments through ARIA offer a critical counterweight to China by helping our partners in the region build defenses and defend democracy and the rule of law.

But CORY understood passage of a law alone does not equate to the implementation of policy. When ARIA was signed into law, he and I convened a series of hearings to ensure the Departments of Defense and State and the USAID were putting resources to the challenge.

The Asia-Pacific is home to 60 percent of the world's population. This fact and the wide geographic scope of the region means that we need to respond nimbly to the latest international crisis of the day.

When North Korea policy vacillated between “fire and fury” and detente, he used the subcommittee to provide critical oversight.

When China and Hong Kong authorities turned to batons and tear gas in a futile attempt to end democratic protests, he hosted one of the architects of the student-powered Umbrella Movement, Nathan Law.

When just this past year, some wished to shake down our Japanese and South Korean allies, we partnered on two resolutions, which reaffirmed our ironclad relationships to both allies.

In his farewell address, CORY said that the pillars of the Senate Chamber are principles shared by all Americans. They are immutable. CORY, it was a pleasure to work with you these past years to also strengthen the pillars of U.S. foreign policy, standing up for human rights, our allies, and the rule of law around the world.

I hope that this son of Yuma, CO, is not finished with public service yet. I am grateful for what we accomplished together on the Asia Subcommittee and even more grateful for our friendship.

My best to Jaime and your wonderful family and to you, my friend.

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

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

#### PREVENT GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS ACT

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, this all feels strangely familiar. It is the middle of December. We are facing a government shutdown, arguing behind the scenes over the final details, discussing whether we are going to do a short-term CR, wondering what is going to happen. Everyone has this sense that if we don't get the bill done by tomorrow, then we are going to end up in shutdown and all the problems that causes.

Senator HASSAN and I stand in the back and hold up our hands and say: In February of last year, we proposed a solution to this that fits this exact scenario to keep us from holding Federal workers and all of our agencies in harm's way.

The ending government shutdowns bill is designed for this moment. For whatever reason, we have not been able to agree to pass it. It is a process document. It doesn't solve all of the policy issues we have. We have real policy differences, but we should not have process differences at moments like this. It is not good for the American people. It is not good for the U.S. Senate or the U.S. Congress to stand at the precipice of a shutdown and to say: Maybe we go over; maybe we don't. Maybe we have a short-term continuing resolution; maybe we pass the 12 appropriations bills. We shouldn't ever get to that moment.

Our simple idea is not a partisan idea. Senator HASSAN and I released a simple, straightforward idea. You get to the end of the fiscal year, whenever that may be, and if we have not finished all the appropriations work, we continue working until it gets done. An automatic continuing resolution kicks in so that no Federal worker is worried that they are going to have furloughs right before Christmas; no agency is panicked about what happens next and who do I have to furlough and who do I have to keep and who is essential and who is nonessential. None of that happens. None of that waste occurs. We continue debating until we resolve the issue. That is all that it is.

We have 12 appropriations bills that are not done. Painfully, in this year of COVID, there have been only 22 total appropriations hearings in 12 months—

22. That is 12 appropriations committees, 12 months, only 22 hearings total for all of them.

We have not completed the appropriations work on time, so now we are struggling with the what-ifs. Senator HASSAN and I have a straightforward idea. Let's pass the end government shutdowns bill. Let's continue our negotiations so we don't have to be in the shadow of a shutdown again next year.

It is doable. It shouldn't be controversial. It should be obvious. When we get to a time period like this, if we are not complete, we keep working until it is done. In the meantime, we don't leave. It is the exact statement I have heard from everybody in the Chamber so far today. We need to stay until it is done. I agree. That should be the process every time we get to this moment. We stay until the work gets done. Our bill just mandates that, and it keeps us from ever having to say the word “shutdown” again.

So I would encourage this body again, as I did all of last year, as I did all of this year: Let's end government shutdowns. Let's keep debating the policy. We have differences. We know that. But let's end the thought of government shutdowns.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, 2020 has been a year of immense challenges. We are in the middle of an unprecedented economic and public health crisis. Small businesses have been forced to shutter or are barely staying afloat. Workers are out of jobs through no fault of their own, and folks are stressed about feeding their families and keeping a roof over their heads. Healthcare workers are exhausted—pressed to their breaking points from treating patients with COVID.

But, thankfully, there is light at the end of the tunnel. With the recent FDA vaccine emergency use authorization, Michiganians and Americans are finally starting to receive much needed reinforcements to combat and to control this virus.

Although there is light at the end of the tunnel, we know the next 2 or 3 months or more are going to be difficult. We cannot let our guard down. We must continue to wear a mask, practice social distancing, and wash our hands. We all can—and we must—play an important role in defeating this virus, and we can do that if we work together.

Working together is the key to get through this pandemic. We know what happens when we work together here in this Chamber. Early on in this pandemic, we worked together to pass the CARES Act, which provided vital resources and support to keep families and workers afloat.

We worked together to pass additional aid for small businesses, for testing, for healthcare providers, and for hospitals. And, right now, we need to

once again come together and work together to pass another round of help. We have done it before, and we did it when case counts were far lower than they are now.

We need to summon the same sense of urgency, and we must come together at the end of this week and pass meaningful bipartisan and comprehensive COVID relief. We must prove to the American people that bipartisan negotiation is not a relic of the past.

As I talk to Michiganians each and every day, the message is very clear. They want us to put partisan politics aside and solve the very real challenges confronting our country.

Finding common ground and bringing people together has always been my approach to serving Michigan and the people of this Nation. This past year, I am proud to say, we worked together to advance legislation on priorities that not only addressed the pandemic but also tackled issues facing Michiganians and people across this country each and every day.

On a bipartisan basis, we have been able to pass legislation out of Congress on a number of topics, whether it has been expanding apprenticeship opportunities for veterans, closing loopholes that pose a threat to our national security, saving taxpayer dollars, protecting the Great Lakes, which is one of our Nation's most precious natural resources, hiring more agricultural inspectors at our Nation's ports of entry, or improving the Department of Veterans Affairs caregiver program.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their partnership with me in advancing these priorities. I know there is no shortage of differences among us, but when we put personal politics aside and focus on addressing the problem at hand, I know we can get results.

As we enter this next session of Congress, I am hopeful that we can build on some of the progress we have made. Whether it is supporting small businesses, lowering prescription drug costs, ensuring our Nation remains a global leader in innovation, or getting through this public health and economic crisis, there is much more that can be done in the next Congress when we are all willing to reach across the aisle to find lasting solutions.

Two years ago, I delivered George Washington's Farewell Address on the Senate floor. It is an annual tradition here in the Senate. In that address, President Washington warned of the dangers of tribalism and political polarization in our country. We cannot forget President Washington's message, particularly during these uncertain and daunting times. We cannot let polarization prevent us from doing the people's work. Let us build on that spirit of bipartisanship. Let us work together to get things done. Our constituents demand it.

This week, we can again work in a bipartisan way to pass a COVID relief

bill that makes a difference to everyone suffering from this pandemic.

I yield the floor.

#### VOTE ON SOMERS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Somers nomination?

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 43, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 274 Ex.)

#### YEAS—52

Alexander	Graham	Romney
Barraso	Grassley	Rounds
Blackburn	Hawley	Rubio
Blunt	Hoeven	Sasse
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Braun	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Burr	Johnson	Shelby
Capito	Kelly	Sinema
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sullivan
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	McConnell	Tillis
Cramer	Moran	Toomey
Crapo	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Cruz	Paul	Wicker
Daines	Portman	Young
Ernst	Risch	
Gardner	Roberts	

#### NAYS—43

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Jones	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Udall
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Wyden
Feinstein	Murray	
Gillibrand	Peters	

#### NOT VOTING—5

Enzi	Harris	Perdue
Fischer	Loeffler	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in

a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am here on the floor today to talk again about the need for us to pass a legislative package, which I would call an emergency package, to deal with our COVID-19 crisis we have in this country.

As we talk today on the floor of the Senate, there are negotiators working busily in a room nearby to try to come up with that package, and that is a good thing. I know they have run into some roadblocks, at least so I have been told. We need to work through those roadblocks. They are relatively small compared to the importance of the overall mission of helping the people we represent, helping those small businesses, helping those hospitals, helping those families who find themselves without a paycheck through no fault of their own. And my hope is that we can get there.

The legislation that is being looked at today, which may be part of a larger package that we will vote on either tomorrow or the next day, is, as I understand it, informed by work that a bipartisan group of us did over the past several weeks. I appreciate my colleagues so much. I see Senator MURKOWSKI is here on the floor today. She was one of those people. Senator MANCHIN was one of the people to help organize it. In fact, I think the first meeting was because LISA MURKOWSKI invited people to have pizza at her place. And that resulted in a very positive interaction between Democrats and Republicans on a lot of detail, a lot of specific issues, to be able to put together a package that will help our country right now to work through this crisis.

I wish I could say that things are better. But when I look at my own home State of Ohio, I see just the opposite. In fact, over the past few weeks, we have had weekly cases that have increased, not decreased. Our number of daily new cases is averaging around 10,000 a day now every day. That is double what it was just a month ago. At least in my State, the coronavirus crisis has increased, not decreased.

By the same token, the economic crisis that is a result of the COVID-19 crisis has continued to grow. We have seen people who have lost their jobs because their restaurant doesn't have any business, not because there is a government edict; although, there are in some States. Some States have said you have to shut down. Some States have gone so far as to say you have to shut down outdoor dining, not just indoor dining. Of course, those people have lost their jobs.

In many cases, it is just because the virus is so prevalent, people aren't