

the Trump campaign and its allies have brought no fewer than 13 lawsuits and lost every single one, many with Republican judges ruling. There have been only three individuals—three—charged with voter fraud in Pennsylvania, and in each case, the person voted for Trump.

The effort by the sitting President of the United States to overturn the results is patently undemocratic. The effort by others to amplify and burnish his ludicrous claims of fraud is equally revolting. This is America. We have elections. We have results. We make arguments based on fact and reason, not conspiracy and fantasy.

On January 6, Congress will meet to formally recognize the electoral college result. There is a very clear process to handle and dispense with the objections of Members of Congress to the counting of the result, and that is just what we will do—dispense with them. On January 6, Congress will ratify the electoral college's decision that Joe Biden will be President and KAMALA HARRIS will be Vice President. Make no mistake about it—Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS will be sworn in as President and Vice President on January 20.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now let me return to the matters at hand.

Today, the Senate will begin the process of overriding the President's veto on the annual Defense bill. The House has already overridden the veto by a comfortable margin. I expect the Senate to follow suit and enact the NDAA into law over President Trump's evolving and ridiculous objections. Congress has passed the annual Defense bill for 59 years in a row. It is an important opportunity to ensure our defense and security policies reflect the evolving challenges of our world and provide our servicemembers and their families, as well as Defense Department civilians, the support, resources, and training they need. The particular legislation includes a pay raise for troops and provisions that will allow the executive branch to be better postured to identify and deter breaches to America's cyber security. In the wake of the SolarWinds hack, that might be a good policy to enact.

Nonetheless, President Trump vetoed this legislation because it provides for renaming military installations that honor Confederate military leaders or, maybe, because it doesn't address an unrelated social media issue. Think about it for a moment. The President vetoed a pay raise to living American soldiers in order to defend the honor of dead Confederate traitors. Well, the Senate will soon have an opportunity to override the President's objection and do right by those brave Americans who wear the uniform.

As I said yesterday, there are two major issues before the Senate right now—the annual Defense bill and the vital and important effort to send \$2,000 stimulus checks to American

families. There are only a few days left in this session, and the Senate should consider both issues before adjourning.

There is a very simple solution to this dilemma: Leader MCCONNELL should bring both measures up for a vote and let the chips fall where they may. I believe both measures—the defense override and the \$2,000 checks to American families—will pass, but at the very least, the Senate deserves the opportunity for an up-or-down vote on increasing the individual payments to the American people.

At the end of my remarks, I will ask the Senate to set a time tonight for a vote on the House bill to provide \$2,000 checks. The Republican leader objected to a similar request I made yesterday, and it appears he may be considering a different bill that packages stimulus checks with other unrelated and partisan policies.

I want to be very clear about one thing: There is no other game in town besides the House bill. The only way to get the American people the \$2,000 checks they deserve and need is to pass the House bill and pass it now. The House has recessed for the year. Any modification or addition to the House bill cannot become law before the end of this Congress. It is a way to kill the bill. Make no mistake about it: Either the Senate takes up and passes the House bill or struggling American families will not get \$2,000 checks during the worst economic crisis in 75 years.

Over the past few days, the idea of increasing direct payments to the American people has united folks from all points of the political spectrum. I salute the Senator from Vermont for the good job he has done in bringing this forward to the American people's attention. An overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House supports the \$2,000 checks. Senate Democrats strongly support these \$2,000 checks, and our unlikely ally, President Trump, this morning, tweeted: "\$2000 ASAP!" For once, the Democrats agree with something on President Trump's Twitter feed. Let's send \$2,000 ASAP to working Americans who are facing the hardest and darkest days of the pandemic.

After all of the insanity that the Senate Republicans have tolerated from President Trump—his attacks on the rule of law, an independent judiciary, the conduct that led to his impeachment—is this where the Senate Republicans are going to draw the line—with \$2,000 checks to the American people? That is a bridge too far? Please.

For the awareness of my colleagues, we can have this vote tonight and send the bill directly to the President's desk for his signature. We can vote on the NDAA bill tonight and finish the Senate's business before the end of the year. All it takes is our Republican colleagues to consent to a simple vote on the House bill to provide \$2,000 checks to the American people. Yes or no, up or down, do you support sending \$2,000

to the American people or not? Let's have the vote.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 9051

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 9051, a bill received from the House, to increase recovery rebate amounts to \$2,000 for individuals; that the bill be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Vermont.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—H.R. 9051 AND H.R. 6395

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I want to concur with what Senator SCHUMER said. What he said goes beyond economics. It goes beyond the desperation that tens of millions of working families are facing. It goes beyond the struggles of the people of Vermont or Kentucky.

Let me just make it clear for the majority leader that 10 out of the poorest 25 counties in the United States of America are located in Kentucky. So my colleague the majority leader might want to get on the phone and start talking to working families in Kentucky and find out how they feel about the need for immediate help in terms of a \$2,000 check per adult. I have the strong feeling that the people of Kentucky will respond no differently than the people of Vermont or New York. The last poll that I saw had 78 percent of the American people saying they wanted and needed that type of help.

This discussion, frankly, is not just about the economic struggling of working families in this country. It is not just about the massive levels of income and wealth inequality. It is about basic democracy.

Now, what we have to do here on the floor, whether it is Senator SCHUMER or Senator MCCONNELL or I, is to talk in legalese. That is the language of the U.S. Senate. The stuff sounds pretty complicated to the average person, but all that Senator SCHUMER and I are asking of the majority leader is very simple: Allow the Members of the U.S. Senate to cast a vote. If you want to

vote against \$2,000 checks for people in your State, vote against it. I see Senator TOOMEY here. He has been clear about it. I suspect he will vote against it. I respect his opinion, but all that we are asking for is a vote. What is the problem? In the House, over two-thirds of the Members of that body, including 44 Republicans, voted to say, in this time of economic desperation, working families deserve help, and they deserve a \$2,000 check.

As Senator SCHUMER just indicated, we have a very unlikely ally in President Trump. Nobody here has disagreed with Trump more times than I have; yet here is what the leader of the Republican Party writes: “\$2000 ASAP!” So, even on this issue, amazingly enough, the President of the United States is right.

What all of this comes down to, my fellow Americans, is not even whether you agree with Senator SCHUMER and myself and 78 percent of the American people or whether you agree with Senator MCCONNELL and, I suspect, Senator TOOMEY. That is fine. It is called democracy. We have differences of opinion. All that I am asking is to give us a vote. What is the problem? Allow the U.S. Senators to cast a vote as to whether they are for the \$2,000 check or whether they are against it.

We will need, as I understand it, 60 votes to win. That is a big hurdle. I don't know that we are going to win. There are a number of Republicans, to their credit, who have said they are ready to vote for it. I suspect there may be more, when given the opportunity, who will vote for it. Maybe I am wrong. Maybe we will lose. I think that would be unfortunate. All that I am asking for right now is to give us the opportunity to vote. What is the problem with that?

I will now go to Senate legalese.

I ask unanimous consent that at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, December 31, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 9051, a bill to provide a \$2,000 direct payment to the working class; that the bill be considered read a third time; and that the Senate vote on the passage of the bill, without intervening action or debate; further, that if passed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; further, that immediately following the vote on H.R. 9051, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the veto message on H.R. 6395 and that the Senate immediately vote on the passage of the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, let me start by pointing out that we are not in the same place that we were back in March. Our economy is in nothing like the situation we faced during a moment in March when this body came

together and voted unanimously, I believe, for the most extraordinary aid package—financial stimulus bill, however you care to characterize it—in the history of the world by far. Remember where we were. We had closed down the economy. To a very large degree, the American economy had stopped functioning because State governments around the country decided they had to close it down. We can discuss and we can argue about whether that was a good decision or not, but given the limited knowledge we had about the nature of the COVID-19 threat, it was deemed to be the right thing to do.

So we were on the verge of having no economy. That has never happened before in our history.

So what did we do? We decided this calls for extraordinary measures, and we would try to use Federal dollars as a substitute for the economy—just replace lost income on a massive, unprecedented scale—and we did. We approved almost \$3 trillion in that legislation.

At the time, we included \$1,200 per person. You could make an argument that that was an extremely inefficient use of that \$1,200 per person, but at the time, given the circumstances, I understood why we didn't have many good options, and that was something we decided to do.

So where are we now? We are in a very different place. Our economy is not in a free fall. Our economy is in a recovery mode. We are not back to where we want to end up. We are not back to where we were before March, but we have taken big steps in that direction.

The economy grew at 33 percent last quarter—33 percent. That is a tremendous recovery that is underway. More than half of all the people who lost their jobs earlier this year have regained their jobs. So we are not finished yet, but that is a huge step along the way.

And now we are being told, after passing another extraordinary bill—this one almost \$1 trillion and including \$600 per person—that that is not enough; we need to do \$2,000 per person, despite the fact that we know for sure, we know for a fact, that the large majority of those checks are going to go to people who had no lost income.

How does that make any sense at all? We know for sure that the majority of these people had no lost income. They didn't lose their jobs, and yet we are going to send them not \$600, not the \$1,200, but \$2,000.

So think about this. A married couple, who both are working and have 2 kids, maybe they work for the Federal Government, like 2 million-odd people do. Maybe they work for a large company, the vast majority of which did not have large numbers of layoffs. So this two-child, two-income couple that makes six figures had no interruption, no diminishment of their income whatsoever. They are going to get \$8,000 of money we don't have that is going to be either borrowed or printed. That is what it is all going to come down to.

There are people who are still suffering from the economic fallout of this terrible COVID crisis. There is no question about it. We know there are people who are concentrated in a handful of industries, for the most part—not exclusively—but people who have worked in the restaurant industry, people who work for hotels, travel, entertainment. So many of those people are still out of work and their prospects of getting their old jobs back are not good in the short run. I sure hope they will be good in the medium-term run, if not sooner.

And our bill addressed that. It addressed that problem. How did we do that? With a new round of PPP loans, which are really grants to small businesses, if they will keep their workforce intact; expansion of unemployment insurance benefits, so that people who have historically been ineligible remain eligible so they can continue to collect unemployment benefits; an increase in the amount of unemployment benefits, a \$300-a-week overlay of Federal money on top of whatever their State program is; \$600 per person, regardless of whether they lost income.

All of that was passed just a few days ago, and now we are told we need to come back immediately, right now, and make sure that we are sending \$2,000 checks to people who had no lost income.

So for that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 9051 AND H.R. 6395

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise to echo the sentiments of the Senator from Vermont. He is right. The Republicans are wrong on this issue. On every single part of this debate, Senator SANDERS is right; the Republicans are wrong.

We are in the middle of an unprecedented crisis in our country. We have a healthcare crisis, we have an unemployment crisis, we have a hunger crisis, we have a housing crisis, we have an addiction crisis, and we have a moral crisis in this country.

The U.S. Government should be responding to the needs, to the desperation of families in our country at this time. There is a crisis of faith that the American people have in its government's ability to respond to human suffering. Well, this institution has been created to respond to human suffering. That is our job.

Tony Fauci has made it very clear that the worst of the pandemic is ahead of us, not behind us. We know what is coming, and yet we are not responding. We know this is not going away soon, and yet we are not responding.

A program, Operation Warp Speed, was created to create a vaccine, but because for 7 months the Republicans have refused to fund the public health