

Now, Senator DURBIN, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, who has long been an advocate for the Dreamers, if he really were serious about that issue, he now has the authority, as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, to put a bill before the committee to allow Senators to offer and vote on amendments and to mark up a bill. And if he were able to get a majority of the committee to vote for a bill, he could then ask majority Leader SCHUMER to put the bill on the floor. But, so far, most of our discussions on immigration have been just that, all talk and no action.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. CORNYN. At the same time, Madam President, America's roads and bridges are in dire need of attention by Congress. Every year, the American Society of Civil Engineers evaluates the state of our infrastructure and issues a report card to let us know how we are doing. Well, America is barely passing with a "C-minus." Texas is faring slightly better than the rest of the class, with just a "C."

I believe Republicans and Democrats alike think that rebuilding our roads and bridges is important. We even share the same goal of expanding the definition of "infrastructure" to include broadband because we saw during the current pandemic that broadband is no longer a luxury. It is an absolute necessity, whether it is for telehealth or whether it is for our children learning remotely or for people working remotely from home.

Even as bipartisan negotiations continue, though, the majority leader is eyeing the prospects of a partisan bill that would circumvent the normal legislative process and would be entirely a partisan product. But we know that in a 50-50 Senate, bipartisan work on shared priorities is not impossible. In fact, we did it just last week.

Last week, we saw a great example of what can be accomplished if we will work together to achieve an outcome.

CHINA

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, in recent years, China has emerged as one of the greatest competitors to America. Both Republicans and Democrats recognize the need to take action now to confront the growing threats posed by China, and so that is what we did last week.

Last week, the Senate passed a sweeping bipartisan bill to invest in strategic competition with China, in large part by funding the CHIPS for America Program to shore up this vulnerable supply chain of advanced semiconductors coming primarily from Asia, primarily from Taiwan.

FILIBUSTER

Mr. CORNYN. Now, Madam President, there is a lot of work that we can

and should do on a bipartisan basis because, of course, not every issue should be or is a partisan issue. But I will have to tell you that old habits die hard around here.

Despite the clear need for cooperation to move critical legislation through a 50-50 Senate, the majority leader is resisting any progress on issues that we can and should be addressing. Instead, he is trying to drum up a scenario where somehow we decide to eliminate the 60-vote requirement, otherwise known as the filibuster. But it is that 60-vote requirement that requires both parties to roll up their sleeves and do the hard work and build consensus.

In a country of 330 million people, we need to have the continuity and the planning and the stability of bipartisan work products, not just a partisan bill that can be undone after the next election for Congress or after the next Presidential election.

Well, over several months, our Democratic colleagues have been asked about the fate of the filibuster, whether they would be willing to eliminate the filibuster in pursuit of partisan goals. Senator SCHUMER, for one, has repeatedly said that "all options are on the table"—whatever that means—and a number of our Democratic colleagues have parroted the same line.

Now, they have looked for examples of Republicans filibustering bills, just like they have done over the last 6 years. They assumed this would be the golden ticket to rid themselves of the bipartisan filibuster requirement and escape blame, only things haven't quite worked out that way. The roadblock to bipartisanship isn't on the Republican side but, rather, on the Democrat side.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, after passing five bipartisan COVID-19 relief bills last year to support the American people through the pandemic, our Democratic colleagues kicked off this year with a different approach. They made no attempt to try to negotiate another consensus package, as we had done five times before last year, and insisted on skirting the normal legislative process so they could pass a purely partisan \$1.9 trillion spending bill.

Well, the problem with that is it was really mislabeled. One, it vastly overshoot the target, and it spent less than 10 percent of the money—which, purportedly, was for COVID-19 relief—on COVID-19, and less than 1 percent of that was related to vaccines, which was clearly the most urgent need.

But the money that we had appropriated last December hadn't even been spent yet, but, apparently, the Biden administration wanted to demonstrate that it could get things through but, in the meantime, appropriated \$1.9 trillion, threatening us with something we haven't seen rear its head in a long time, which is inflation.

But the bill, as I said, included a lot of unrelated and unnecessary partisan priorities, ranging from blank checks for mismanaged union pension funds, funding for climate justice, backdoor money for Planned Parenthood, and an exclusive paid leave program for Federal bureaucrats.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, where did that land us? Well, as I said, last week, the Department of Labor announced that inflation had climbed to the highest rate since 2008. Core inflation surged to the highest level in nearly three decades. Families are feeling the pinch of higher prices as they pay higher prices for everything from housing to cars to gasoline to groceries.

This is really sort of a silent and hidden tax on their income, when the dollar that they earn is worth less and less as prices go higher and higher. But, unfortunately, this is the exact scenario economists expected when our Democratic colleagues rolled out this \$2 trillion spending bill at the beginning of the year. And they are currently proposing to spend trillions of dollars more.

Even Larry Summers, who once served as Treasury Secretary under Bill Clinton and Director of the National Economic Council under President Obama, warned about inflation. He penned an op-ed in the Washington Post in February, cautioning the administration about the risks of inflation, making himself persona non grata among our Democratic colleagues. But he wrote another one last month saying that "the inflation risk is real."

You might think that would serve as a cautionary tale to our Democratic colleagues, that partisan legislation does not give way to sound and stable policies. But that is not the case.

When the majority leader said all options are on the table for eliminating the filibuster, he didn't mention the fact that he would be setting the table and setting the agenda trying to make that case.

Absent Republican obstruction that he and other members of the media forecasted, the majority leader is now teeing up a series of designed-to-fail votes so he could explain or justify—try to justify—why the filibuster should be eliminated.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, we kicked things off last week with a vote on a bill that would exploit the cause of pay fairness, when that is already clearly the existing law, but, in this case, to line the pockets of trial lawyers.

Senator SCHUMER said this month, the Senate will vote on S. 1, the partisan Federal election takeover bill. So just as our Democratic colleagues went on a spending spree in the name of

COVID-19, this bill hijacks the constitutional authority of the States in the purported name of increasing voting access. But this bill, too, is chock full of unnecessary, unpopular, and unconstitutional election proposals.

It makes it much easier for partisans to affect our elections through fraud, in part, by removing requirements for the most basic safeguard, which is voter identification.

That was one of the main recommendations in 2005 of the Commission on Federal Election Reform, a bipartisan commission cochaired by former President Jimmy Carter, a Democrat, and former Secretary of State, James Baker, a Republican. That Commission, back in 2005, recommended that voters be required to present a photo ID card and the State should provide free cards to voters who, for some reason, didn't have a driver's license or other identification.

In order to vote in person, most States require voters to present some valid form of identification. Matching the name of an eligible voter with the name on a valid form of ID is a commonsense safeguard against fraud, but one our Democratic colleagues apparently want to eliminate.

In fact, their legislation would stop the States—actually it would prohibit the States—from requiring proof of identification in order to vote. Just sign a piece of paper saying you are who you say you are and no further questions can be asked.

On top of that, this bill would require the States to automatically register anyone in their databases for everything from the department of motor vehicles to public assistance. We know these programs aren't limited to eligible voters and could include noncitizens and others who aren't eligible to cast a ballot, not to mention the fact that those who are already registered to vote would be registered again, potentially.

And even if there are duplicate registrations or if someone passes away or moves, States would not be allowed, by this law, to clean up their voter rolls within 6 months of an election.

But just when you think things can't get any crazier, they do. Our Democratic colleagues want to provide taxpayer funding for political campaigns and elections. That is right. They want you to pay for a political candidate's campaign, whether you want to or not, whether you support the policies of that candidate or not.

A lot of companies have matching programs for charitable giving. If an employee donates to the charity of their choice, the company often will match the donation dollar for dollar. Well, that same principle applies here, in part, except instead of the charity getting money, it is now a political candidate. Instead of the company footing the bill, it is—you got it—it is you, the taxpayer.

I could go on and on. This proposal, S. 1, which we will be voting on in the

near future, changes the basic structure of the Federal Election Commission, which is currently a bipartisan Commission, which is forced to obtain a bipartisan majority before they can act. It split 3 to 3. But this bill would eliminate that bipartisan requirement and simply allow a partisan Federal election committee to work its will.

This bill also legalizes something called ballot harvesting, which is susceptible to widespread fraud. In other words, it lets a campaign worker go around to nursing homes, neighborhoods, union halls, wherever, and collect your ballot and then to take them down to the clerk's office and cast that ballot. Well, the opportunities for fraud are pretty obvious.

This bill would also implement a new financial disclosure policy that even the American Civil Liberties Union says "could interfere directly with the ability of many to engage in political speech about causes that they care about."

But above all this, this bill undermines the trust and accountability that is so important to elections. The Judiciary Committee recently had a hearing where the secretary of state, who happens to be a Democrat, from New Hampshire said the single most important thing in providing a big turnout for elections is public confidence that their ballot will be counted. It is not how many days before election day you can vote, who can vote by mail; it is the public's confidence that their ballot will be counted, no matter how and when cast.

So S. 1 is not a serious attempt at bipartisanship. It is the opposite. It is not an honest effort to pass legislation. Right now, we know that Democrats don't even have 50 votes on their side of the aisle. But the majority leader is trying to prove that partisanship apparently has a death grip on the Senate, but, unfortunately for him, it is not the party he thinks.

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

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

The majority whip.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE INVESTIGATION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last Friday, the New York Times reported that during the Trump administration, the Justice Department issued subpoenas involving Members of Congress, their staff, and family members, even a minor family member. It is highly unusual for the Justice Department to investigate Members of Congress. The reason it is unusual is clear: Our Founders created three separate

branches of the Federal Government with a separation of powers so that each branch could serve as a check and balance on the other and no branch would have too much power.

When the Justice Department investigates a Member of Congress, typically, it is for corruption charges. That is understandable, but that is not what happened here. This was an investigation into a leak of information. And the use of subpoenas to investigate Members of Congress is extremely strange territory.

These concerns are heightened when the President has publicly attacked those same Members of Congress. That is what former President Trump did when he repeatedly and without any evidence accused Representative ADAM SCHIFF about leaking information about Russian election interference.

These reports and the reports that journalists and even Trump's own White House Counsel were included in the Justice Department's so-called leak investigation raise serious questions about the Justice Department and its former leaders.

The Senate Judiciary Committee has a constitutional responsibility to oversee the Department of Justice on behalf of the American people, so yesterday our committee sent a letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland asking for more information. But yesterday Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican minority leader in the Senate, came to the floor and warned us off. He warned the Judiciary Committee against exercising our statutory oversight responsibility because it could become "a partisan circus." This came on the heels of Senator MCCONNELL's personal veto of a bipartisan Commission to investigate the deadly January 6 mob attack on the U.S. Capitol. But now the minority leader is warning us against even looking into the targeting of Trump's perceived political enemies by the Justice Department. The minority leader claimed that the Senate does not need to look into this matter because—get this—the Department of Justice inspector general has already announced he would investigate. That is a pretty decent argument if you have no memory whatsoever.

For over 13 months during the last Congress, under a Republican majority, the Senate Judiciary Committee conducted an extensive oversight investigation into the FBI's opening of the Crossfire Hurricane investigation even though the Department of Justice inspector general had already investigated it. The Department of Justice inspector general had already completed a 19-month investigation of so-called Crossfire Hurricane involving over 100 witnesses and reviewing over a million documents.

That wasn't good enough for the Republican majority. They persisted in conducting a committee investigation nevertheless even though the inspector general's investigation concluded that Crossfire Hurricane had a proper basis