

we are going to keep at it until we get the job done.

Now, I just want to say something about the news we received last night about the Senate Parliamentarian.

Last night's ruling was extremely disappointing. It saddened me. It frustrated me. It angered me. But make no mistake. The fight continues.

Senate Democrats have prepared alternative proposals and will be holding additional meetings with the Senate Parliamentarian in the coming days.

I have been working closely with my colleagues in the Senate, including Judiciary Chairman DURBIN, Senators PADILLA, MENENDEZ, LUJÁN, and CORTEZ MASTO, and we will continue our fight to find the best option available to provide immigrants with the chance at one day obtaining lawful residence here in America.

The last year and a half have shown how vital our immigrants have been to keeping our economy going during a time of crisis. So many risked their lives on the frontline of this pandemic but remain excluded from the very same benefits that have kept millions of others secure during these hard times.

We are short of workers from one end of America to the other. One of the reasons, the Trump administration dramatically cut back on immigrants in this country. We need them. We need them in our labor force. We need them to continue American vitality. We need them because they are part of the American Dream.

It is estimated in my city by some that one-third of the healthcare workers at the height of COVID who risked their lives for us were immigrants.

Having a strong law that helps our immigrants is vital. The American people understand that fixing our broken immigration system is a moral imperative and an economic imperative. Immigration reform has been one of the most important causes of my time in the Senate, and I will not stop fighting to achieve it.

Finally, on addressing the debt limit, on debt limit the Republicans are doing a dine-and-dash of historic proportions that hurts the American people and hurts our country. That hurts the American people and hurts our country.

In the immediate future, both parties will have to come together to allow the Federal Government to continue its most important responsibility: paying the bills and making good on our outstanding obligations.

A few minutes ago, I joined with Speaker PELOSI in announcing that the continuing resolution that we will take up to avoid a government shutdown will also include a suspension of the debt limit through December 2022, allowing us to meet our obligations and preserve the full faith and credit of these United States of America. Suspending the debt limit through December of 2022 provides an amount of time commensurate with the debt that was

incurred as a result of the \$908 billion COVID emergency relief bill last year. That was a bill that was passed when Donald Trump was President and Senator MCCONNELL was the majority leader of the Senate. It was passed under Republican leadership. That is the debt we are paying in this bill. The legislation that funded this \$908 billion in COVID relief was supported by more than 40 Republicans and signed into law by President Trump. So anyone who says this is Democratic debt is not talking fact; they are talking fiction.

Both sides—both sides—have a responsibility to pay for the debt that we have already incurred. It has always been done in a bipartisan way. Unfortunately, last week, Leader MCCONNELL announced that the Senate Republicans are inclined to deliberately turn their backs on their obligations.

When asked if Republicans would block an extension of the debt limit, Leader MCCONNELL, amazingly and cravenly, said that “Republicans are united in opposition to raising the debt ceiling.” Shame. This is the same Leader MCCONNELL who urged Democrats and Republicans to support raising the debt ceiling when Donald Trump was President and he was majority leader. He always comes up with some sophistry as to why it is different, but everyone knows it is not different. In fact, Democrats supported three times raising the debt ceiling when Trump was President, and if my recollection is right, at least one of those times was when the House, the Senate, and the Presidency were controlled by Republicans.

Should Republicans careen our country toward a default, our country could actually be plunged into recession—laying off millions, making it harder for people to pay for the food on the table and their mortgages and their rent. Shame, shame on the Republican leader.

As Secretary Yellen put it just days ago, failure to raise the debt limit would have “absolutely catastrophic economic consequences . . . [and] would precipitate a financial crisis.” A default would risk sending interest rates sky high across the board, hurting consumers, small businesses, and our country's ability to borrow in the future. Our economy, still fresh off the trauma of the COVID crisis, could slip back into recession and undo everything we have done to help struggling Americans pick themselves back up.

Now, many on the other side, including the Republican leader himself, are trying to justify their reckless position with deeply misleading talking points. They have argued over and over again that they refuse to work with Democrats because they oppose our forthcoming legislative agenda. Of course, what they don't say is that these two issues have nothing to do with each other. The forthcoming legislative agenda has not incurred any debt—a nickel of debt—in the United States. It was the previous agenda of President

Trump and the Republican Senate and Republicans in the House that created this debt.

Republicans ignore the analysis like the one done by the Washington Post, which observed that “roughly 97 percent of the current U.S. cumulative debt was accrued before Biden took office.” Indeed, none other than the Wall Street Journal made this even clearer. “Raising the debt limit wouldn't facilitate future spending,” it said, “and Congress would still need to raise the debt limit this fall even if no new major spending programs are enacted.”

I want to repeat that not just for Leader MCCONNELL but for my Republican colleagues. Hopefully there are some who will rise to their responsibility and abandon this craven, political move, which would do such harm to the United States, that the Republican leader has proffered. So I will read it again. The Wall Street Journal said, “Raising the debt limit wouldn't facilitate future spending” and went on to say that “Congress would still need to raise the debt limit this fall even if no new major spending programs are enacted.”

So the bottom line is simple. Let me repeat. What Republicans are doing is nothing short of a dine-and-dash of historic proportions. They want working-class American families to foot the bill for their irresponsibility, and as a consequence of their callous political games, it will be veterans and Social Security payment recipients who suffer most.

This isn't just another partisan fight. This isn't who can be more macho. This is about the country. All too often, the press—they make it into macho, macho. That is wrong. What one party is doing here, everyone knows, is deliberately wrong—at least the Republican leader and all those who choose to follow him—with serious consequences for the people. It is not just another partisan fight; it is about avoiding a crisis that would undo all the progress our country has made to heal itself of the COVID crisis.

Democrats are going to do the responsible thing and vote to extend the debt limit when the time comes. We will see which of our Republican colleagues on the other side will have the strength and the courage to follow suit.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Margaret Irene Strickland, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, over the past year and a half, senior Democratic leaders decided the upheaval and hardship of a once-in-a-century pandemic was actually a chance to justify radical leftwing change.

This isn't just me conjecturing; it is what they keep saying. Right at the start of the crisis, March 2020, the House Democratic Whip said the pandemic offered "a tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision."

Just last week, President Biden said: "This pandemic has been God-awful for so many reasons. . . . But"—"but," he said—"it does present us with an opportunity." So they get points for honesty, at least. The reckless taxing-and-spending spree the Democrats are writing behind closed doors is designed to leave Americans with a socialist country they never voted for and a country that working families, in many ways, would barely recognize.

Last night, one of those many efforts hit a stumbling block. Senate Democrats were reminded the rules of this institution will not permit them to shove a massive amnesty for illegal immigrants into a reckless taxing-and-spending spree they want to ram through on a party-line basis.

Our Democratic colleagues cannot pretend that massive transformational policy changes are mere budgetary tweaks. As no less an authority than our colleague now-Chairman BERNIE SANDERS said just a few years ago, "the function of reconciliation is to adjust federal spending and revenue, not"—not—"to enact major changes in social policy." That is Chairman SANDERS a few years ago. That is a lesson he and his caucus need to relearn.

Even with the border as insecure as it has ever been, the far left wanted sweeping amnesty, and Democratic leaders dutifully tried their very best. It just goes to show you how radical this legislation is going to be.

Democrats want to tamper with Americans' Medicare and stretch the program even thinner, while it already faces fiscal challenges. They want to interfere massively with the States that choose not to bow to Obamacare mandates on Medicaid; they want to use healthcare dollars to line the pock-

ets of special interests with big union giveaways; and they want to impose socialist price controls on Americans' medicines that would leave us with fewer new treatments and new cures in the future.

It adds up to a massive leap toward socialized medicine. But somehow this still only scratches the surface.

Democrats are also trying to force through an unprecedented Federal takeover of American families' childcare options that may leave faith-based childcare providers high and dry. They want an all-out assault on affordable, reliable, homegrown American energy so the entire country could be marched toward California utility prices, California gas prices, and California electricity blackouts—just what families want.

Look, I could go on all day. The reckless taxing-and-spending spree that Democrats are writing behind closed doors is shaping up to be exactly what they promised: an effort to exploit this terrible but temporary pandemic as a Trojan horse for permanent socialism.

Now, on a related matter, Democrats have united, unified control of the Senate, the House, and the White House. Their strategy for all this transformational borrowing, spending, and tax hikes was deliberately designed to include no Republican input and to receive no Republican votes.

Since Democrats decided to go it alone, they will not get Senate Republicans' help with raising the debt limit. I have explained this clearly and consistently for over 2 months. We do not have divided government. Democrats do not need our help. They have every tool to address the debt limit on their own—the same party-line process they used to ram through inflationary spending in March and already plan to use once again this fall.

Now, look, this might inconvenience Democrats. It might delay their next reckless taxing-and-spending spree, but Democrats cannot risk the full faith and credit of our Nation to serve their own partisan timelines. Democrats decided to govern alone. Their unified Democratic government must put basic governing duties ahead of partisan wish lists. If they don't, the consequences for our country would be catastrophic.

Senate Republicans would support a clean continuing resolution that includes appropriate disaster relief and targeted Afghan assistance. We will not support legislation that raises the debt limit.

Remember, when the debt suspension lapsed in August, the debt limit was automatically ratcheted up to account for all of the borrowing that had occurred up to that date. This isn't about the past. It is about the future. And Democrats want to build a partisan future without our input. So Democrats will not get bipartisan facilitators for their purely partisan spending binge.

Democrats are fully capable of owning this step themselves. The Demo-

cratic chairman of the House Budget Committee admitted just yesterday: "We can do it through reconciliation. [But] [l]eadership has said they don't want to do that."

One party controls the entire government. They have the power to address this alone. And as I have warned since July, that is what they will need to do.

TRIBUTE TO HAL ROGERS

Madam President, now, on one final matter, Representative HAL ROGERS once described Southeastern Kentuckians by saying: "They're honest, forthright. . . . they can see through a phony in a minute flat." So it is fitting his constituents just reelected him by 70 points. He is certainly honest, forthright, and no phony.

For over 40 years, HAL has fought for his home region and delivered unparalleled support for its development and its growth. In honor of HAL becoming the longest serving Representative in the history of the Commonwealth earlier this September, I would like to pay tribute to this one-of-a-kind Kentuckian.

I first met HAL during the 1971 Kentucky gubernatorial election. He was already a rising star in the State Republican Party, having just been elected Commonwealth's attorney for Pulaski and Rockcastle Counties 2 years prior. As a fellow attorney and young conservative, I looked up to HAL and watched his career with considerable interest.

Less than a decade later, HAL was elected to the House of Representatives in Kentucky's Fifth Congressional District the same year Ronald Reagan was elected President. Since then, he has won reelection 19 times, always by a wide margin. He loves his corner of the State, and as his repeated victories absolutely prove, his constituents love him right back.

Once HAL got to Congress, he quickly went to work fighting for the issues his constituents cared the most about. His hard-won legislative victories earned him praise from fellow House Republicans who tapped him to lead the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Eight years later, he became chairman of the full House Appropriations Committee, expertly cutting spending, reducing waste, and directing funds to important projects all across the country. As a former Commonwealth's attorney, HAL used his law enforcement credentials to defend Kentucky from a wide array of threats. Before the rest of America was paying full attention to the scourge of substance abuse, HAL launched Operation UNITE.

The anti-narcotics initiative covers 32 Kentucky counties and has been on the frontlines in the fight against the opioid epidemic, helping to lock up thousands of criminals and remove millions of dollars' worth of illegal drugs from the streets.

HAL is a lead promoter of investment in Southeastern Kentucky, which for