

the Washington Post, many hard-right House Members say their DOA bill represents the bare minimum they are willing to accept—the bare minimum.

One Freedom Caucus Member said this bill is “not a negotiating piece. It is the deal” and further added that “[Speaker MCCARTHY] cannot get to 218 with changes to this deal.”

Let me read that again, because it so perfectly captures the extremist thinking on the hard right, which we all know has tremendous leverage in the House.

Speaker MCCARTHY “cannot get to 218 with changes to this deal.”

Let me just read it again. “Cannot get to 218 with changes to this deal.”

Respectfully, that is not negotiation. That is a ransom note. That is a hostage-taking tactic. It is another sign that Speaker MCCARTHY has surrendered to the extremists in his conference, who are ready to let the United States default unless they get everything—everything—they want.

Senate Democrats cannot—and will not—allow Republicans’ “Default on America Act” to become law, because the consequences of these cuts for American families would be severe. For generations, Congress has made spending and revenue decisions as part of the annual budget process. That is the appropriate place to debate, not here as a bargaining chip—a take-it-or-leave-it bargaining chip—for the hard right.

So beginning this week, our Senate committees will do what House Republicans would not do: hold hearings to expose the damage that the cuts contained in the “Default on America Act” would cause to everyday American families.

We will show the American people how the “Default Act” would rip away SNAP benefits for over a million recipients and eliminate Pell grants for tens of thousands of student loan borrowers.

We will show the American people how the “Default on America Act” would raise taxes by over \$500 billion over the next decade, crippling job creation, stifling economic growth, and squandering our future prosperity to the benefit of the Chinese Communist Party.

And we will show the American people how the “Default on America Act” would cut critical funding to nearly all sectors of American life, leading to fewer jobs, higher costs, and leaving policemen, first responders, border patrol, and our brave veterans all hanging out to dry.

We cannot move forward so long as hard-right MAGA Republicans, which we all know have tremendous, enormous leverage in the House, insist on their bill—a bill that is unacceptable to the Senate and the vast majority of the American people.

Sadly, if the hard right continues running the show in the House, the dangers of a first-ever default will keep growing day by day. And as we expose this terrible bill for what it is, Senate

Democrats’ position remains the same: The only real solution is for both parties to pass a clean bill to avoid default, with no brinksmanship, no hostage-taking.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Madam President, now on Senate business. Well, it is going to be another busy week here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. Later today, the Senate will vote on the confirmation of Anthony Johnstone of Montana to serve a lifetime appointment as a circuit court judge for the Ninth Circuit.

A graduate of Yale and the University of Chicago, Mr. Johnstone has a wealth of experience in both public service and private practice. As former members of the Montana Supreme Court attest to, Mr. Johnstone has one of the “best legal minds and is the finest and most respected legal scholar in the State of Montana.”

At the end of the week, I also filed cloture on three additional district court judges from New Jersey and New York, and Members should be advised that I will be filing on additional judicial nominations later this evening. The Senate will work on processing all of these nominees over the course of the week.

Judicial nominees remain a top priority for the Senate. Senate Democrats are proud we confirmed 119 new judges under President Biden, including 31 circuit court judges, 87 district court judges, and one groundbreaking Supreme Court Justice in Ketanji Brown Jackson. The diversity of these jurists is unlike anything our country has seen: 84 of these judges are women and 80 are people of color. The Senate will add to that impressive tally over the course of this week.

TRIBUTE TO TERRY O’SULLIVAN

Madam President, now, on a dear friend, Terry O’Sullivan. Today, it brings me immense joy, gratitude, and a little sadness to pay tribute to a giant of American labor, a hero of working families, and a leader who truly stands in a category all his own: Terry O’Sullivan, who, Friday, retired as general president of the Laborers’ International Union, or LIUNA, after more than two decades. Over the years, Terry has become one of the dearest friends I have had in Washington.

There would be no expansive middle class in America without the labor movement, and the labor movement would not be the same today without Terry O’Sullivan and LIUNA. The proud members of LIUNA helped build our roads, our bridges, and tunnels and office buildings and housing. Under Terry’s leadership, LIUNA has become the Laborers’ Union, as it is fondly known, has become one of the most impactful unions of the 21st century. It was under Terry’s watch that LIUNA workers helped clean up the wreckage of ground zero after 9/11. Under his watch, LIUNA built its first-ever high school for students to enter construction work. And it was LIUNA that organized the immigrants and supported

comprehensive immigration reform. So, unsurprisingly, anyone who knows Terry knows his loyalty lies in one place and in one place alone: the working families of LIUNA and of Americans in general.

And I know this personally: My cousin Abe Weinshall, who was a proud member of Local 79, the Hod Carriers, in New York, and they treated him so, so well, even when he had a severe illness, because the healthcare that the laborers were able to get was topnotch.

Terry’s loyalty to the working people has been very long. It is a loyalty that first drew breath in the early years of his childhood, having been raised in a union household as the son of LIUNA secretary treasurer Terrence O’Sullivan.

At 11, Terry attended his first LIUNA convention. He started early. And from there on, there was no turning back. He became a proud card-carrying member for life. After becoming LIUNA general president in 2000, Terry spent the next two decades growing, modernizing, and expanding LIUNA into one of the greatest advocates for working Americans in this century. In the face of radical wealth polarization, Terry won better wages, better benefits, and greater say about working conditions for his union members of LIUNA and for his fellow Americans.

I have known Terry a very long time. Terry first stood out to me because even at the most formal events in Washington, I noticed that Terry never wore a tie. We joke about that. But over the years, Terry has become a confidant, a brother, and someone I have turned to for advice and guidance again and again over the years. Some of my most enjoyable evenings in Washington were dinners with Terry and Yvette—his wife—and with a good glass of wine.

To listen to Terry speak is to hear a man on fire with love for his country and with love for the working families of America. To watch Terry work is to see someone singularly dedicated to his mission. And he is someone equally at ease in the boardroom, the labor rally, and the construction site. He doesn’t miss a beat going from one to the other.

And, of course, Terry is famous for his candid style and no-nonsense attitude. He is from California. I am from Brooklyn. But we share that direct speaking way. If you cross Terry’s path or the path of working families, you will quickly find out you made a powerful adversary. But if you win Terry’s heart, you will discover you found a lifelong friend, as I have discovered.

Of course, Terry’s legacy is not just felt in America but around the world. He is a proud supporter of a united Ireland and of Irish workers. Terry and I have worked together on so many Irish issues, and we have agreed to continue working together in the years ahead.

So, for me, this is not really a goodbye. Terry and I will stay good friends, working on the causes we believe in,

and hopefully having some nice dinners at his and Yvette's home on the Eastern Shore.

The work Terry began will certainly continue. The fights he advanced shall go on. And as we celebrate Terry's well-earned retirement, we wish him and his family the very, very best on their next adventure.

TRIBUTE TO BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Madam President, finally, on another retirement announced just this afternoon: Let me close by honoring another great friend—beloved, truly beloved Member of our Senate, our dear colleague BEN CARDIN of Maryland, who announced earlier today that he will retire at the end of this term. He is one of my dearest friends in the Senate and has been for a very long time and someone I have always admired for favoring substance over flash, for digging deeply into issues, and for his ability time and time again to persuade his colleagues of the justice of his causes, often working across the aisle to turn his ideas into successful legislation.

In Senator CARDIN, the people of Maryland have been gifted with the consummate public servant. "Consummate public servant," doesn't that describe BEN so well? Whether representing Marylanders in the State House of Delegates or in Congress or in the Senate, BEN's north star has never changed: It is the people he serves, the communities he knows well, and the country he so dearly loves.

And whether in foreign or domestic issues, he put the issues first, the politics second. And in doing so, won the respect of every corner of this Chamber.

As Chair of the Small Business Committee, he spent years fighting for Main Street and been a tireless advocate for job creators and entrepreneurs, especially those who don't always have a seat at the table.

And during COVID, Senator CARDIN's leadership and expertise were absolutely essential as we passed legislation to protect family restaurants, local shop owners, independent businesses. There are tens of thousands, probably hundreds of thousands, of small businesses that are in existence now that wouldn't have been had BEN not fought so hard for them.

So, in conclusion, I wish BEN and Myrna the very best on their road ahead. I have no doubt they will find new ways to serve the State of Maryland moving forward. And we will remain friends forever.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

REMEMBERING JANET GARDNER MULLINS GRISSOM

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, over the weekend, our Nation lost an outstanding public servant, and I lost a dear friend of nearly 40 years.

Janet Gardner Mullins Grissom was a proud daughter of Louisville, a trail-blazing government leader, and my very first Chief of Staff here in the Senate. She passed away at the age of 73.

I believe Janet was a 29-year-old single mom when she and her young daughter Shannon arrived here in the Nation's Capital, determined to start a new chapter. To give you a sense of Janet's spirit, here is what she would later say about her first job interview:

I told them I could take dictation, which I couldn't, but I figured I could learn.

Janet had smarts. She had tenacity. And she had a communication style that one might delicately call direct. Our hometown newspaper would later report that she had "a salty tongue." Well, that was putting it mildly. She was a riot. She was a force of nature. And those qualities fueled a meteoric rise.

By the time I met Janet at some parent-teacher function at both of our daughters' school back in 1983, she had already ascended to the top rank of Senate staffers and actually left Washington to go back home to Louisville.

As you can imagine, I had to cajole Janet into heading up my long-shot first Senate campaign. I understand Shannon only permitted her mom to take the job and the potential return to Washington that winning might entail because Janet had assured her there was virtually no chance we would pull it off. Surprisingly, we did pull it off. We packed our boxes for Washington. I believe Shannon at least got a new puppy for a consolation prize.

Janet's veteran know-how helped me hit the ground running and make an impact from the start. She could ask for sensitive meetings, explain detailed policy issues, and curse a blue streak at some unruly reporter—and that she would all do before lunchtime. You couldn't imagine a better friend to have in your corner.

I believe she was the first woman to serve two different Senators as chief of staff. After my office, Janet's next stop was the political operation of then-Vice President Bush. That is where she met James A. Baker after he left President Reagan's Cabinet to oversee the Bush campaign in 1988. Apparently, while the other campaign staff greeted the famous newcomer with the awe and deference one might expect, Janet marched down the hallway barefoot and said: "Hey, Jim, nice to meet you." Everyone else recoiled, but Jim Baker laughed. When he became Bush 41's Secretary of State, Janet went with him and served as Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs. When Baker became White House Chief of Staff, Janet went with him and became an assistant to the President. And when Janet left government for the private sector, she kept on blazing trails. She spent a decade helping steer the Ford Motor Company as a senior officer.

So Janet Mullins Grissom built a prototypical Washington, DC, power-

house resume by being a thoroughly untypical Washington person. Brilliant and accomplished, yes, but tough as nails and a little rough around the edges in the best ways.

That same spine of steel helped Janet hold a serious illness at bay for a number of years. Up to just a few days ago, she was still in the fray, still tweeting up a storm on politics and media criticism, relishing the good fight right to the end.

Janet lived to see her most lasting legacy come full circle. Her older grandson, Harry, has a startup business. Her younger grandson, Sam, has gone into political communications himself. He even spent a couple of years in my office as an outstanding speechwriter and press aide. I know Janet was thrilled to see the boys thriving.

Elaine and I send our deepest condolences to Janet's husband Tom, her beloved daughter Shannon, and her grandchildren, Harry and Sam, and all the family members, friends, and colleagues mourning this tremendous loss.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. 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.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I am here to discuss the Defense Department's financial audits—or, more accurately, the lack of credible audits. My colleagues know that I am as stubborn as a mule when it comes to my oversight work of the Pentagon's accounting system—or lack of system.

I wish I could stop sounding like a broken record when talking about the Pentagon's financial track record.

The fact is that the Pentagon is pig-headed when it comes to accounting for taxpayer dollars. It keeps pouring billions of dollars into an antiquated accounting system that doesn't work.

Late last year, I read an article that appeared in a national security blog. The blog is called War on the Rocks. This blog article is called "The Pentagon Can't Count: It's Time to Reinvent the Audit." It was written by Steve Blank, a business professor at Stanford University.

As a former member of the Defense Business Board, the professor calls for a whole new approach to defense auditing. The Pentagon is spending \$1 billion a year—and these are his quotes—"to get incrementally better" and still, according to him, clean opinions are nowhere in sight.

He raises a legitimate question: Why is the Pentagon spending so much money for so little results—meaning money on audits?

Thinking outside the box was not in the Defense Business Board's charter,