

in our State. And there, the Inflation Reduction Act is blowing new life into Ljungstrom. This is a company that used to make coal technology equipment and has transitioned to making parts for wind turbines and is hiring 150 new workers, all in a place where people thought they didn't have much of a history, because they knew the coal industry was declining.

It has happened all over America. In Georgia, Hyundai and LG announced they are increasing their multibillion dollar investment towards a major EV and battery manufacturing plant, one that will be the State's largest project ever, creating thousands of good-paying jobs in years to come. And in New Mexico, Arcosa broke ground on a new wind tower production facility expected to create 250 new jobs. These jobs will help fill the over \$1 billion worth of wind tower orders they have received since President Biden signed the IRA into law. These investments, and many others, are supporting the whole of America, red and blue States, rural and urban, everyone, everywhere. And you can be sure the best is yet to come.

Last month, we saw other examples of implementation, too. Over the past few weeks, President Biden made groundbreaking announcements on lowering the cost of prescription drugs, on prevailing wage, and more. Many of these are a direct result of the work that we have done in the Congress.

So Democrats are very proud of the agenda now taking hold across America, and we intend to keep going.

Now the Senate gavel back into session with a lot to do, but there is one clear place to begin: Keep the government open. As we all know, government funding is set to expire on September 30. By the end of this month, the House and Senate—Democrats and Republicans—all must get on the same page about keeping the government open and avoiding a pointless shutdown—a shutdown that will hurt just about every single American; a shutdown that, of course, shouldn't happen.

To accomplish that, the answer is very simple: All sides must work together in good faith, without engaging in extremism or all-or-nothing tactics.

Look no further than the example we have set here in a bipartisan way in the Senate: Democrats working with Republicans on a bipartisan basis; chairs, Democratic chairs, engaging fruitfully with Republican vice chairs and ranking members. All 12 appropriations bills have been reported out of committee with bipartisan support, some of them unanimously—unanimously. Both sides avoided dragging the process down with unseemly tactics. It sets a very good template for how things should work in Congress.

I want to thank all my colleagues, but especially Appropriations Chair PATTY MURRAY and Vice Chair SUSAN COLLINS, for their tremendous work thus far on the appropriations process. They truly deserve a lot of credit.

When the House returns next week, I hope House Republicans—I implore House Republicans to recognize that time is short to keep the government open and that the only way—the only way—we will finish the appropriations process is through bipartisanship, the idea of both parties working together, not one party, particularly if it is a party governed by an extreme 30 or 40 Members filling out a wish list that they know can't pass. They can't do that.

So let me repeat. Let me say it again. The only way to avoid a shutdown is through bipartisanship. So I urge—I plead—with House Republican leadership to follow the Senate's lead and pass bipartisan Democrat and Republican appropriations bills supported by both parties.

As we work to fund the government, there are plenty of other things we must do, too, both on and off the floor. We will, for one, continue laying a foundation for bipartisan congressional action on AI. Next Wednesday, along with Senators ROUNDS, HEINRICH, and YOUNG, I will host the Senate's inaugural AI Insight Forum, a first-ever convening of the top minds in AI here in the Congress. Voices from business and the civil rights community, researchers, worker advocates, and many more, all in one room having an open discussion about how Congress can act on AI: where to start, what questions to ask, and how to build a foundation for safe AI innovation.

These AI forums are vital. Artificial intelligence is unlike any topic we have undertaken in Congress. It moves faster; it is more complex; and there is little precedent for this kind of work.

This is not going to be easy. In fact, it will be one of the most difficult things we undertake, but in the 21st century, as technology moves forward with or without us, we can't behave like ostriches with heads in the sand when it comes to AI. We must treat AI with the same level of seriousness as national security, job creation, and our civil liberties.

Now, ultimately, of course, the real legislative work will come in committees, but the AI forums will give us the nutrient agar, the facts and the challenges, that we need to understand in order to reach this goal.

Of course, next week's forum is just the start. The Senate will continue hosting AI forums throughout the fall on a variety of topics, including finding ways to promote AI innovation, IP issues, workforce issues, privacy, security, alignment, and many more.

We will also move the ball forward on other items on our agenda wherever we can, but of course they will need Republican help to reach the necessary 60 votes to move forward, like lowering the cost of insulin and prescription drugs, something Members on both sides of the aisle are hard at work on. We did it in the IRA for insulin for Medicare for people over 65. We should do it for everybody else. Insulin is too

vital and becoming too expensive for too many Americans. And making progress on cannabis through the SAFE Banking Act, as well as commonsense rail safety, which I said in July would be a big priority.

We also must build on the work we did during the NDAA to outcompete the Chinese Government, to keep the American people safe, to protect American businesses, and ensure that American innovation and technology leads the way this century.

We also must continue standing with our friends in Ukraine, now more than ever, as the counteroffensive against Putin's forces is in full swing.

And we must stand with our fellow Americans in places like Hawaii, Florida, Vermont, and other regions battered by storms and fires and flooding.

The topics continue: from advancing a farm bill to kids' online privacy, to reauthorizing the FAA, and to holding bank executives accountable for irresponsible behavior.

Our committees have done excellent work to move all of these issues along, but we are under no illusion that we can make progress on the Senate floor unless we get bipartisan cooperation. None of this will be easy either. The bills will require a lot of work and compromise, but if we can progress on these items, we will greatly improve the lives of average Americans.

Finding bipartisan compromise on issues like these is never easy, but that is what it will take to get things done, and our efforts to do precisely that have already led to significant accomplishments under this majority. As we gavel back in, we will keep going to reward the trust the American people have placed in us.

NOMINATION OF JACOB J. LEW

Mr. President, finally, on Jack Lew, earlier today, President Biden announced that he has nominated Jack Lew to be the next Ambassador to Israel. Israel is one of America's most important allies and will remain an essential partner in the years ahead on security, tech innovation, and cultural ties, so it is vital we have a strong American Ambassador in Jerusalem.

Mr. Lew is precisely the person for the job of Ambassador to Israel whom we need. As former Treasury Secretary and Chief of Staff under President Obama, he will bring a wealth of experience and diplomatic skill that will ensure the partnership between the United States and Israel remains strong.

And do you know why else I know Jack Lew will do a great job? He is a proud Queens boy and a graduate of Forest Hills High School, which I used to represent in Congress.

I commend President Biden for nominating Mr. Lew, and I look forward to his nomination in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

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. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

KENTUCKY STATE WORK PERIOD

Mr. McCONNELL. Well, Mr. President, I am glad to welcome our colleagues back from the August work period. Spending time back in our States with the folks we represent isn't just part of our job; more than anything else, it is what allows us to be effective here in Washington.

Now, one particular moment of my time back home has received its fair share of attention in the press over the past week, but I assure you, August was a busy and productive month for me and my staff back in the Commonwealth.

I kicked off the month in West Kentucky and then in my hometown of Louisville, where I met with small businesses and community leaders. We had a candid conversation on the critical issues facing our State, from relentless inflation straining families and business owners to the challenge of finding workers in a lagging labor market.

I also had a chance to travel to the eastern part of Kentucky, where I met with healthcare and recovery workers in Manchester. Tragically, the substance abuse crisis has become even deadlier in recent years, especially in my home State. So we discussed what we are doing to combat it and find ways the Federal Government can fill the gaps.

I also welcomed Dr. Rahul Gupta, the national drug czar, back to the Commonwealth to hear more about what we are doing to fight back against addiction. I look forward to continue working with Dr. Gupta to make Kentucky a safe and healthier place.

Throughout the month, I was pleased to see over \$6 million go toward addressing the opioid crisis at home. This Federal funding will go a long way in supporting programs that offer a lifeline to countless Kentuckians who struggle with substance abuse.

In Bowling Green, I met with community bankers to discuss what Senate Republicans are doing to put a check on the Biden administration's reckless spending and regulatory overreach.

At the Kentucky State Fair I had a chance to indulge in some of the best that the Bluegrass has to offer, like the Farm Bureau's famous Ham Breakfast. This event is a highlight of mine every August, and this year was no exception.

I met with farmers from across the State to discuss their priorities and concerns as Congress takes up the all-important farm bill. This input will be vital to our work here in the Senate in the months ahead.

In Northern Kentucky, I wrapped up the month with local business leaders to talk about some of our landmark infrastructure investments underway in the State, like overhauling the Brent Spence Bridge and revitalizing our riverports and railroads.

From rural farm families to businesses of all sizes, every Kentuckian I met voiced the same message: There is too much government and too little being done to boost the economy and help everyday people.

So as the Senate gets back to work in Washington, I will keep these conversations and concerns in the forefront of my mind.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, this month, of course, Congress needs to address our Nation's most pressing needs with timely appropriations, and we need to keep the lights on come October 1.

Back in January, I pointed out to Washington Democrats the new normal they faced. The American people have elected a divided government and demanded that we work together on our most basic governing responsibilities.

Well, as I have reminded our colleagues regularly since then, that has meant funding the government through regular order. It has been encouraging to see Senator COLLINS, Senator MURRAY, and our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee make serious headway in that direction, and next week, we will aim to pass the first batch of their work out here on the floor.

I have also made clear that the Senate's top priority must be keeping the American people safe; and this month, we will have a chance to do that with supplemental appropriations for urgent national security and disaster relief priorities.

We need to continue to invest in America's defense industrial base, both to support our partners in today's fight and to help our own forces deter tomorrow's threats. And as our colleagues from Florida and Hawaii know all too well, emergency personnel are working overtime to help communities shattered by natural disasters over the summer.

So the Senate reconvenes with our work cut out for us and a deadline fast approaching. I hope each of our colleagues has returned ready to do their part.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

WELCOMING MITCH McCONNELL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was here for the presentation by the Republican leader, and I am happy that he has returned. I told him it was great to see him back and that I couldn't wait to disagree with him; and I am sure I will have an opportunity in the near future.

RURAL HEALTH

Mr. President, I spent the August recess in my crisscrossing the State of Illinois, which was a pretty big oper-

ation. One tip to the other is about 350 miles and a couple hundred miles across. I tried to make a point of not only visiting the population center—Chicago and the suburbs around it—but to go Downstate too. My focus Downstate was to visit small towns and rural areas and to go to the hospitals and sit down with the administrator and ask him what was going on with that local hospital.

The Acting President pro tempore knows this from the State he represents. These small-town hospitals are really the lifelines for these communities. They are great sources of pride. They are great sources of employment. They are there for critical medical care, and God forbid you lose one, it really is devastating to a community.

I found, as I went around the State and sat down with hospital leaders and public health officials and other healthcare providers, that several messages came through loud and clear. We spoke about the struggling rural hospitals, and it applies to the hospitals in the urban areas as well. Not only are they lifelines for emergency medical care but they are the backbones of the local economies of these communities. Nationwide, rural hospitals, in particular, are really struggling. Half operate in the red. They are losing money, and more than 300 across the Nation are at immediate risk of closure.

I had a memorable visit to Iroquois County, IL—that is south of Chicago, south Kankakee—and I went to the hospital that has been there for decades and is a great source of pride. They were really worried when they contacted our office that they wouldn't be able to keep the lights on in that hospital. So we worked to help them obtain something called "critical access hospital" status under Medicare. Several of the community leaders, when I went there to make the announcement that they had been approved, said that we saved the hospital with that common effort.

I have a bipartisan bill with Senator JAMES LANKFORD. Senator LANKFORD and I are as opposite politically as they come in this Chamber. He is a Republican from Oklahoma and is very conservative, but he has joined me in extending the lifeline to additional rural hospitals that are facing closure. Our bill would create some flexibility around the strict Federal definitions that a hospital must be literally 35 miles or more away from others to qualify for payment designation. Senator LANKFORD and I believe that characteristics of the hospital and its role in the community should also be factors in determining eligibility.

I hope the Finance Committee will take this up now and take it seriously. We can save dozens of hospitals nationwide by preserving vital access to healthcare for patients in rural areas.

But my No. 1 takeaway from hospitals in the city of Chicago, in the suburbs, and in Downstate was very