

## GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Madam President, on a different subject, that of the minibus and the vote that just occurred, the outcome of this vote on the minibus is wholly disappointing and undermines months of hard work appropriators have done to move appropriations bills through regular order. Senators MURRAY and COLLINS have done herculean work as have the members of their committee.

Democrats have worked cooperatively with Republicans on every step of this process. We pursued regular order. We are willing to allow votes on amendments, and we are partnering with colleagues on the other side of the aisle to bring this minibus to the floor.

Senate Republicans have asked us to work with them, and we have worked with them. Until now, we were making progress, but now a few select Republicans who seem to think they are Members of the House Freedom Caucus have thrown a wrench into the process and for no other reason than the pursuit of gridlock itself.

So the outcome here is disappointing, but it is not the end of the process. I filed a motion to reconsider this vote. Democrats want to reach an agreement with our Republican colleagues that will pass the minibus and make up the time lost because of Senator JOHNSON's obstruction. My Democratic colleagues and I will do our very best to get the minibus done. We have come very far, and there is no good reason for us to turn back now.

With that, I yield the floor to the great President pro tempore, chair of the Appropriations Committee, my friend and colleague, the senior Senator from the great State of Washington, Mrs. PATTY MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I thank the majority leader.

Let's be clear. The three bills in that package are not partisan bills. This was not some secretive process. We drafted these bills through an open, bipartisan process. We held hearings. We held markups for the first time in years. We kept our doors open to any Member with thoughts or concerns. So it is very frustrating to see that this bipartisan effort got derailed today despite all of that work and despite the overwhelming consensus last week that we wanted to all get started on this package.

All of our colleagues and their staffs who spent long hours working on these bills in good faith deserve better. More importantly, all of our constituents who sent us here to advocate for them, to work together, and to solve problems deserve better.

I will keep fighting to make sure we do right by our constituents and keep our regular appropriations process moving here in the Senate. As my colleagues know, I don't give up easily, and I am not going to give up here either. I am going to keep pushing with everything I have got to pass the

spending bills that so many of us have spent so much time working on to get our communities the resources they need.

Yet I do have to say today that I am deeply disappointed. I am not new to politics. I am not new to tough votes or setbacks. I know that this work is never easy, but it is really unfortunate that this overwhelming bipartisan process and this package of bills that passed unanimously has been stymied by the objections of just a few Senators. That is upsetting, and it is pretty hard to square with a lot of the talk that we hear all the time about wanting to work together, wanting to break the pattern of partisanship, wanting to help people, wanting to solve problems, to say nothing of how some of our loudest complainers who have been talking big about their commitment for us to return to regular order and who have been railing against these omnibus bills at the end of the year have led the effort to halt our best shot in years of actually getting closer to regular order and, instead, possibly setting us on a collision course for another massive omnibus.

While this full package may not be moving forward right now through this process, I will not stop working to return this process back to regular order and keep things moving. I will keep talking to colleagues about how we get all 12 of our bipartisan spending bills across the finish line here in the Senate. I will keep working to see if we can get that consent agreement that will allow us to move forward on this package.

As we get closer to September 30, I am working hard to make sure we chart a bipartisan course for a CR and supplemental funding package so that we can avoid a damaging and completely unnecessary shutdown and reject the devastating cuts from the House Republicans that would gut everything from heating assistance to FAA funding, to the Social Security Administration, and so much more, and that will provide critical resources for things like disaster relief and wildland firefighters and our allies in Ukraine.

I came to Congress to help people and solve problems. That is what gets me up every day in the morning. It is what I am focused on at every meeting I have, in every bill I write, and in every vote I take. And while this vote a few minutes ago sent a disheartening message about the state of things, it will not be the last word, because I won't let it be, and I know many of my colleagues will not either.

One thing I have seen over and over again in my time here is, if you want progress, you don't leave the table, and you keep working. So I am going to stay at the table. I will keep working. Right now, we have to get a bipartisan CR and a supplemental package done. That is a priority.

But I hope and I believe, through the work that we do, that we will show the

American people there are still Senators on both sides of this aisle determined to get our work done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FETTERMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

## ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, in the mountains of Nagorno-Karabakh, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding. Azerbaijan's blockade of the Lachin corridor has left over 100,000 ethnic Albanians cut off from the world—deprived of the food, the water, fuel, and medical care that they need to survive.

Last week, one resident made a plea. She asked:

How many more people will have to die before the world takes notice?

Today, that question carries new meaning as the Armenian people not only confront dwindling resources but heavy bombardment. On September 19, Azerbaijan violated the fragile peace and began attacking Nagorno-Karabakh. While a cease-fire was announced this morning, we cannot ignore the violence, and we must stand with the citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh.

This conflict systematically targets the Armenian people. It is cruel; it is calculated; and it is inhumane—further demonstrating that the Armenian people are facing an existential threat. Experts from the International Criminal Court say there is reason to believe it amounts to an act of genocide. That word would always sound an alarm, but it creates a particular weight with the Armenian people and evokes a devastating chapter of their history.

The government of Azerbaijan has orchestrated a humanitarian disaster, only to further their political and their territorial claims. The blockade of the Lachin corridor has kept essential supplies out of the region since June. Pregnant women are being forced to walk miles to a medical clinic. Fuel shortages have shut down schools and sidelined emergency vehicles. People get sick from untreated water and then visit pharmacies with empty shelves.

Food shortages run rampant. Officials in Nagorno-Karabakh estimate that 95 percent of residents are suffering from malnutrition. Starving citizens are lining up for bread in the streets and wondering how they will find their family's next meal. The use of military force by Azerbaijan will only further endanger citizens who have already endured so much.

The Biden administration has provided some crucial assistance, and the Azerbaijani Government has announced a theoretical agreement to open the Lachin corridor once again. But that deal has yet to bring the Armenian people out of harm's way. The

bombardment began after it was reached, and this increasing military aggression has only deepened the humanitarian crisis.

The Aliyev regime has now demanded that Nagorno-Karabakh's government be dissolved and the ethnic Armenian troops be removed. The Azerbaijan Government has made it clear their goal is to erase the historic presence of Armenians in this region.

Until it is proven that this cruel campaign has ended, we must be vigilant. Until the people of Nagorno-Karabakh have what they need to survive and to walk freely in their home once again, we cannot stand to the side.

In the midst of these unthinkable conditions, residents have taken to the streets, calling for an end to the blockade. We must join their chorus—shedding a light on Azerbaijan's actions and addressing the immediate threat of ethnic violence. And I encourage the Biden administration to remember these crimes against humanity when considering where to send aid and to apply diplomatic pressure.

If we continue to let this crisis devolve, then we are complicit in the violence. I call on my Senate colleagues and the Biden administration to stand against the cruelty of the Azerbaijan Government and stand by the side of the Armenian people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Ms. ROSEN assumed the Chair.)

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motions filed during today's session ripen at 3:30 p.m.; that if cloture is invoked on the Brown nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired at 6:30 p.m.; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from New Hampshire.

#### AGRICULTURAL DISASTER RELIEF

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to the floor today to discuss the urgent need for Congress to provide relief for recent agricultural disasters.

I appreciate that circumstances around the appropriations process have changed somewhat since we prepared these remarks, but what I really want to do this afternoon is to highlight the

devastating experiences of New Hampshire growers this year and explain why it is so urgent for them that Congress provide disaster relief.

In New Hampshire, our growers have faced an unprecedented difficult year. A late frost on the evening of May 18 caused enormous damage to fruit crops across New Hampshire but especially to our apple orchards.

These photos really depict what happened to most of the apple crops in New Hampshire. You can see that these almost look like chestnuts as they are so small and stunted and brown. In this, you can barely make out that it is an apple, and you can see the size of them based on the impact from the frost.

This event followed an extreme freeze in February that wiped out virtually 100 percent of our peach crops and other stone fruits.

My office has been hearing from apple growers who lost 80 to 100 percent of their crops this year as well as from New Hampshire growers who lost up to 100 percent of other crops, such as peaches, pears, plums, blueberries, strawberries, grapes, and cherries.

For people who think "Well, you don't have that many orchards in New Hampshire," we have the largest apple orchard of New England in New Hampshire.

This is a big concern for our farmers in the State, and they make up a considerable percentage of our small businesses. What we have seen is total crop losses for some growers and near-total losses for others.

The business impact of such catastrophic damage goes way beyond the direct cost of damage to the crops because, in New Hampshire, we have a strong tradition, as I know they do in other States, of families who visit their local orchards every year to "pick your own" apples and other fruit. For local farms, these visits aren't just about that actual apple picking; it is an opportunity to showcase everything their farms have to offer, to display other products for families to purchase—vegetables that have grown during the season, baked goods, apple cider, applesauce. Everything that can be made from apples is available at those farm stands.

Apple picking marks the start of autumn in New Hampshire. We are currently well into September and what should be apple-picking season. This past weekend should have seen busy crowds at farms across New Hampshire, with families apple picking, eating cider doughnuts, and sipping apple cider, but, sadly, this was not the case.

I heard from growers like Trevor Hardy from Brookdale Fruit Farm in Hollis, who called his counterparts at Meadow Ledge Farm in Loudon, at Poverty Lane Orchards in Lebanon, and other orchards to learn that it wasn't just his farm that lacked the usual bustling energy of children and families on the farm. Local growers across the State, like Windy Ridge Or-

chard in North Haverhill, are concerned that families won't come this season for their annual farm visits, and the total resulting revenue losses will be enormous.

For a lot of families—and my family is no exception—going to the local pick-your-own orchard to get whether it be apples or pumpkins or vegetables is an annual event. My daughter and her four children have had pictures taken in the pumpkin patch in the nearby farm every year that those kids have been home.

I had a chance to meet with a number of farmers last Friday. One of the things they talked about was the concern that they have longtime customers who are not going to be able to enjoy their farms this year because of the impact from the frost. New Hampshire growers are estimated to be facing as much as \$20 million in disaster-related impacts from these freeze events. This estimate doesn't even include the ongoing impacts to vegetable growers and forage crops from flooding and excessive moisture. The total cost for that is still being tabulated.

This is the Brookdale Fruit Farm, which is the biggest orchard in New Hampshire. It is in Hollis. It is the biggest orchard in New England. We can see this is a rainstorm that happened about 2 weeks ago, and you can just see the water cascading through the orchard because of the flooding. The impact that this is having on next year's crop, on vegetables, is really still being tabulated but is excessive across the State.

I am hearing from longtime New Hampshire growers that they have never seen crop damage this bad before. Last week, when I visited with farmers, I went to Apple Hill Farm in Concord along with a number of apple growers from different regions in the State. Chuck and Diane Souther, who own Apple Hill Farm, showed me the severe losses their apple crops have suffered this year. They showed me apples that looked very much like these apples. They told me about the devastating effects of the late frost on their orchards and how they stayed out all night on May 18, during the freezing-cold temperatures, to try to protect their crop and save as many of their trees as they could. They told me in heartbreaking detail about the impact on their businesses and how disappointed they are not to be able to provide apples to their annual customers.

I hope that families in New Hampshire will still visit their local orchards. Some still have some apples to pick, and they still have other products to buy and other activities for kids to enjoy. In a year like this, we need to support our local farmers more than ever.

Before I close, I want to read some comments from a letter that was shared with my office from Ken Merrill, who is an apple grower in Londonderry, NH. His family owns and operates Oliver Merrill & Sons, which is a