

Then I defended our Connecticut law in the Connecticut courts with many of the same arguments that we used to challenge Federal law.

She stood alone in those days as an advocate and a champion of gun violence prevention, and she modeled the curve that has led to the modern movement of gun violence prevention. And it is a movement now because she knew it would require the American people to be as outraged as she was and saddened by the death that she personally witnessed in San Francisco. And she would often recall it in very personal terms.

For her, all of these causes were personal. Her service and her helping people were personal. And she understood that service and results, accomplishments, required that we be bipartisan, that we work across the aisle, that we work with people who disagreed with us and try to find common ground. That is what she did relentlessly and tirelessly.

So her service, her grace, her generosity, her sensitivity, her caring will continue in the people that are her legacy, in the people who will and should, always, preserve her memory as a motivation for continued service.

I am proud to have been her friend as well as her colleague, and I will always treasure the great and good model and mentorship that she provided for so many of us, as we go through these next days of grief and pain but also joy in knowing her.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Todd Gee, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi for the term of four years.

VOTE ON GEE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gee nomination?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator

from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 82, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 244 Ex.]

YEAS—82

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Barrasso	Heinrich	Ricketts
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Risch
Blackburn	Hirono	Romney
Blumenthal	Hoeben	Rosen
Booker	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Boozman	Kaine	Rubio
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Budd	Kennedy	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Lankford	Sullivan
Casey	Lee	Tester
Collins	Lujan	Thune
Coons	Lummis	Tillis
Cornyn	Manchin	Tuberville
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Cotton	McConnell	Vance
Crapo	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Moran	Warren
Ernst	Mullin	Welch
Fetterman	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Fischer	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wicker
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden
Grassley	Padilla	Young
Hagerty	Peters	

NAYS—8

Braun	Hawley	Schmitt
Britt	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Paul	

NOT VOTING—9

Capito	Daines	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Marshall	Smith
Cramer	Sanders	Stabenow

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the McGrath nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Tara K. McGrath, of California, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of California for the term of four years.

VOTE ON MCGRATH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the McGrath nomination?

Mr. SCHATZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms.

SMITH), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 245 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Tester
Casey	Manchin	Tillis
Collins	Markey	Van Hollen
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Welch
Fetterman	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Graham	Padilla	
Grassley	Peters	

NAYS—37

Barrasso	Hawley	Risch
Blackburn	Hoeben	Romney
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Braun	Johnson	Schmitt
Britt	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Budd	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tuberville
Crapo	McConnell	Vance
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	Young
Fischer	Paul	
Hagerty	Ricketts	

NOT VOTING—10

Capito	Kaine	Smith
Cassidy	Marshall	Stabenow
Cramer	Sanders	
Daines	Scott (SC)	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session. The Senator from Alaska.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2835

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I am on the floor again with my colleague from Texas, Senator CRUZ, trying once again to pass our Pay Our Military Act.

I am not going to spend a lot of time explaining what we are trying to do here since 48 hours ago we tried to do the same thing. We are, in our conference, right now trying to get to a compromise, working through things to make sure we don't have a government shutdown. It may or may not happen. It is looking more likely, though.

As we get closer to that moment, the idea that we would leave the men and women who protect this country uncertain about whether they are going to get paid even though they are still going to deploy, they are still going to be fighting all over the world, protecting this Nation—so we are going to leave them out hanging, right?

So all we are trying to do is the most commonsense thing you could do if you cared one bit about the troops of the United States, and that is to say: Hey, we know you are worried. We know you are probably deployed. We know your wife or spouse is back home worried about whether you are going to get paid next week. You have a dangerous mission you are going on tonight somewhere in the world. So we are going to take that worry away from you because we care about you.

Now, granted, my colleagues might say: Well, what about the IRS worker? What about the Department of the Interior worker?

No offense—there is a little bit of a difference, OK. There is a little bit of a difference. We all know it. We should know it.

So as we get closer, this is the bipartisan solution that we all need to undertake.

Here is the thing: As I said last week, when we had the identical situation in 2013, 10 years ago—identical: a Democrat-controlled Senate, a Republican-controlled House, a Democrat-controlled White House—it was looking like there was going to be a shutdown. What did everybody unanimously agree to? Hey, let's take the troops out of this. Let's make sure the men and women who serve in our military are not worried. Let's unanimously pass the Pay Our Military Act.

So, 10 years ago, we did that. I wasn't here, but I applaud everybody who did that. Simple. Identical. Identical. So what has changed? I have no idea what has changed.

It looks like my Democratic colleague is going to come down and object and make some gobbledygook argument about appropriations or "Let's keep trying." The government is going to shut down tomorrow evening. We are going to keep trying. But let's take one group of Americans and say: Hey, we know you sacrifice more than anybody. We are going to take that worry away from you. We did it 10 years ago in a bipartisan way, so we are going to do it again.

The Presiding Officer knows. I guarantee you the Presiding Officer agrees with this bill, as a veteran of almost 30 years, a naval aviator. The Presiding Officer knows what it is like.

There are guys on aircraft carriers right now and women on aircraft carriers flying F-18s, and their spouses back home are going: Hey, honey, guess what. I don't think I am going to have money to buy groceries next week.

That guy is getting ready to take off on some carrier in the INDOPACOM re-

gion, and he has to worry about that? He has to worry about that? She has to worry about that?

We can fix that right now—right now. We have done it before, and I can't imagine my Democratic colleagues are going to come up and object to this bill. I am starting to get mad. We don't want a government shutdown, but we can protect certain people, for goodness' sake. If we are not going to protect our troops and their families, I don't know whom we should protect.

So maybe my colleagues are on the floor getting ready to say: You know what, gee, Senator SULLIVAN, Senator CRUZ, we relent. These are good ideas. And you know why we know these are good ideas? Because we all did this 10 years ago.

I have no idea why we didn't do it now.

I yield the floor and recognize my colleague from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, unless something significant changes, 35 hours from now, the Federal Government will shut down. At 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, the paychecks will stop for every soldier, every sailor, every airman, every marine, every member of the Space Force, and every coast-guardspman. That is not right.

The good news is, we can prevent it. We can prevent it right now. The bill Senator SULLIVAN and I are trying to pass says that at 12:01 a.m., our Active-Duty military will be paid; that if Washington is dysfunctional, if politicians will bicker throughout the night, that is not their fault, and we are not going to hold them hostage to the partisan demands of politicians.

Right now at home, there are people watching this debate on C-SPAN, and they may be wondering: When did the Senate get this dysfunctional? Did this institution ever operate?

Senator SULLIVAN pointed to a time when it at least operated a little better than it does now.

In 2013, this identical legislation was before the Senate. There was a Democrat majority. Harry Reid was the majority leader. This identical legislation passed 100 to nothing, and it passed unanimously in the House.

In 2013, Senate Democrats realized: Fine, we will have a fight, but we are not holding our Active-Duty military hostage.

In 2013, Senator DURBIN, who is sitting on the floor, voted yes to fund our military. In 2013, Senator WHITEHOUSE, who is sitting on the floor, voted yes to fund our military. In 2013, Senator MURRAY, who I believe is getting ready to stand up and block this bill, in 2013, she voted yes to fund our military. Have we really gone that far in a decade that Democrats now are perfectly happy to take away the paychecks from the young men and women who are risking their lives to keep us safe?

The Presiding Officer spent years in the Active-Duty military. The Pre-

siding Officer is a proud Navy veteran. The Presiding Officer knows men and women who are serving right now in Active Duty, and I feel quite confident the Presiding Officer doesn't want to go home and look them in the eyes and say: It was my party, the Democratic Party, that took your paycheck away.

Well, it doesn't have to happen.

Everyone at home, I want you to listen to what is going to happen in a moment, because there are two magic words. If you hear two magic words from the Senator from Washington—"I object"—if you hear those words, understand what will have happened. It is the same thing that happened just a couple of days ago, which is that Democrat leadership said to our Active-Duty military: We don't give a damn about you, and we are going to cut off your paycheck Sunday at 12:01 a.m.

That doesn't have to happen.

By the way, I would point out not only is it the fault of every Democrat—and I am sorry, Mr. President—it is the fault of every Democrat because there are no Democrats here supporting us. The Presiding Officer, in his heart, knows we are right, so I am going to invite the Presiding Officer, when we do this again—because we are going to keep doing it and keep doing it. I would invite the Presiding Officer to come join us because the Presiding Officer knows this is the right thing to do. And there are more of your colleagues on the Democrat side who know this is the right thing to do.

Some 19-year-old marine right now in the DMZ facing North Korean machine-guns is being told that the U.S. Senate doesn't care enough about his or her service to pay them. That is just wrong. It is stupid.

And this body used to know enough to say: Hey, we have political disagreements here, but we support our troops.

I guarantee you, every Democrat Senator in this Chamber goes home and tells your constituents: I support the troops.

You know what? Talk is cheap. If you support the troops, stand up next to us and say: Let's pay the troops.

And by the way, if you support the troops, go to your leadership and say: Stop this garbage.

Was Harry Reid a rightwing kook? Because Harry Reid signed off on paying the troops. And I will tell you why today's Democrat leadership believes they can get away with it—because in 2013, we had something of a functioning media. They actually reported on what was happening. If you look up in the Gallery, there are a total of zero reporters there. There is not one.

The corrupt corporate media doesn't intend to tell the citizens of Washington State or the citizens of Illinois or the citizens of Rhode Island or the citizens of Arizona—they don't intend to tell them: Your Democrat Senator is why Active-Duty military isn't being paid.

So every reporter yesterday—I had reporters running after me, going: Oh,

isn't this Republican shutdown terrible?

And I said: Those are great talking points. Have you written a single story about the fact that the reason our military is not going to be paid is because Democrat leadership is objecting?

No. Because none of them have written that story. Every one of you knows what the right thing to do is. And so my hope is there is a tiny, still voice inside of some Democrat Senators that will stand up and go to your leadership and say: We can fight all day long on partisan issues, but we are not going to take our troops hostage.

That is the right thing to do, and every Member of this body knows it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Appropriations be discharged from further consideration of S. 2835 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, as I have said, I share my colleague's concern with making sure that our servicemembers do not miss a paycheck because of a potential government shutdown. In fact, I do not want any of our Federal workers to miss a paycheck, whether they are cancer researchers whose work saves our lives or brave firefighters who risk their lives for us, and I don't want any programs families rely on to be undermined: counseling and transition assistance for new veterans adjusting to civilian life, nutrition assistance for 7 million moms and kids who need a hand up. And that includes our servicemembers' families.

Several years ago, I worked to save a WIC clinic which was going to be kicked off a Navy base in my home State of Washington that hundreds of military families counted on. None of those paychecks for any of these workers and none of those programs should shutter because of a completely unnecessary shutdown, which is why I am working around the clock with the majority of our colleagues to make sure that we do pass a bipartisan CR, which we released this week, because that is the only serious solution here. That is the only way that we will make sure everyone is able to keep doing the work that the American people count on and getting that paycheck that they do deserve.

If the Senator from Alaska or the Senator from Texas are serious about making sure our servicemembers get paid, I hope they will get serious in a way that matters the most, and that is their votes. I hope they will work with us to keep the government open. And I

hope they will reconsider their recent votes against the CR to fund the government in a bipartisan and timely way.

Let's be real. You cannot grandstand about wanting to make sure that servicemembers get paid during a shutdown and then vote against the very bipartisan bill that prevented a shutdown.

I also hope the Senators will understand that our servicemembers will see the harm of a government shutdown in so many other ways. Permanent change-in-station moves will be significantly curtailed, meaning that some of our families could be left without a place to live if they have already sold their house or broken their lease or they could be forced to pay for two homes at once. For the Army alone, this means approximately 2,100 moves every week. And if you do not work with us to keep the entire government open, servicemembers' elective surgeries and procedures at DOD medical and dental facilities would have to be postponed. And, by the way, an elective surgery could be anything from removing a kidney stone to a mastectomy for breast cancer.

Essentially, post and base services will be closed or severely limited. That is everything from our commissary statewide to childcare our military families count on.

So not only do I want to make sure that our servicemembers don't miss a paycheck, I want to make sure that our servicemembers don't miss out on any critical services they rely on every day.

The Senators should also understand that their focus and support of the military cannot end with those who are currently in uniform. And they should remember, 47 percent of Department of Defense civilians are veterans. And for that matter, one in every four employees across the entire Federal Government are veterans. We can't leave anyone behind.

So I will say it again for my colleagues who raise their voices here on the Senate floor but have not cast their votes to prevent a shutdown: There are a lot of programs I care about, a lot of programs we all care about that would be hurt by a shutdown. But we are not going to solve this problem one by one, carve-out by carve-out. The best solution is to stop a shutdown in the first place. That is something we can do. And I bet we could do it a lot more quickly if the Senators from Alaska and Texas would earnestly work with us.

This isn't complicated. We have a straightforward, bipartisan CR package that will avoid that shutdown, keep our military paid. So let's get our jobs done and get that passed. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I am going to try to keep this short because the issues that we are debating here are not that complicated.

I agree with my colleague from Washington State. We are working around the clock. We are in our conference right now trying to get an amendment to bolster border security, that the whole country, by the way, wants—Democrats, Republicans—the whole country wants that. So we are working around the clock too.

And my colleague did misstate something. I actually voted to get on this bill. I voted to get on this bill. So her statement about my vote, she needs to check my vote the other day.

But be that as it may, once again, she says there is only one serious solution. Well, this body has done this before. The Senator from Washington State has done this before. On the eve of a shutdown in 2013, the Senator from Washington State voted for this bill. Every Senator voted for this bill.

So when she keeps saying, "Let's get real," I agree, let's get real. Go look at your vote from 2013. You voted for this on the eve of a shutdown.

I will remind my colleague from Washington State, in 2019, when there was a partial government shutdown, focused on the Coast Guard which wasn't getting paid and the Democrats blocked my bill to pay the Coast Guard, she actually stated:

It is absolutely unacceptable that our Coast Guard families went without their paychecks during the shutdown. We need to make sure President Trump doesn't put them through this again.

Well, I am going to put the Senator from Washington State's words back at her: It is absolutely unacceptable that Coast Guard and other family members went without paychecks during the shutdown. We need to make sure it doesn't happen again. So vote for our bill.

Every time they object, the arguments of why they are objecting to something they already agreed to 10 years ago get more tangled up. We are all working to avoid a shutdown, but if it doesn't happen, let's make sure the men and women who are risking their lives for our country and their families know that they are going to get paid. That is all we are asking. That is all we are asking.

And everybody in this body 10 years ago did this, including the Senator from Washington State. And it is just beyond comprehension that they are coming up with arguments now to not do this.

This isn't about politics. This is about supporting our troops at the moment they really need it. And they are not doing it.

I yield the floor to my colleague from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, at the opening of her remarks, the Senator from Washington said: I agree with the objective of this bill; I agree with what Senator SULLIVAN and Senator CRUZ are trying to accomplish. Then she talked for a while, and then she

blocked the entirety of the bill. Everything in between, saying, “I agree with this bill,” and the two magic words at the end of her remarks, “I object.” I have to admit brought me back to Saturday morning cartoons and watching “Peanuts” and the teacher going: “Wah wah wah wah” because they were words, but they didn’t mean anything.

This is a binary choice. At 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, are soldiers going to get paid, yes or no? Are sailors going to get paid, yes or no? Are airmen going to get paid, yes or no? Are marines going to get paid, yes or no? Are members of the Space Force going to get paid, yes or no? Are coastguardsmen going to get paid, yes or no?

A decade ago, every Member of this body voted to pay them. Since this debate began, the Presiding Officer had been Senator KELLY and has now been replaced by Senator MURPHY from Connecticut. I would point out, Senator MURPHY voted yes to pay our Active-Duty military in 2013. And yet now the Democrats are blocking those paychecks.

The Senator from Washington said: Well, gosh, the Democrats had a CR that you could have voted for. The Senator from Washington knows fully well that the bill drafted by Democrat leadership is not going to pass the House of Representatives. She knows that. The result is going to be a shutdown. And what has changed from 2013 to now? From 2013 to now, the Democrat leadership is perfectly willing to hold a young man or woman in the military—to hold their paychecks hostage.

Well, something interesting is going to happen at 12:01 a.m., 35 hours from now. Paychecks of every Federal employee will stop. The paychecks of the stenographer who is recording my words will stop. The paychecks of the clerks sitting down front will stop.

But, you know what, Mr. President? There are 535 people whose paychecks will not stop. Under the Constitution, Members of this body, Senators and Members of the House, their paychecks can’t stop even during a shutdown, which means at 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, every Democrat Senator will keep drawing their paycheck, while the people risking their lives to defend us will not.

Well, I will tell you, I have in writing instructed the Senate that I will not accept a paycheck so long as our Active-Duty military is not being paid.

It is wrong. Senators are paid \$174,000 a year, by law. The Democrat leadership, who stands up and says, “I object,” is telling a 19-year-old woman in a nuclear sub right now, defending our Nation, that her paycheck doesn’t matter anymore.

There is, right now, a mom in tennis shoes serving in the military who is discovering that her mortgage payment—she doesn’t know how to pay.

And so I am going to suggest to the reporters who aren’t here and aren’t covering this that so long as Democrat leadership keeps blocking what has

been bipartisan and unanimous legislation previously, that every Democrat Senator ought to be asked: Are you taking a paycheck come 12:01 a.m. on Sunday? They are the ones objecting. They are the ones stopping. Every soldier needs to understand: Why are you not being paid? Because the Democrat objected. Every sailor needs to understand: Because the Democrats objected. Every airman, marine, coastguardsman, every member of the Space Force, when your paycheck goes away 35 hours from now, it is because of two magic words the Democrat leadership has said. Let’s be clear, it is not just the Senator from Washington. She is doing it on instruction from the Democrat leadership. They could change it like that.

I can tell you this. Senator SULLIVAN and I are going to keep coming back over and over again because there is not a Member of this body who wants to go home to your State—even a State like Connecticut. You don’t want to be at home looking at Active-Duty military and saying: Yes, my party took away your paycheck. That is too cynical even for this body. I pray that common sense comes back.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

REMEMBERING DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Mr. KENNEDY. Senator FEINSTEIN, Godspeed.

I had the pleasure of serving with Senator FEINSTEIN on the Judiciary Committee. I also served with DIANNE on the Appropriations Committee. In fact, we served on the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee. DIANNE was the chair and I was the ranking member.

DIANNE, you died with your boots on, and I think that was one of the things she most wanted to do.

Senator FEINSTEIN and I didn’t agree on much, but she was a delight to work with. She understood politics and government, especially today. It takes a big heart and a lot of wind and a thick skin, and that is especially true today.

There are some people in this city who didn’t want DIANNE to finish her term for political reasons. They tried to chew her up and tried to spit her out, and they tried to step on her. But they couldn’t do it because DIANNE was tough as a boot, and she wanted to die with her boots on, as a Member of this august body. And I am going to miss her.

Godspeed, Senator FEINSTEIN.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2968

Mr. President, I am here today to try to extend the National Flood Insurance Program. It appears to me—I hope I am wrong, and I know, Mr. President, you agree with me—that we are headed toward a shutdown. If that happens, that means that the National Flood Insurance Program will come to a halt.

I don’t want people to worry too much. If you already have national flood insurance, the program will continue to pay claims. But as long as gov-

ernment is shut down, you will not be able to buy new insurance. That is important because flood insurance is a huge part of the commerce of our real estate markets in America.

For most Americans, the purchase of a home is their biggest single financial decision they will ever make. In many areas—not just coastal States but many other States—you cannot purchase a home, if you have to borrow money, without flood insurance. So if we allow the National Flood Insurance Program to expire, it is going to shut down home sales where the entity loaning the money requires flood insurance. It is just going to shut it down. The real estate industry, for a variety of reasons—in part because of President Biden’s inflation—is already having a tough time, and this will make it worse.

My bill would take the current flood insurance program and just extend it “as is” until December 31, 2023. If we don’t do this—I want to make this clear, as well. Some of my fellow citizens may be saying: What is the big deal? Just don’t buy it from the Federal Government.

You can’t buy it from anybody else. The Federal program, imperfect as it is, is the only game in town. So if you are ready to buy a home and close on a home and you go to a mortgage lender and say, “I need to borrow the money,” and they say you have to buy flood insurance to get the loan, the Federal Government is the only entity you can go to. You cannot buy, for all practical purposes, private flood insurance in America today.

I mentioned that the NFIP was imperfect. I understate it. As I said yesterday on the floor, the National Flood Insurance Program, as administered by FEMA, is a mess. As I said yesterday, it looks like someone knocked over a urine sample.

FEMA made the program even worse a year or so ago with its Risk Rating 2.0. It went out and hired a consultant to design a new algorithm that made changes in the program without telling policy holders the basis for those changes. I met with FEMA a number of times. I said: Can I see your algorithm? They said: If we show you, we have to kill you—and I am in Congress. We are in litigation with FEMA right now.

Let me say it again. Risk Rating 2.0 made it even worse than it already was.

Ever since I have been in the U.S. Senate, I have been working with, I don’t know, 20 different Senators and probably 50 to 100 House members who are involved to try to fix the flood insurance program, and it has been very difficult. We haven’t been able to do it, but we will continue to try.

But in the meantime, the only thing worse than a bad flood insurance program is no flood insurance because, as imperfect as it may be, FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program is the only game in town. And if we allow this program to expire, it is going to

really, really, really hurt the American people. It is going to really, really hurt the real estate industry. It is going to really, really hurt folks out there who have saved money, and they are ready to buy a home, but they can't do it because they can't purchase flood insurance.

For that reason, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 2968—that is my bill that would just extend the current program for flood insurance, imperfect as it may be, until December 31, 2023. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object, once again, we are asked to extend the flood program without any reforms to protect the taxpayers. Like many Federal programs, this Federal program is well-intentioned, but it may very well be the best real-life example of moral hazard.

We are told that the program is funded through insurance premiums, but the premiums are below the market rate, and so the program is eternally and consistently short of money.

A 2014 report by the Government Accountability Office found the flood program collected \$17 billion less than the market would have required. For all practical purposes, the flood program is insolvent.

Just a few years ago, the flood program owed \$30 billion to the taxpayers. Congress later cancelled \$16 billion of that debt, but the flood program has not made any progress in repaying the taxpayers. The total now stands that the flood program owes \$20 billion to the taxpayers with no way of repaying that money.

Perhaps the greatest insult to the taxpayers, though, is the lack of true limits on this delinquent program. There are no limits on how many claims can be filed or how much money can be received for a policyholder. So it isn't that I have a \$3 million flood policy. You could have a \$3 trillion policy. There are no limits. There are also no limits on how big your house could be. You could have a \$10 million house, a \$20 million house, a \$50 million house, and the taxpayers subsidize your house.

Rather than encourage people to leave flood-prone areas, this program encourages people to stay and rebuild time and time again. In thousands of instances, the program encourages people to rebuild and rebuild and rebuild.

According to the Pew Charitable Trusts, over 150,000 properties have been rebuilt over and over again. In fact, 25 to 30 percent of flood program claims are made by the policyholders

whose properties have flooded time and time again. Over 2,000 properties have flooded more than 10 times. One home in Batchelor, LA, flooded 40 times and received a total of \$428,000 of flood insurance payments—40 times. No one should keep rebuilding in a house that floods 40 times. But the record, if you can believe it, isn't Batchelor, LA. It is Virginia, where one home flooded 41 times and received payments of over \$600,000, all subsidized by the taxpayer.

Adding insult to injury, the Congressional Budget Office found that the flood program tends to benefit the wealthy and that 23 percent of the subsidized coastal properties were not even policyholders' primary residences.

Realize what this program is doing. It is subsidizing insurance for the rich and famous for their beach houses. There are no limits. It subsidizes people who have \$10 million homes to get subsidized government insurance. It is true. The government forces the taxpayers to pay and rebuild the summer homes of the rich. In fact, sometimes it seems that the flood program caters directly to the wealthy. Nearly 80 percent of the National Flood Insurance Program policies are located in counties that rank within the top 20 percent of income.

Enough is enough. It is an insult to rob the taxpayers to give to the rich. This is why I offer an amendment that, if we could come to an agreement today, would require that the Federal program not insure your second house, not insure your beach house. If you live there—it is your only house—it will be included. If it is your second house, your beach house, it is not going to be included.

And we would set a cap on the amount. Who in their right mind thinks we should be subsidizing insurance for \$10 million mansions? It is crazy that anybody would think that is what we should do.

I offer a compromise today. Extend the program. Let's keep the program. We will keep the program open. We won't miss a beat. But we will set some limits on the houses.

So what I would like to start with would be a cap of \$250,000. Those houses below 250 would be subsidized, would get subsidized insurance. Up to 250, you buy your own.

Also my proposal would not allow you to use the insurance if this is your vacation home—if this is your secondary home.

So, Mr. President, I ask the Senator to modify his request so that the Paul amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the bill as amended be considered read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. KENNEDY. Reserving the right to modify or not modify.

Senator PAUL, as usual, makes some very good points. I agree with him

wholeheartedly that the National Flood Insurance Program is a mess. It needs to be fixed.

I want to make the record clear that in Louisiana, my people are working people. My coast is a working coast. My people aren't wealthy millionaires who have three or four homes on the beach. These are ordinary people who get up every day, go to work, obey the law, pay their taxes, and try to do the right thing by their kids.

They can barely afford one home. It is not only the coast that we are talking about. In 2016, in the middle of my State—again, not mansions, just working-class people—we had 24 inches of rainfall in about a day and a half.

The homes that flooded—and many of them did—were not anywhere near a body of water. If you get 24 inches of rain in a day and a half, your home is going to flood. I don't care if you are living on Pike's Peak. So this program is meant to help those people as well.

But in pointing that out, I don't want to take anything away from Senator PAUL's excellent points. He is, however, mistaken in one critical respect: When you buy flood insurance through the Federal National Flood Insurance Program, the most you can collect on your home as a result of one flood is \$250,000. It is not accurate to say that a million-dollar home can collect a million dollars in damages from a flood. That is just not true. If there is a flood and you own a million-dollar home and you own a \$250,000 home and the owners of those two homes both have national flood insurance, the most under the policy they can collect is \$250,000.

So why do you want to tell a person who owns a million-dollar home that they can't insure their home? You are just telling them they can't buy flood insurance, so the flood insurance program has less money to cash flow. It makes no sense.

Now, Senator PAUL is correct, and it is one of the things we are trying to fix, that there has been abuse in terms of some homes. Senator PAUL mentioned the example of Louisiana; but there are other States, many others, where homes have flooded three or four times, and they keep getting flood insurance.

If I can say anything good about the current National Flood Insurance Program today, I would say that FEMA has taken steps to try to prevent that from happening so that if you flood a certain number of times, you have to move. And I know the Senator didn't—I don't think I am disagreeing with him on that. I think we are in agreement.

But let me tell you the second and main reason I can't accept Senator PAUL's change. For me, it has to do with what is right. There are probably 20 different Senators—well, there are a hundred Senators who care about flood insurance, but there are about 20 different Senators who want to be involved in any changes made to this program. And I dare say there are 50 to 100 members of the House.

Now, as the Presiding Officer knows, when we bring a bill to the floor for unanimous consent, we don't just walk down here one day and do it.

We let all of our Senators—fellow colleagues, our fellow Senators—know what we are about to do. So if they want to come down and object, they can do that. And that is what I did with my bill, which just keeps the current program and extends it until December 31, so we will get past the shutdown and we won't keep people from buying homes.

But Senator PAUL's changes have not been sent to all members of the Senate. It is called a hotline. And I anticipate that the Senator will have other changes, and that is fine.

The easy thing for me to do today would be to agree with one of his changes. I am not sure it makes that much difference because the amount of damages you can claim on a flood is \$250,000, but the easiest thing for me to do today would be to agree to one of Senator PAUL's changes, but that would be stabbing my colleagues in the back.

Because I can assure you, knowing how many of my colleagues feel about the National Flood Insurance Program, they would want to be here today to weigh in. And I just can't do that to them, even though it would allow me to get this passed.

I also think that if we make changes to the National Flood Insurance Program, those 50 to 100 House members that I am talking about are likely—some of them are likely not to allow the changes, and that is why they would object to it. And that is why my objective has been—and I need to stand behind it—to just take the current program and extend it to December 31.

So for that reason, I don't agree to the modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has not agreed to the modification. Is there objection to the original request?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the process is similar to what has been described but not exactly as has been described. The bill is sent out, everybody gets a chance to object. People who choose to object can come, that is also announced.

The objections are announced, and we come to the floor. If the Senator wanted to work together on this, this could be modified today and someone else would have to come to object, and that is announced to all 100 Senators and often works that way. But, today, what we have is a situation where I am offering an amendment to reform taxpayer-subsidized insurance, and it is being rejected by one Senator, not by all Senators, not in place of all Senators. They have a chance to come, it has been announced, they can come and object to this if they wanted.

But here is the thing, what I am trying to do is modify a program so that the average ordinary taxpayer does not

have to pay for rich people's flood insurance for their beach houses.

About half of the houses that are insured in this program that loses billions of dollars every year, that is \$20 billion in the hole, about half the homes are worth \$500,000 or more.

Do you know any regular working folk that have \$500,000 homes on the beach? No. If you have a \$500,000 house on the beach, buy your own damn insurance. The taxpayer should not have to buy your insurance.

So I would ask the Senator—we can do this today; there are other Senators on the floor; they can come running from hither and yon, and they can object to this—but I would ask the Senator, let's modify the program so rich people don't get their houses insured by the government and subsidized by the taxpayer. We can change the limits to \$500,000. That would cut out half of the homes in the United States, half of the beach houses, half of the rich people in our country who are getting subsidized insurance.

Make the limit \$500,000. If we make it \$500,000, the program will be half as big, and it will lose half as much money. Let's modify this program. So I would ask the Senator to modify his proposal with my amendment, and my amendment would say: You can't use the insurance for your second home, only your primary residence, and if you have a half-a-million-dollar mansion on the beach, guess what? You get to buy your own insurance. That is my modification, and I would ask the Senator to accept the Paul amendment that is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator agree to the modification?

Mr. KENNEDY. Reserving the right to accept or not accept. Again, Senator PAUL—I understand his points, and they are very good ones. I would point out that his proposal—we have about 84.7 million owned or occupied homes in the United States. Let's call it 85 million homes in the United States.

Senator PAUL's amendment would exclude 52.5 million of them. Five hundred thousand dollars on a home is a lot of money, but I think in places like California and Connecticut and New York, where we have seen cost of living different from my State, there are plenty of ordinary Americans, middle-class Americans, who have scrimped and saved to put together the money to borrow \$500,000, and I don't want to hurt them.

But the second and the main reason I can't agree to Senator PAUL's proposal: I am just not going to stab my fellow Senators in the back. They do not know about these changes that are being proposed. They may be good changes, and I like the way Senator PAUL is thinking. But let me say it again, I know of at least 20 Senators, some of whom are not in Washington who care about flood insurance. And if I started agreeing to changes for the short-term satisfaction of getting to pass a bill, it is just not worth it to me.

And I am not going to stab them in the back. They have the right to be here and participate in these changes, and they are not here because they don't know about it. So for that reason, I do not concur in Senator PAUL's amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection to the modification is heard. Is there objection to the underlying original motion?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object. What I am trying to find here, is there a compromise? Is there some level of rich person that maybe the taxpayer could say: Enough is enough; they ought to pay their own way? Is there some level of rich person's mansion that maybe the average, ordinary taxpayer should not have to subsidize their insurance?

So we have tried a half a million, which is about half the homes the ordinary working class people in our country have to insure, why don't we try—if we can't do a half a million, let's try mansions of \$750,000. You would say, well, how many are there? Twenty-five percent of the national Federal subsidized insurance are homes of \$750,000 a year. We are not talking about ordinary people now, we are talking about rich, rich, very rich people getting subsidized insurance from a program that loses billions of dollars and has to be bailed out every year. We have a government with a \$1.7 trillion deficit. It goes on year after year. Nobody does anything. Just reauthorize it. Today we can make a compromise. So I offer the Senator a compromise: If \$500,000 is too cheap and you want to insure half-a-million-dollar mansions, will you, at least, modify it to exclude mansions of \$750,000 or more? I think that is the least we can do.

And I would ask unanimous consent to accept the Paul motion at the desk that indicates \$750,000 as the limit for the insurance.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. I fear I am not being clear, and I am sorry for that. Let me say it again. If you own a \$250,000 home and you own a \$750,000 home, neither one of you can buy more than \$250,000 worth of insurance, because the maximum amount of insurance that you can buy through the National Flood Insurance Program is \$250,000.

So what is the point of excluding someone who owns a \$750,000 home? I realize it is in vogue to denigrate rich people, but they can't buy any more insurance. It would be different if someone could buy \$750,000 worth of flood insurance who owned a \$750,000 home, but they can't. It is capped at \$250,000.

So I have to respectfully disagree with my friend on that. And, No. 2—I don't want to belabor this—I am not going to stab my fellow Senators in the back. The 20-plus Senators with whom I have spoken to try to negotiate a new

and better Flood Insurance Program do not know about these changes.

And I would like to agree to Senator PAUL's suggestions, but if I do, I am stabbing my fellow Senators in the back, and it is just not worth it to me because they don't know about any of this.

For that reason, I respectfully object to Senator PAUL's amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator objected to the modification.

Is there objection to the underlying request?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. It is certainly not my intention to denigrate rich people. I aspire to be one someday. But I don't aspire to ask for free stuff from the government if I ever become a rich person.

Why would we subsidize insurance of rich people? Is there no limit—is there no limit—is there no possibility of compromise on some mansion that is too large to be in this program?

What about \$10 million? We have tried \$250,000. That was too little. You know, the insistence is we must insure these homes. We tried a half million. But the insistence is, no, everybody should get it.

I don't think rich people need subsidized insurance. The program loses billions of dollars every year. We have tried 750,000, but apparently there still is this need and this desire to insure rich people's beach houses.

Why don't we try one last time. We will try something that I think anybody could compromise to and anybody would accept, and certainly I wouldn't want to be the one justifying a program that gives people who have \$10 million mansions insurance. Why not accept it and make someone on the other side support such a ridiculous policy?

So my final proposal today will be to ask unanimous consent that the Paul amendment at the desk would exclude \$10 million mansions from government-subsidized insurance.

I think that is the least we can do. If we can get that compromise, it would bring at least some sense of sanity to this crazy program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the Senator's request to modify?

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, if I own a \$10 million home—and I assure you I do not—and my neighbor's home is \$250,000, that is its value, which is more like it in Louisiana. And we both go to an insurance agent, and we say: We want to buy national flood insurance because we can't get a mortgage without it. Then the insurance agent is going to say: OK. Neighbor whose home is worth \$250,000, I can write you a policy, maximum \$250,000.

And then they are just going to turn to me with my \$10 million home—which I can assure you is fictitious—and the agent is going to say, I can only sell you \$250,000.

The suggestion that somebody with a \$10 million home is being insured for \$10 million is just not accurate. It is just not accurate.

So what good is it going to do to tell someone in a \$10 million home who wants to buy \$250,000 worth of flood insurance—the same amount as his neighbor—what good is it going to do to exclude him?

Some can beat themselves on the chest and say, boy, we stuck it to those rich people. But they are not getting any more insurance. And what it is going to mean to the program is there is going to be fewer and less premiums coming into the program, which will make it insolvent.

You can see the difficulty in trying to reach agreement on the forms.

That is why I am going to say it again. And I have proposed a clean, if you will, proposal that will just extend the current program, imperfect as it may be, until December 31.

If we don't do this, it is going to really, really hurt. It is not going to hurt the rich folks. It is going to hurt the ordinary, middle-class Americans who are trying to buy a home.

And the second and final reason, if it were, or the third and final reason, frankly, if it were up to me to get this passed—because I am really worried about it, as you can tell—I would probably agree to Rand's proposal, but I am just not going to stab my colleagues in the back.

They don't know about this proposal, and I think that of the 20 or so of my colleagues whom I have met with about changing the Flood Insurance Program, I know they would like to have their say. And if I agree to the Senator's proposal today—because they don't know about his proposal—I would be stabbing them in the back, and I just can't do it, Mr. President. It is just not worth it to me.

For that reason, I respectfully object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is objection to the request to modify.

Is there objection to the Senator's original motion?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. Let the record show from this discussion today that the Senator has objected to any limits on taxpayer-subsidized flood insurance, any limits: 250,000; 500,000; 750,000, even 10 million.

This is a program that loses billions of dollars every year. This is a program that can't work for the poor people because we have got so many rich people in it.

Half of the homes in the program cost over a half million dollars. So this is a problem. This is a program that loses money every year, and the Senator is unwilling to accept any limits on this.

There is this argument that somehow he is defending all the Democrat Senators who can't come here, but he could easily have said: I am not willing to object to this because these are rea-

sonable proposals and force the Democrats to object to this.

But he has taken this upon himself to defend the status quo, to defend the inclusion of \$10 million mansions in this program.

So I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, you are getting tired of my saying this, I know. This rich \$10 million American that Senator PAUL keeps talking about can't buy any more insurance than the American who owns the \$250,000 home. He just can't.

And I am going to try again. I will be back tomorrow, and like the terminator, "I'll be back."

Because in trying to punish the rich, when they can't buy any more insurance than the ordinary American, Mr. President, like you and me—250,000, that is the limit for the rich American and the middle-class American—this is going to put the entire real estate industry in jeopardy. And it is also going to put a lot of ordinary, middle-class Americans out there who have scrimped and saved, and they have got the money for the downpayment, and they are ready to buy a home, but they are not going to be able to buy it because they can't get flood insurance, and their mortgage lender requires it.

And by the time government opens back up—I hope it is a short period of time, but we don't know—those interest rates instead of 7.5 percent could be 8 percent.

And look, I get the politics of beating up on the rich, but the rich have nothing to do with this. This is about ordinary Americans.

But I appreciate, Mr. President, your patience in listening to me today. And with that, I think I need to yield the floor, do I not, Mr. President?

To whom should I yield it?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator can simply yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY. Senator HIRONO from the great State of Hawaii or Senator SCHUMER?

Are you seeking recognition, or are you just wavering at each other?

Mr. SCHUMER. I always wave with friendship and affection to my friend, the Senator from Louisiana.

I was going to speak for a few minutes; is that OK?

Mr. KENNEDY. Of course. I just work here. I am not management.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

NEW YORK

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am going to speak on two topics; first, what is happening in my hometown of New York and then, second, what is going on over there in the House of Representatives.

As we speak, my hometown of New York is experiencing some of the most frightening rainfall and flooding we have seen since Hurricane Sandy. About a month's worth of rain has inundated Brooklyn in just a matter of

hours, and some parts of the city have experienced up to 5 inches of rain. Flash floods remain in effect from Manhattan to Queens to Brooklyn.

And we are not through the danger yet. Another powerful storm is expected over the next day, and the situation remains dangerous.

I will continue closely monitoring the otherworldly flooding we are seeing in New York.

A little while ago, I spoke to the Governor to tell her that I will do everything on the Federal level to get New York the help it needs.

Earlier today, I sent a letter to FEMA and a few minutes ago spoke to the FEMA Administrator, telling her New York needs help.

FEMA has promised me two things; one, to deal with the immediate effects of the flood, any equipment and other types of resources they need; and, second, later, to provide resources New Yorkers will need to rebuild and recover.

And here in the Senate, I will work to secure any Federal assistance possible to fund relief efforts and aid those who need to rebuild from the flood damage.

Again, I cannot stress enough that we are not through these storms just yet. Everyone please follow emergency guidance and stay safe.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. President, now on the CR and the shutdown, we stand now at the precipice of an unnecessary, reckless, and entirely Republican-manufactured shutdown.

In less than 48 hours, funding that pays the salaries of our troops for border enforcement, for TSA operations, nutrition programs, food inspections, all—all—will come to a halt.

As I have said for months, Congress has only one option to avoid a shutdown, bipartisanship. We needed bipartisanship yesterday. We need it today. We will need it tomorrow. It was true yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

But in the House, sadly, unlike the Senate, we have not seen bipartisanship. We have only seen chaos. We have only seen paralysis.

A few hours ago, Speaker MCCARTHY held a vote on a truly radical CR proposal everyone knew never stood a chance of passing the Senate.

And now, the House Republicans' CR has failed to even pass the House by an unexpectedly large and decisive margin, 34 votes—much more than most expected.

The Speaker has spent weeks catering to the hard right, and now he finds himself in the exact same position he has been in since the beginning: no plan forward, no closer to passing something that avoids a shutdown.

The Speaker needs to abandon his doomed mission of trying to please MAGA extremists, and, instead, he needs to work across the aisle to keep the government open.

Things seem to be getting worse for the Speaker rather than better, and it is time for him to try bipartisanship.

Here in the Senate, bipartisanship is precisely what we are pursuing by working on our CR.

Just yesterday, I am proud to say, 76 Senators voted in favor of proceeding to the CR.

I salute not only Chairman MURRAY, but Ranking Member COLLINS, and Leader MCCONNELL, and the so many others on the other side of the aisle who joined us in moving forward.

We will continue working on the CR over the course of today and see if we can find some agreement to pass it quickly.

I note that these 76 Senators are voting in favor of proceeding to the CR even as we work through debates about the final content of the bill. That is what bipartisanship means—not that we agree on everything but that disagreements do not paralyze the process.

When the Senate finishes its work, it is imperative the House move on the Senate-passed, bipartisan CR. It will be our last chance to ensuring that a shutdown is avoided. Any more time the Speaker spends trying to cobble together hard-right wish lists that can't even pass the House would be a grievous mistake.

So to Speaker MCCARTHY, let me be clear. If you don't want our troops to go without pay, work in a bipartisan way. If you don't want to see border funding endangered, work in a bipartisan way. If you don't want to see seniors lose access to Meals on Wheels or cuts to nutrition for women, infants, and children or holds on small business loans, work in a bipartisan way.

At the end of the day, these MAGA extremists who are the ones responsible for bringing us to the brink fundamentally do not care about funding the government. Some of them are actually gleeful about a shutdown. Codding the hard right is as futile as trying to nail Jell-O to a wall, and the harder the Speaker tries, the bigger mess he makes. And that mess is going to hurt the American people the most.

I hope the Speaker snaps out of the vice grip he has put himself in and stops succumbing to the 30 or so extremists who are running the show in the House.

Mr. Speaker, time has almost run out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I know there are others who are waiting to speak, and I will yield to them momentarily, but I think it is important that the majority leader explain the entire story of where we find ourselves here today on the verge of a shutdown.

The truth is, the Senate has not passed a single appropriations bill that passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee by bipartisan support. Some of them were passed unanimously. The first bill, I believe, that passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee passed out some 80

days ago. Now, it may have taken until the end of July before we could get a House bill to then amend, which is a necessary procedural prerequisite, but the fact of the matter is, the majority leader, who is the only person who can schedule a vote on any of these pieces of legislation, has failed to bring any of these bills to the floor and successfully passed in the U.S. Senate.

So 18 days before the end of the fiscal year, which is the shutdown unless we pass another funding bill, the majority leader puts a so-called minibus, or a combination of three appropriations bills, on the floor. That was the first time the majority leader decided to actually schedule a vote on anything.

My point is that the majority leader likes to blame the House—and particularly because it is a majority of Republicans—so he acts like this is all their fault. Everything is just hunky-dory and bipartisan in the Senate. That is false. The majority leader has contributed dramatically to this shutdown because of the Senate's failure under his leadership to pass any appropriations bills whatsoever. And, yes, it is no surprise to anybody that here we are needing to find some way forward on a continuing resolution—in other words, to keep the lights on—while we continue to work out other differences.

I think shutdowns are a mistake. Shutdowns are a mistake because they don't solve the underlying problem. They disrupt all sorts of people, and he mentioned some of the people they disrupt, including pay to our military. Our own staff aren't going to get paid. People aren't going to be able to get passports through the passport office. If they have immigration problems, if veterans are worried about getting compensation or other benefits, they are not going to be responded to because of this government shutdown. Completely, completely predictable and completely, completely unnecessary.

So I think if you are going to talk about who contributed to where we are today, the majority leader—I say this respectfully—this is in large part a Schumer shutdown because the Senate hasn't done its job. This is not governing. This is not responsible. Again, the only way we can consider legislation in the U.S. Senate is if he schedules something on the floor. That is his prerogative as the majority leader.

But people ought to be held accountable. People ought to be responsible for their own actions. And the majority leader has simply failed to let the Senate do its work even though the Senate Appropriations Committee, which is chaired by a Democrat, Senator PATTY MURRAY, and ranking member, Senator SUSAN COLLINS. They did magnificent work. They did what they were supposed to do. But because the majority leader failed to bring any of those bills to the floor, we haven't passed a single appropriations bill, and we are looking at a deadline of midnight Saturday,

where the government ceases to function because of the failure to do our job here in the Senate.

The House has its own problems, but we ought to take care of business here first, and we haven't done that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

REMEMBERING DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, thank you for your patience.

I want to begin today by reiterating my sadness about the passing of our friend Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN.

Senator FEINSTEIN's death strikes at the heart of so many of us committed to public service, as she was. A courageous trailblazer, she stood up to powerful interest groups on behalf of her constituents and the rest of us. She was a fierce legislator, fighting to ban assault weapons, defend survivors of domestic violence, protect our Nation, and much more. But she was also a thoughtful friend.

Just last week, she wrote me a letter expressing her happiness that the banyan tree in Lahaina, badly burned by the wildfires, is starting to show signs of renewed life. She wrote:

I hope that the beloved tree continues to recover and serve as a source of hope and a symbol of resilience for the entire community.

I, too, share her hope.

MAUI WILDFIRES

Mr. President, it has now been 6 weeks since the fires tore through the town of Lahaina on Maui as well as several upcountry Maui communities. As the whole world has seen now, those fires were devastating, claiming nearly 100 lives and destroying close to 3,000 structures, most of them residences. Our hearts break for all those impacted by this tragedy.

Within hours of those fires, though, the Federal Government was on the ground, providing assistance and relief. In the weeks since, well over 1,000 Federal personnel have traveled to Maui to aid in the recovery efforts, and more than \$125 million in individual relief has been distributed. Additionally, President Biden requested \$4 billion in disaster relief funding following the fires on top of the \$12 billion he had previously requested.

As I said at the time, disaster relief has always had broad bipartisan support, and there is no reason the Maui disaster should be treated any differently.

In fact, Speaker MCCARTHY agreed. When he visited Lahaina less than 4 weeks ago, he said:

We want to get the resources to individuals that could rebuild their life. We've got to focus on the children for the schools, get them back into the education so they don't miss out.

I couldn't agree more.

This funding is essential to our ongoing recovery efforts, but now Speaker MCCARTHY, in refusing to stand up to the most radical faction in his caucus—I call them the chaos caucus—is endangering these resources for Maui and

other communities impacted by disasters across the country. We just heard from our majority leader what is happening in New York City even as we speak.

So, again, as we speak, the Senate is working to advance a bipartisan continuing resolution to keep government open, which includes \$6 billion in disaster relief. While clearly not everything we need, it is a critical downpayment that will allow the Federal Government to continue its important work on Maui and in other communities impacted by disasters across the country. It will allow FEMA, the SBA, and the other critical Federal Agencies to continue their disaster relief work as we work to pass a longer term funding agreement. But if radical House Republicans shut down the government, that funding will be held up indefinitely.

My colleague, Representative JILL TOKUDA of Hawaii, summed it up well just yesterday in her testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Committee. She said that the people of Maui "have gone through enough, the wheels of government must keep turning to provide support and resources, so they focus on recovery and rebuilding."

By forcing a government shutdown, Speaker MCCARTHY will be abandoning the people of Maui—the very same people he vowed to help just weeks ago when he visited Maui.

We are less than 48 hours from Republicans shutting down our government, and they have yet to even put forward a funding bill that they can pass. It is unconscionable.

While these remarks are focused on the impact of a shutdown on disaster aid, make no mistake—a Republican government shutdown will have negative consequences for millions of Americans not just in disaster relief but on every aspect of their lives all across our country. This is not a game. We all want to know what it is going to take for House Republicans to grow up and realize that the chaos they are sowing is going to have real impacts on real people's lives all across the country.

Meanwhile, the Hawaii delegation, as well as the bipartisan Senate, will continue doing everything we can to keep government open by passing the continuing resolution that we have on deck in the Senate and secure the funding for our communities—funding that is so urgently needed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the Senate's need to swiftly confirm any U.S. attorney nominees.

Two days ago, I came to the floor to request unanimous consent for the Senate to take up and confirm four pending U.S. attorney nominations that were being held up by one U.S.

Senator, the junior Senator from Ohio, Senator VANCE.

Two days ago, he said:

My position is we should have a full Senate vote on each one of these . . . Justice Department nominations.

He also said:

[I]f it's so important to confirm these folks, bring them to the floor for a vote.

But now that is exactly what he is attempting to prevent today.

For decades, the Senate confirmed U.S. attorney nominees of both political parties by voice vote or what is called unanimous consent in the Senate after they had been reported by the Judiciary Committee. Before the beginning of the Biden administration, the Senate had not required a rollcall vote on the confirmation of a U.S. attorney since 1975—almost 50 years. In fact, during the Trump administration, Senate Democrats allowed every one of Trump's U.S. attorney nominees—all 85—to move through the committee and be confirmed by voice vote, unanimous consent.

Let me tell you, as a Democrat in those days, I knew what I was getting with these U.S. attorneys working for Jeff Sessions, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, and William Barr. I knew what was going to happen, but I respected the tradition of the Senate.

Now Senate Republicans have decided to change the rules and are blocking the confirmation of these critical law enforcement officers.

I have faced this before. Republicans had said they were going to object to U.S. attorneys but fortunately had better thoughts on the subject as time progressed.

Now, this year, the Senator from Ohio has proudly announced that he will—I will quote him, in fact: "I will hold all [DOJ] nominations. . . . We will grind [the Justice Department] to a halt."

Grind the Justice Department to a halt.

U.S. attorneys are too important to be used as political pawns in a national debate. They lead our Nation's effort to prosecute violent criminals.

Don't tell me that you are for law and order, but you want to stop criminal prosecutors from being appointed to the job. They lead our Nation's effort to protect our communities from drug trafficking.

I quoted some numbers the other day about drug trafficking and fentanyl deaths in the State of Ohio, the State where one of these U.S. attorneys would be going to work, in the Cleveland area. Ohio runs fourth in the Nation in narcotics deaths, and for the Senate to respond by having one Senator from Ohio stopping the appointment of a criminal prosecutor to go after these cartels or drug gangs is not explainable.

So I offered Senator VANCE the opportunity to allow us to schedule confirmation votes on all pending U.S. attorneys. I want to read exactly what he said from the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD,

which, of course, is the permanent record of the Senate and will be read by future generations.

This was on September 27, 2 days ago. Here is what Senator VANCE said:

I am the new guy, and I recognize that I am a little naive when it comes to matters of the procedures in the U.S. Senate. But I have had a lot of jobs in my life; and yesterday we passed one vote and today we have passed zero votes. The time that we have spent debating whether we should have unanimous consent over these nominations, we could actually use to vote on these nominations and end this charade and call it out for what it is. If we believe that these nominees must go forward, let's just have a vote on it. Allow me to scrutinize them. Allow my colleagues to vote them up or down. That is a totally reasonable thing to ask of this Chamber and to ask of this leadership; and because of that, I object.

Well, I accepted his challenge. I took his words to be heartfelt and truthful, that he wanted votes. So today we had two votes on two of the U.S. attorneys, considered by the Senate, which is exactly what the Senator from Ohio asked for.

But there are two more on the calendar that he held up initially. He said on the floor during our debate that these weren't people he was necessarily objecting to but that somebody else in the Senate might be objecting to. I didn't know what that meant, but I wanted to give him the time to find out who that might be. It turns out there is no one else—he is the only objector—even though he said on the record, in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, that all he wanted was a rollcall vote on these nominees.

Well, he is going to get the chance to keep his word that he put in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and he is going to get a chance to have the vote he asked for. It is only fair. If we did it for the first two, we will do it for the others.

Let me repeat it again. Senator VANCE did not only refuse to move these nominees by voice vote, as the Senate has done for decades, he is now backtracking on his own words from 2 days ago and is refusing even to allow rollcalls on these nominees.

This kind of obstructionism is becoming commonplace, I am afraid. If you take a look at this Executive Calendar that we have here, there are pages and pages of military officers who have served this country nobly and honorably who are asking for a simple promotion they are entitled to. They are being held up by another Republican Senator who doesn't want to move forward on this, holding them for 6 months from promotion. Is this the new way of doing business under a MAGA regime? I hope not.

Rebecca Lutzko is nominated to be U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Ohio. She is a longtime Federal prosecutor who has served as assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio for nearly 18 years. As a Federal prosecutor, she handles cases involving prescription drug trafficking, gun crimes,

and corruption. Important? You bet it is.

April Perry is nominated to be U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. She has significant experience in the private sector and as a Federal prosecutor. She served in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois for over a decade, where she handled narcotics, gang violence, public corruption, and fraud. Important? You bet it is. Ms. Perry specialized in child exploitation prosecutions and spent 6 years as the office's Project Safe Childhood coordinator.

Are you concerned, as I am, about the exploitation of children, the trafficking of children, the terrible sexual abuse that is taking place on the internet? Do you think we ought to have the Department of Justice on that case? Of course we should.

One week ago, Senator VANCE was quoted as saying, "My objection is not to the specific qualifications of these particular individuals who have been nominated."

So, here, he is not complaining about any of their resumes or their capacity to do the job and do it effectively. His concern—and he said it publicly, so I think I am going to accurately quote him—his concern is that the former President of the United States was indicted, and he is very concerned about a Department of Justice that would even let that happen.

For goodness' sake, things happened in the Department of Justice's activities during the administration of Donald Trump that I objected to, but I didn't stop the appointments of U.S. attorneys under Trump. I didn't stop the people in law enforcement, who are keeping us safe in our communities.

These are ably qualified individuals. I am asking Senator VANCE: In good faith, keep your word. What you said in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD is a matter of record, and you should stand by your word.

For that reason, I make the following motion: I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 314 and 315; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Is there objection?

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VANCE. Madam President, in reserving the right to object, let me address a few of my distinguished colleague from Illinois' comments.

First of all, while it is true that my hold policy regarding the Department of Justice is not focused on any particular nominee, I do think this particular nominee is particularly troublesome, and let me just talk about why.

Ms. Perry is a figure who served as the chief ethics officer in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office during the Jussie Smollett hate crime hoax. You may remember that from a few years ago. This is when a person accused people of engaging in a false hate crime, took a ton of State resources to investigate it, and it turned out the entire thing was fraudulent and meant to gin up publicity for Mr. Smollett.

Everyone pretty much agrees that Ms. FOXX, who was the State's attorney at the time, engaged in some pretty unethical behavior, and Ms. Perry effectively rubberstamped it. Is she the sort of person who could be entrusted to impartially administer justice in the Biden-Garland Department of Justice? I don't think she is. So I will be voting against her nomination. I also object to giving a streamlined confirmation process for her.

Now, the Senator from Illinois is apparently hell-bent on coming before the Chamber every single week to litigate what I think and believe is a corrupt and politicized Department of Justice. He makes much—and he makes much every single time we engage in this exercise—about the fact that the Department of Justice has never had this kind of hold policy placed on it before. I agree. This is a new and unique circumstance.

What is much different about the Trump administration Department of Justice and the Merrick Garland-Joe Biden Department of Justice is that Donald Trump never tried to throw his political opponents in prison. This is crazy, banana republic stuff, and I will not stand for it.

I will continue to hold these nominations, and I will continue to push back against the politicization of justice.

Finally, let me just say that what I have asked for and what I will continue to ask for is that these nominees go through regular order. The Senator knows well what everybody else knows, which is that, as one Senator, I cannot prevent the confirmation of these nominees however much I might like to. What I can do is force us to go through regular order.

I asked for a vote, Senator DURBIN. You can invoke cloture. We can vote on cloture. We can then do a recorded vote. That is what we have done with many, many nominees, and because of the corruption of Merrick Garland's Department of Justice, it is what I ask with this nominee and with any in the future.

Because of that, Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it is interesting that we have got a new argument.

Previously, he said: I have no objection to these nominees. I just don't like the process. I want a vote.

I said: Fine. You can have a vote.

Now when we ask for a vote on the two remaining nominees for U.S. attorney, he is finding fault with those individuals.

I hope he will take the time—and I know he is a fair person—to read the record about what Ms. Perry did when she worked for the State's attorney, Kim Foxx. It is true there was a controversial case before her office and that she was the chief ethics officer in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. She served in that office at the time the Jussie Smollett matter was being investigated, but Ms. Perry's role as chief ethics officer was limited to recommending that State's Attorney Foxx recuse herself and that the office seek the appointment of a special prosecutor.

Notably, Ms. Perry resigned from that office a few weeks after the prosecutors initially agreed to drop the charges against Mr. Smollett. She has never been implicated, and to throw her name into this situation is unfair. I am sure the Senator from Ohio doesn't want to do that.

So listen to what he suggests—and I am glad Senator REED is on the floor, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

Does it sound familiar?

We have a group of people—of nominees—who have come before us who have been considered throughout history in a routine, unanimous consent way, and now the Senator from Ohio says we have to go one by one and have a cloture motion on each one of them. You and I both know, having been here a few years, what that means. It is physically impossible, whether we are talking about officers in the military or U.S. attorney nominees, to say we will just stack them up on the calendar and go through cloture votes, and it is unnecessary.

If we didn't single out a single U.S. attorney nominee in the Trump administration but gave voice votes to all 85, it is an indication of an effort of good will and bipartisanship even when we are suspicious of what the political agenda may be of that Department.

To hold some of these people—the U.S. attorney for his own home State, the city of Cleveland—to hold this person to this kind of scrutiny that goes way beyond anything we usually have been involved in is unfair to her, and it is unfair to the process and the system.

I am going to return to the floor. The Senator from Ohio and I are going to be pretty familiar fixtures on this floor because if you say something in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, as he did—that all he wants is a rollcall, and we offered a rollcall, just as I did, and he denies it over and over—he has some explaining to do.

If he thinks that standing up for the MAGA process here is something the American people admire, I beg to differ with him.

We understand that the Department of Justice has an important job to do to keep us safe in our communities,

and for someone to say—for a Senator from the U.S. Senate to say, "I will hold all [DOJ] nominations. . . . We will grind [the Justice Department] to a halt," really? That is your agenda? That is why you came to the Senate?

If the Department of Defense is being ground to a halt because of the promotions of officers and to do the same thing at the Department of Justice, and we are facing a government shutdown because of MAGA Members of the House of Representatives, the American people have a good picture, a good photograph, of the future if we go down one particular path in terms of the future of politics in America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

REMEMBERING DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise to pay tribute to our colleague DIANNE FEINSTEIN, who passed away, as we all know, this morning.

As California's senior Senator and the longest serving woman Senator ever, Senator FEINSTEIN was a trailblazer. Everyone has made that point, and it is a true, accurate, and compelling point.

In representing the country's most populous State for over three decades, she occupied the national stage as well, and for many people inside and outside this Chamber, she became the archetypal Senator: prepared, professional, pragmatic, and unfailingly civil. Californians rewarded her hard work by voting for her by wider and wider margins.

She fought hard for the things she believed in and very often succeeded, but she never bullied or belittled those who took a contrary position. Her achievements are many: the enactment of the Federal assault weapons ban in 1994, the 6-year review of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program, which prompted significant reforms in the intelligence community. She was the leader in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. She delivered for the people of California, enacting laws to protect public lands and national treasures and doing the hard work to bring stakeholders together to resolve thorny issues and complex environmental challenges in her home State. She led on national environmental issues, including legislation to improve the fuel economy of automobiles.

I had the privilege and the pleasure to get to know her. We were both members of the Aspen study group. This is an organization sponsored by the Aspen Institute of both right and left, thoughtful national security policy people. I was very honored to be asked, and DIANNE was a long-term member. To listen to her insights, to listen to her analysis, along with other very thoughtful people, was incredibly helpful to me, particularly as a more junior Member of the Senate, and, of course, her hospitality, her friendship, and her decency just was so apparent there as

it was here on the floor in the U.S. Senate.

In fact, as we look back, there is a very simple fact here that DIANNE FEINSTEIN influenced, in some way, every major policy challenge that this body and this Nation has faced over the last 31 years with her voice, with her vote, with her counsel, with her wisdom, with her unfailing commitment to the people of California and the people of the United States. She literally never gave up. She never stopped.

She is someone that will be remembered, truly, as one of the greatest U.S. Senators in the history of this country. It was a privilege to serve with her. On this day, I wish her family and all her loved ones the comfort of knowing what an extraordinary woman and what an extraordinary Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN was.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

H.R. 3935

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, Americans across the country are watching us now, as we near the brink of an entirely pointless and absolutely devastating government shutdown and wondering: How in the world did we get here? It is a great question and an infuriating one.

So I want to take a few minutes to walk through exactly how we did get here, because the plain truth I want the American people to recognize is, it did not have to be this way. But a number of House Republicans, who have been working from day one of this Congress to hold our government hostage, pushed the most extreme partisan agenda imaginable and set us on a collision course for a government shutdown.

You don't have to take my word for it. Just listen to what some of them have been saying:

If a shutdown occurs, then so be it.

We should not fear a government shutdown.

It is "not the worst thing that could happen."

And this quote:

[M]ay be what it takes.

Last week, of course, former President Trump—the same guy responsible for the longest shutdown in history—called for Republicans to shut down the government again.

Unfortunately, it sure seems like these are the sorts of people Speaker MCCARTHY has been listening to—the most extreme, fringed voices in his party—when he should be listening to the overwhelming majority of people in our country who do not want a shutdown, because, let's be clear, most Members of Congress—like most Americans—on both sides of the aisle here, in both Chambers of Congress, do not want a government shutdown. They do want to see us working together to get our jobs done.

This is something I have heard from so many of our colleagues when I became chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee at the beginning of

this year: We need to get back to regular order. No more omnibuses. No more chaos. No more government shutdowns. I heard it from across both parties here in the Senate.

So I have been working with the senior Senator from Maine to deliver on just that: to make our appropriations process work better, to get our bills done, and to ensure that all Members do have a say in the process.

We have made some concrete progress; but over and over, extreme Republicans in the House have put up roadblocks and done everything they can to prevent Congress from getting even the most basic things done.

The vice chair of the Appropriations Committee and I held nearly 50 hearings this past spring to evaluate what resources our communities need in the year ahead. But, then, instead of being able to get right to work and negotiate top-line spending numbers and writing those bills as we finished those hearings this spring, we had to press pause to contend with extreme Republicans who were then holding our Nation's credit hostage and threatening a devastating default if they did not get their way with unrealistic, draconian cuts to programs that this entire country relies on.

It was a full-blown crisis. It was created by extreme House Republicans who ground Congress and almost our economy to a halt.

Finally, after their dangerous brinksmanship caused so much unnecessary drama and delay, President Biden and Speaker MCCARTHY struck a deal on spending levels that rejected the deepest, most damaging cuts. Now, it was not a deal I would have written myself—absolutely not—but a deal is a deal.

The Speaker and the President shook hands. We all voted on it. It was signed into law. We had an agreement so we here in the Senate could finally get to work writing our bipartisan spending bills.

And in the Senate, that is exactly what we did. The senior Senator from Maine and I said: Okay, let's get things back on track. Let's get back to regular order. Let's write serious bills that can actually be signed into law.

We agreed to work off that Biden-McCarthy deal in a bipartisan way to avoid partisan poison pills and give all of our colleagues input on those bills. We held televised, bipartisan markups with amendments, with debate. And, for the first time in 5 years, we passed all 12 bills out of the committee, and those bills passed overwhelmingly with bipartisan support. We then got a resounding 91 votes to start work on three appropriations bills that passed unanimously out of committee on the Senate floor.

As we know, a few holdouts slowed things down. But I want you to know we are going to keep working together to return to regular order so Members can debate appropriations bills and offer amendments, and we can get them passed.

Now, compare that to the House. Did they work to produce serious, bipartisan appropriations bills that can be signed into law? Nope. They wrote extreme partisan bills—extreme—that are not going anywhere.

Did they keep out provisions that they knew would be nonstarters? Absolutely not. Their appropriations bills are a far-right wish list chock full of extreme policies that would undermine our response to the climate crisis, embolden bigotry against the LGBTQ community, weaken commonsense gun safety regulations, and, of course—of course—impose extreme abortion restrictions.

I mean, the list of extreme far-right policies that were slapped onto the government spending bills in the House is astounding. If you want to get something done for your constituents, you need to get serious, and those bills are not serious.

Did House Republicans, at least, stick to the bipartisan top lines that President Biden and Speaker MCCARTHY agreed to and we all voted on? Not even in the slightest. Before the ink was dry on that deal that he shook hands on, Speaker MCCARTHY caved to demands from the far right to ignore those agreed-upon spending levels and take a hatchet to programs that our families rely on.

In those spending bills, House Republicans want to cut 80 percent—8-0—80 percent, that is \$14.7 billion from title I funding our public schools rely on. It supports nearly 90 percent of our Nation's school districts. That includes rescinding funding that Congress provided last year that schools have worked into their budgets and are using for this school year.

They want to cut grants that keep our drinking water safe by more than half.

They want to slash nearly \$4 billion from lifesaving research at the NIH.

In the middle of a childcare crisis, they want to cut Head Start by \$750 million and eliminate funding to help our States expand preschool programs.

I am just getting started. I can go on all day with the devastating cuts House Republicans have jammed into their partisan spending bills with utter disregard for that agreement that we all passed a few months ago and, more importantly, for how harmful those cuts would be for those back home.

Those cuts would hollow out Federal programs and Agencies to a point where basic government services that people expect to get done—whether it is food safety inspectors or air traffic controllers—would almost certainly break down.

I don't say all of this to score political points. I am laying the facts out to make them plain to the American people, who I am sure are just as frustrated as I am, about how pointless it would be to shut down and how ridiculous it is that we are even at this point today.

So here we are, days from a government shutdown, and it is clear the only

way Congress can keep the lights on and avoid a terrible shutdown is the bipartisan bill to continue funding and keep things open short-term while we work on those full-year bills.

The House isn't even trying to put forward a serious proposal to do that.

Here in the Senate, the senior Senator from Maine and I have a simple, bipartisan bill that keeps the government funded so we can continue to work on our full-year appropriations bills. It includes absolutely essential, time-sensitive reauthorizations for the FAA and other Agencies, and it extends urgently needed funding for disaster relief and our allies in Ukraine. It is a truly reasonable, bipartisan bill carefully negotiated.

We are working at this very moment with our colleagues to get this bill over to the House as soon as possible. But so far, Speaker MCCARTHY seems to be more focused on indulging a few Members by writing bills with massive, cartoon-villain level cuts instead of listening to the American people and avoiding this shutdown.

After wasting all of our time on his partisan bills, which will never become law, he tried to jam through a truly extreme CR that would have cut agencies by 30 percent—30 percent—as if a 30-percent shutdown isn't devastating to our families and the economy.

They need to get real. If it were to become law, that extreme proposal would have been devastating for families and for our country. Whether it is the Social Security Administration that is working to get seniors signed up for new benefits; the Department of Education that is working to process Pell Grants and financial aid for students—those Agencies and so many others—would have had to figure out this Monday how to implement a 30-percent, across-the-board cut if their bill had passed. This Monday.

Their bill would grind basic government services to a halt. It would create chaos and almost certainly make the odds of a recession likely.

As we just saw a while ago, that bill, fortunately, went down in the House in flames because it was not bipartisan, and it was not a serious effort to get our communities the funding they need.

So the lesson here should be obvious: Partisanship is not how we get through crisis—any of them—especially in a divided government. It is not how we prevent shutdowns. We prevent shutdowns by rolling up our sleeves, doing the hard work of talking to each other, listening to each other, and hammering out a bipartisan agreement to keep the lights on.

Fortunately, that is what we have actually done here in the Senate. We have a bipartisan agreement. We are on our way to sending it to the House as soon as possible.

The good news: It is not too late for Speaker MCCARTHY to learn his lesson and do the right thing. So I hope instead of listening to the likes of former

President Trump or the extreme right and continuing to push a bill like he just did that failed so badly, the Speaker needs to listen to all of the people who will be hurt by this shutdown, who will miss their paychecks, who will be cut off from healthcare and childcare and support they rely on. And then I hope he will commit to bringing up our commonsense CR bills to the floor as soon as possible.

Let us get our jobs done. Let's keep the government open. And then, instead of retreating back to partisan extreme, I urge Speaker MCCARTHY to do what so many of our Members on both sides of the aisle here in the Senate have called for and work together with our colleagues to find common ground and produce serious proposals that will make people's lives better.

Politics isn't a game. Sometimes you just choose to do the right thing because you know quite clearly what the right thing is to do. Shutting down the government is not the right thing. Refusing to work in a bipartisan way and forcing us into a showdown to show certain Members of the House Republican majority that you will fight Democrats, that is the wrong thing.

The American people don't want to see you fight the other party. They want to see you work with your colleagues across the aisle. That is what we have done in the Senate with our 12 bipartisan funding bills, and the sooner we take the shutdown off the table, the sooner we can get back to work to pass those 12 bills that fund everything from cancer research to grants for our farmers, to top-notch medical care for our veterans, and so much more.

So, as I have said so many times, let's help people and solve problems. Let's work together, not against one another.

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.

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

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

IRAN

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, on June 27, 2014, an email was sent to an individual who works with Iran's Foreign Ministry. The sender of that email was seeking advice on whether she should attend a workshop on Iran's nuclear program hosted by Ben-Gurion University in Israel.

The sender wrote:

I am not interested in going, but then I thought maybe it would be better that I go and talk, rather than an Israeli like Emily Landau who goes and disseminates disinformation. I would like to ask your opinion, too, and see if you think I should accept the invitation and go.

In a normal world, we would chalk this up to an academic seeking politically charged advice from a mentor.

But I became concerned when I learned that this individual who wrote that email, who was actively seeking guidance from individuals within the Iranian Foreign Ministry, now has a U.S. Government Top Secret clearance and works within our Defense Department as the Chief of Staff for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict.

Just to be sure we are following this, this is a U.S. citizen who wrote to someone inside Iran's Foreign Ministry to seek advice on going to a conference in Israel and speaking at that so that they would speak instead of someone who was pro-Israel. They were asking their advice.

Well, this individual is Miss Ariane Tabatabai, and that email was not the last one that she sent to her friend who was there in Iran's Foreign Ministry. She also wrote him a few weeks later, on July 10, 2014, to let him know that she was offering testimony to Congress on the Iran nuclear deal and needed some advice on how to handle it.

To be sure that we are continuing to follow this, she is going to be speaking to Congress, and she is asking the advice of someone inside Iran's Foreign Ministry on how she should handle her testimony before the U.S. Congress.

Now, some of my colleagues may have seen the Semafor article detailing these communications and the extent of Iranian influence operations against the United States. It contained details about the Iran Experts Initiative, referred to often as the IEI, which was a brainchild of the Rouhani administration.

It tasked a handful of second-generation Iranians with planting pro-nuclear Iran ideology in Western think tanks and writing propaganda demanding compromise with Tehran.

So the IEI is a part of Iran's soft propaganda. It is very intentional. We know that they were using this to push pro-Iran stories. It wasn't a casual operation. The Iranian Foreign Minister and his nuclear negotiating team were involved in creating this group—creating this group—there to support pushing the nuclear complex, the nuclear buildup in Iran.

Well, Miss Tabatabai was a part of the core group of the IEI, as it was referred to—that tight-knit core group. Remember, this is the Iran Experts Initiative. And from what we can gather, by all accounts, she was very good at her job. We know this because we have now seen emails between the Iranian officials in charge of this propaganda mill boasting about the success of their propaganda mill.

And just a few years after Tabatabai made a name for herself, pushing propaganda for Iran, the Biden administration invited her to take a seat at the table as part of Robert Malley's Iran nuclear negotiating team.

You remember Robert Malley. He was the lead negotiator on the 2015 JCPOA—or, as we commonly call it, the Iran nuclear deal. And then, in 2021,

Biden named him the U.S. Special Envoy for Iran. It was his job to bring the United States and Iran into compliance with the failed nuclear deal.

Now, this is a tweet from June of that year sent by a high-ranking Russian diplomat whose job it was to help reimplement this deal. It shows the U.S. delegation at the negotiating table, hammering out the details with the Iranians.

And that is Ms. Tabatabai on the end in the pink blazer. She was not a background player. She was someone who had a seat at the negotiating table.

For almost 3 years now, I have come to the floor to implore President Biden and his advisers to just pay attention to the blatant information warfare against our country that is being carried out every single day by the new "axis of evil"—Russia, China, Iran, North Korea.

Now, we have seen this take many forms. We see it with the remaining Confucius Institutes that are still in our country. We see it on TikTok. But for the most part, Biden has chosen to ignore the risk these influence operations pose to our country.

Now, we know his administration found a willing participant in an Iranian-influenced operation. He hired her. He gave her a U.S. Government top-secret security clearance and sent her to negotiate with the very officials that once she worked for.

Remember, she was a part of the Iran Experts Initiative. This is beyond poor judgment. This is dangerous. It is also rather unthinkable.

I would also remind my colleagues that earlier this year, her former boss and colleague, Robert Malley, was placed on leave after the State Department suspended his security clearance. They had reason to believe he was mishandling classified material.

Yesterday, we learned that the Pentagon is going to review Tabatabai's links to Tehran. But that is not sufficient. I want to know how it could be possible that the Biden administration found nothing of concern when they vetted her.

That is why I have sent this letter over to the Pentagon demanding answers to these questions. The American people deserve to know. How in the world someone who had worked for the Iranian Experts Initiative had been a part of what was called the core group—how could they possibly get a security clearance?

But, you know, considering the links to which this administration has gone to appease Iran, I imagine their response will be just as satisfying as the other that some of my colleagues and I have received in our attempts to exercise oversight over some of these foreign policy and national security issues. The American people deserve answers.

I ask unanimous consent that my letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding the foreign contacts of Ariane Tabatabai be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SEPTEMBER 28, 2023.

Hon. LLOYD J. AUSTIN III,
Secretary of Defense,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY AUSTIN: I am writing to express my concern over the actions taken by Ariane Tabatabai, the current Chief of Staff for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD/SOLIC). Iran is an evil, violent regime that supports terrorism and seeks to annihilate freedom loving countries across the globe. Under the Obama-Biden administration, your boss helped make it easier for Iran to develop a nuclear weapon—showing regimes across the world that the United States will reward them for abusing human rights. Last year, the Iranian government murdered a woman for not wearing a head scarf. There is no other way to put it: Iran is a barbaric country.

This administration has gone to great lengths to appease Iran—taking the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen off the Foreign Terrorist Organization list and ending U.S. support for Saudi Arabia and the UAE's war against the group. And just this month, on the anniversary of 9/11, President Biden incentivized Iran's terrorist activities and conceded our nation's future security as he handed over a \$6 billion payout to Iran.

Given your administration's intentional appeasement of the Iranian regime, it is unfortunately not surprising that you are allowing those with close ties to Iran to serve in a senior role. It is vital to the security of our nation to thoroughly evaluate all individuals with links to the regime that wish to operate within the Department of Defense. It is imperative that no one with direct affiliations to the Iranian regime have access to sensitive information or influence over United States foreign policy.

According to a report, on June 27, 2014, Ms. Tabatabai consulted with an individual within Iran's Foreign Ministry over attending a workshop regarding the Iran's nuclear program at Ben-Gurion University in Israel. To quote Ms. Tabatabai, "I am not interested in going, but then I thought maybe it would be better that I go and talk, rather than an Israeli like Emily Landau who goes and disseminates disinformation. I would like to ask your opinion too and see if you think I should accept the invitation and go." She also wrote to that same individual that she was to give testimony before the U.S. Congress on the nuclear deal.

Ms. Tabatabai's relationship with Iranian government representatives, along with her malicious comments regarding our ally, Israel, as a representative of the U.S. Department of Defense is undeniably unacceptable. Ms. Tabatabai's ties to the Iranian regime are dangerous and raise questions about potential foreign adversarial influence within the Department of Defense. Additionally, these reports call into question whether Ms. Tabatabai should be permitted to a security clearance with access to classified materials.

I ask a response to the following questions no later than October 6th, 2023:

1. What level clearance does Ms. Tabatabai currently possess?
2. How long has she held this clearance level?
3. Was her affiliation with the Iran Experts Initiative (IEI) discussed during the processing of her security clearance?
4. Has the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) reviewed Ms. Tabatabai's SF-86 for consistency since the release of this information?

5. Is it a standard Department of Defense policy to clear speaking engagements with a foreign leader prior to finalizing the decision?

6. Does the Department of Defense plan to question Ms. Tabatabai on if there is additional information she has leaked to foreign governments?

7. Has Ms. Tabatabai ever been in the position to make impacts that directly impact the country of Israel?

8. Did Ms. Tabatabai have access to classified documents related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action?

Sincerely,

MARSHA BLACKBURN,
U.S. Senator.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I yield the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Republican leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, Congress has until tomorrow night to pass a straight-forward short-term funding extension and avoid a government shutdown.

All this week, and every time we have found ourselves in this situation before, I have offered my colleagues the same warning: Shutting down the government doesn't help anybody politically; it doesn't make any meaningful progress on policy; and it heaps unnecessary hardships on the American people as well as the brave men and women who keep us safe.

Right now, I am encouraged that many of my colleagues who share our concerns are working hard on amendments to strengthen the pending legislation and avert the disastrous effects of a shutdown.

Congress has an opportunity right now to pay our servicemembers, border security personnel, and other essential workers; to keep important government functions running; and to keep the lights on so the important discussions we are having right now about dealing with Democrats' border crisis, delivering disaster relief, supporting Ukraine, and reining in reckless spending can continue. And I would urge our colleagues to take that opportunity.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

Madam President, now, on an entirely different matter, today, I join my alma mater, the University of Louisville, in celebrating the inauguration of its new president, Dr. Kim Schatzel.

As many alum will tell you, UofL is a special place. For me, it was the first place in Kentucky where I felt completely at home. And it is somewhere I continue to find fulfillment in my personal and public life.

As a young man, it is where I met the first professor who challenged me to think for myself, where I tested my talents in my first art class, and where I was lucky enough to take part in UofL's congressional internship program. And that turned out a lot better than my artistic pursuits.

These days, UofL continues to be an important part of my life, whether I am tailgating football games with friends, advocating on behalf of the

university in Washington, or observing the success of the McConnell Center scholars.

As President Schatzel steps into her new role, I hope she will find the immense opportunity and access afforded to myself and every UofL student, staff, faculty, and alum who walks this campus.

Throughout its 225-year history, UofL has hosted a long list of visionary leaders who shaped its success, and today I am proud to welcome President Schatzel to though those ranks. Her wealth of experience in both academics and business make her a valuable addition to the UofL family.

Before joining the University of Louisville, she led a successful career in corporate America. In just two decades, she rose from foreman on a Ford Pinto assembly line to heading up a multinational manufacturing enterprise.

She would eventually pivot to an equally impressive career in academia, taking her marketing genius to higher education. As President of Towson University, she bolstered graduation rates and broke records in capital investment on campus.

These are high priorities for our university as well, and I look forward to partnering with her to bring similar success to the UofL and broader communities.

The city of Louisville, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and the entire Nation rely on the University of Louisville for its research and innovations in medicine, engineering, agriculture, the arts, and so much more.

Leading a major metropolitan university like UofL is a big job, but I think I speak for the entire Louisville community when I say: President Schatzel, keep up the great work. From one Cardinal to another, I wish her the best of luck and congratulations this momentous day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

REMEMBERING DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I am standing here at the desk next to the desk of our fallen colleague, Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN. It seems enormously strange that instead of being able to sit here and have her next to me, her desk is covered with a black cloth and a crystal bowl of white roses.

We come from the west coast where our States sit side by side, so perhaps it was fitting that we sat side by side here on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

One thing, in particular, that Senator FEINSTEIN liked to do was share with me pictures of her dog Kirby, whom she absolutely loved. And she had a lot of pictures on her phone to show Kirby in different moments of delight. And I must say, for me, this was kind of a powerful, personal connection because I enjoyed showing her pictures of my dogs, Roxy and Lila, whom I love dearly.

So even as we work on the great issues of international affairs or the

big challenges of America, sometimes it is just the personal connections, simple connections in life that can bond people to each other.

Very few people's lives are as full of as much history and consequence as Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN's: the first woman to serve as mayor of San Francisco; the first woman to serve as a Senator from California; the longest serving Senator not only from California, the longest serving woman in the Senate ever at just over 30 years.

In 2009, during my first year in the Senate, she made a point to invite me as a freshman Senator to meet her friend the Dalai Lama. I had a chance to previously meet the Dalai Lama when I was head of the World Affairs Council in Oregon, and I had invited him to speak to the people of Oregon. But this was in a different context of the connection, the foreign relations, in which we were striving to elevate concerns about the treatment of the Tibetan people. She was a passionate supporter of Tibetan people.

She had met him 30 years before in India. She had welcomed him on his first visit to the United States, as the mayor of San Francisco. She never let up on the importance of that challenge and her concerns about the mistreatment of the Tibetan people.

In fact, I also had the opportunity to work with her on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which strived to shine a light on many human rights issues, but one of which, certainly, was defending the Tibetan people's human rights and culture from the repression of the Chinese Government.

She was also a powerful partner as we worked together to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act here on the Senate floor, which we did in 2013, and then to strive to elevate the Equality Act, the gold standard for ending discrimination against our LGBTQ community—an act that we have not yet passed on this Senate floor but absolutely should. I hope someday we will have the votes to do that.

She just believed that nobody should face discrimination, everybody should have an equal opportunity to thrive here in the United States of America.

We also served together for many years on the Appropriations Committee and the Rules Committee. She was a persistent voice in this last couple of years, time and time again, calling for better pay for our Federal wildland firefighters. Now, that particular issue is so essential because of the fires we are facing in the West, and no one raised it as often or as passionately as she did. As a result, we won that pay raise. I know that she would be insisting, if she was here today, to make sure that pay raise is sustained in any continuing resolution that we might pass in the next couple of days.

She knew how essential that was out West, that we have wildland firefighters who can work year-round and

be paid decently so we are actually there on the job.

I was proud to cosponsor her legislation this year, the West Coast Ocean Protection Act, to prohibit the exploration, development, and production of oil off the west coast, a mutual concern of those of the west coast that our coast and our multiple fisheries—our crabbing, our whiting, our shrimp, our salmon, our groundfish—are not damaged by oil, that our shoreline is not damaged by oil.

It was essential, she felt, that we preserve the health of our oceans against the potential damage of drilling off the coast. In fact, she was a strong voice in this modern conversation about climate change. She understood climate chaos and how the changing temperatures are affecting us in so many different ways.

At one point when we were serving on the Appropriations Committee together, I had a simple amendment that supported our international obligation to help fund an intergovernmental panel on climate change, and we had a deal between legislators on both sides of the aisle that we would simply hold a voice vote because legislators across the aisle felt it should be passed. But they knew anything that related to climate was so controversial, and they didn't want to bring that controversy into the discussion about honoring a treaty obligation. So the agreement was to pass it by voice vote.

When I proposed the amendment, Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN spoke up—I hadn't filled her in on the background—and she said: This issue is about climate. It is so important we should hold a recorded vote.

I probably went a little bit pale because I wasn't sure that, as a recorded vote, we could vote to honor our international agreement. But, fortunately, and just by a single vote, we did. It worked out. But it just shows her commitment to having a public discussion, public votes, public accountability to take on this incredibly significant challenge that we have faced with the changing climate.

Senator FEINSTEIN helped open the doors of the Senate to so many other women legislators. She took weapons off the street. She believed torture was un-American and unacceptable, and those who are responsible must be held accountable.

She raised vehicle emissions standards and protected so many of California's and America's beautiful outdoor spaces for future generations, including the interest she had in protecting Lake Tahoe.

Yesterday, Senator FEINSTEIN, who did so much to open this government to so many, cast her final vote in the U.S. Senate. It was a vote to keep this government open, keep the American Government serving the American people.

She lived an exceptional life—a life dedicated to public service. She has left behind an enormous public leg-

acy—a legacy of tenacity, a legacy of and willingness to build bridges across the aisle to solve problems. I hope that many of us can just hope to do as well.

My thoughts are with her daughter Katherine and her granddaughter Eileen. It was an honor and privilege to serve with Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN here in the U.S. Senate.

Thank you.

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.

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

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

Ms. LUMMIS. Madam President, I am honored to have had my first term in the U.S. Senate coincide with DIANNE FEINSTEIN's time here in this Senate.

When I learned this morning that she had passed away—the longest serving woman in the U.S. Senate—two words came to my mind: patience and kindness. The Bible says that love is patient and kind.

Senator FEINSTEIN and I disagreed on policy much of the time, but never regarding patience and kindness. DIANNE FEINSTEIN was unfailingly kind. She was particularly kind to other women Senators. She was the first to invite other women Senators to dinner, to lead our gatherings, and to focus our attention on things that are good for all Americans, without regard to political ideology.

As someone who arrived in the Senate the same week as January 6, that day set the tone for many of my first months in the U.S. Senate. But that day never set the tone for my relationship with Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN. My conversations with her, from beginning to end, were unfailingly cordial and kind.

Particularly poignant were my observations of the relationship between Senator FEINSTEIN and her colleague from California, Senator ALEX PADILLA. The conversations I enjoyed with Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator PADILLA displayed his admiration and respect for his senior Senate colleague, based on a yearslong working relationship going back to his internship for her. And his importance to her is on display in the beautiful artwork she created for him. That was a beautiful California duo. I know that Senator PADILLA will do her honor in becoming California's senior Senator.

So I conclude with positive memories of DIANNE FEINSTEIN—Senator, colleague, and hopefully for both of us, friend. That is a lovely way to set the tone for political opposites going forward.

If patience and kindness is what love is, then that is also what Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN is. Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN is love. I salute her service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, I am very glad that you have taken the chair to preside because I want to talk about something I think is kind of near and dear to your heart. This is something that I passed in the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in the Senate back in 2019, and this was passed with bipartisan support. I am talking about a bill called the Prevent Government Shutdowns Act.

Following passage, I wrote an article in the Wall Street Journal. I just want to read the first two paragraphs of that column, published on September 22, 2019:

If the Legislature in my home state of Wisconsin fails to pass the next year's appropriation bills, we don't shut government agencies down. We fund them at the previous year's appropriation levels. Doesn't that make sense?

That common-sense approach should apply in Washington, but it doesn't. By the time I arrived in 2011, Congress's appropriations process was completely broken.

It still is.

The United States has since had—

Again, this is as of September 2019.

—the United States has since had three government shutdowns, passed 34 continuing resolutions to avoid shutdowns, raised or suspended the debt ceiling nine times and—

Again, this was just 4 years ago.

—increased the federal debt \$8.5 trillion.

So here we are, a couple days before the end of the fiscal year, 4 years later—our debt, by the way, has more than doubled; it stands at \$33 trillion now—and we are facing a shutdown.

Isn't this ridiculous? There is no reason for this.

Again, back in June of 2019, I tasked up my committee members. I said: OK. I want to pass a bill that will end all government shutdowns forever. Take it off the table.

Now, there have been a number of bills designed to do that offered in both Chambers, both the House and the Senate.

I have three members of the committee—four members of the committee have their own bills.

The bill I selected to debate, mark up, and pass was one offered by Senators JAMES LANKFORD and MAGGIE HASSAN.

I chose that bill because—one bill actually increased spending; one bill decreased spending. But the Hassan-Lankford bill did what we do in Wisconsin: You don't shut an agency down; you don't shut the government down; you just keep spending at last year's level until the legislature can get its act together and appropriate the funds.

So that bill that I chose that we passed—by the way, on a bipartisan basis. I believe every Democratic Senator on the committee voted for it because Senator HASSAN, Senator LANKFORD did a good job of coming together in a bipartisan fashion. They put some disciplines in there.

But what it does, it just creates rolling 14-day CRs. With those disciplines,

Members can't travel back on the government dime. You only have a 24-hour shutdown, I believe. There are other disciplines there that put pressure on the process to get our act together and start appropriating bills.

If you don't get it done in the first 14 days, you have another 14-day CR, you do another 14-day CR, until we complete the appropriations process.

Again, not an efficient way of doing things. I think the reason most Members say that they don't want to shut down the government is we realize it is a very inefficient process, and it hurts people. It hurts people.

So why haven't we passed this in the last 4 years? Why haven't some of these other preventing government shutdowns acts passed in the past? Why not? It is ridiculous we haven't done it yet.

The result, by the way, has been what this chart demonstrates. Again, I already mentioned we are at \$33 trillion in debt. It is very important to recognize how out of control spending is here in Washington, DC.

When we were debating the omnibus last year, I asked my Republican colleagues at the Senate lunch: Does anybody know how much the Federal Government is going to spend this year?

I didn't get any answers. Maybe somebody knew, but they didn't volunteer to answer.

I went out and asked the Washington press corps, the folks who are supposed to be reporting on this to our constituents and to the American public: Does anybody know how much the government spent last year?

Well, it is over \$1 trillion. Well, that is true in terms of discretionary spending—less than 30 percent of the budget.

By the way, I granted them immediate absolution. I said: I wouldn't expect you to know how much the Federal Government spends in total because we never talk about it.

Think of it. The Federal Government is the largest financial entity in the world, and, in December of 2022, the people I was asking—the people who should have known this—had no idea what in total the Federal Government spent. Well, the answer was about \$6.2 trillion.

Let me put that in context. That is what this chart shows. The numbers are pretty small. So I will describe them. This column is fiscal year 2019 spending. This is the fiscal year before the pandemic and the pandemic recession.

This column is this fiscal year, fiscal year 2023 estimated spending. We don't have hard figures yet, but we have a pretty good idea of what we are going to be spending.

Just 4 years ago, in just the year 2019, total Federal Government spending was \$4.446 trillion—\$4.4 trillion. Let me put that in perspective. In 2002, it was the first time we passed the Rubicon of spending over \$2 trillion in total. Seventeen years later—it took us 17 years to more than double that to \$4.4 trillion.

This fiscal year that we are closing out in a couple of days, we will spend over \$6.3 trillion. We are spending \$1.9 trillion more this year than we spent just 4 years ago. This is completely out of control.

By the way, if you put us on a baseline, based on just population growth and inflation—in other words, take out the massive out-of-control spending during the pandemic and just put us on a reasonable baseline—last year, we spent a little more than \$5 trillion.

But in the debt ceiling deal—which, by the way, didn't raise the debt ceiling by a given amount—but House conservatives basically gave the Speaker to negotiate \$1.5 trillion. We have done one of these Washington games, which is suspending debt. It will probably result in a debt ceiling of \$4 trillion, which will accommodate this massive—massive—deficit spending.

So again, just to repeat: 4 years ago, \$4.4 trillion; 4 years later, \$6.3, almost \$6.4 trillion. That is an increase of more than \$1.9 trillion. And the deficit this year will be somewhere between \$1.7 and \$2 trillion. We need to get this under control.

But I want to make an important point here. As dysfunctional as Washington, DC, is—it is grotesquely dysfunctional. I come from the private sector. This would not happen in the private sector. You wouldn't take 72 or 73 percent of what you spend in your private sector budget and say: That is on automatic pilot. We are never going to look at that. We are only going to look at 27 percent of the budget and try to control that. That is basically what we are doing here with discretionary spending this year. Twenty-seven percent, we will focus on that, and we will ignore 73 percent and let it grow out of control.

But again, this is a well-honed process. This isn't—it is dysfunctional, but the process is in place, and it is a well-honed process to mortgage our children's future, and we are witnessing that process.

Again, this is my 13th year. I think every year, at least, a shutdown has been threatened, as we are threatening this one—again, disquieting people, worrying people, because if a shutdown does occur, people will be hurt. We can avoid it.

But this well-honed process is playing out as it has ever since I have arrived here. Basically, you don't do appropriation bills without the House, without the Senate. You might start. You might start the charade, like we did this year, and start passing them in this Chamber, in September, a few weeks before the fiscal year. Obviously, you don't have enough time to pass all of them. So then you threaten a government shutdown.

You predict calamity, and then you load onto a continuing resolution spending that may or may not be controversial. It is not where you increase spending. It is not where you put supplemental spending. But that is what

we do. So it becomes controversial, and, all of a sudden, here you are threatening shutdown.

Now the proposal on the table right now in the Senate is: Let's do a CR with some controversial spending, and we will have that CR end the day before the Thanksgiving recess—a little pressure on our Members, just in case we can get our act together to come up with a couple of massive minibuses or just one massive omnibus to drop on everybody's desk. And if they want to go home for recess, you had better pass that now.

Now, my guess is we probably won't be able to get that done in time, and so we will end up with another CR. This one will probably be scheduled to expire—oh, I don't know, pick a date. My guess would be December 23 and December 24—the same process. That is what happened last year.

Then we get it, again, dropped on our desk—about a 2,000-plus page bill. Nobody has time to read it, other than the people who wrote it. And you get the Hobson's choice—vote yes or no. The problem with that, in addition to just the grotesque dysfunction of it, is the individual appropriation bills do not get the scrutiny that they deserve.

If you bring up every appropriations bill—12—you have got to start somewhere around May. You bring up each individual appropriation bill. Now you can actually scrutinize it. The public can see it. We can offer amendments.

Again, it is not a panacea. I am not going to say it is going to completely stop this runaway spending train, but it will be some constraint. It restores some function to this very dysfunctional place.

So what I have been pushing for, for 4 years—and it is one of the reasons I withheld my consent on the minibus. And I appreciate the fact that the chairman and the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee were willing to work with me and offer me an amendment on the minibus to try and get a vote to maybe pass the Preventing Government Shutdown Act, but other people are objecting, and we haven't got that vote yet.

So here we are, a couple days before a shutdown, and we need to do something. The House is having, obviously, a difficult time coming up with a solution. The Senate may pass something that really has no chance of passing in the House. I think we have to be honest about that.

So, again, in order to prevent a government shutdown, what we ought to do is do something that people agree on. You know, rather than trying to use this moment to jam something through that people don't all agree with, let's try and pass something people agree with, which is a bill that will prevent a government shutdown.

Now, I chose a 14-day clean CR—because that is pretty much the structure of the Prevent Government Shutdowns Act, rolling 14-day CRs, giving both Chambers the time to act to start

passing these bills with a little bit more scrutiny than what minibuses or an omnibus would afford. It is a very commonsense approach. It is something we all ought to agree on. It would prevent a shutdown. It would prevent pain to real people. And all we have to do is agree to do what we all say we want to do, to avoid what we all say we want to avoid—a government shutdown.

So, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of my bill, which is at the desk. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). Is there objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, we can't be back here in the same situation in 2 weeks. We need a CR that gives us the actual time to get through our bipartisan spending bills. Believe me, I would love to say we could get this done in 2 weeks. But we know that is not realistic, because even the three that passed unanimously out of my committee have run into delays, as the Senator from Wisconsin knows all too well.

And, just as importantly, this bill does nothing to reauthorize time-sensitive programs. It does not reauthorize the FAA, which means chaos for air travelers. It doesn't reauthorize our community health centers and other critical primary care programs, which means patients in our underserved areas will lose access to programs they need.

And it doesn't protect our wildland firefighters from a drastic pay cut. It doesn't extend disaster relief funding or Ukraine's aid.

We have before this body a carefully negotiated bipartisan CR that does include all of those absolutely essential policies, that has already garnered more than enough support to pass here in the Senate, and that I am confident will pass the House as soon as Speaker MCCARTHY actually puts it to a vote.

That is where our attention needs to be, not on a slapdash bill that puts us back here in 2 weeks and completely leaves air travel, health care providers, firefighters, and so much more in a lurch.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. MURRAY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted “no” on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 324, Thomas G. Day, of Virginia, to be a Commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission for a term expiring October 14, 2028.

HOPEWELL CEREMONIAL EARTHWORKS

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate the Ohio History Connection, National Parks Service, and local Tribal communities on their historic achievement of earning Ohio's first World Heritage designation.

The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks join the Yellowstone National Park, the Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty, and 21 others as U.S.-designated World Heritage sites. The designation is reserved for the places on earth that are of “Outstanding Universal Value” to humanity and will support the protection of the site for future generations.

The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks are a series of eight ancient monuments built in the middle of the Woodland period, between 1,600 and 2,000 years ago by people we now refer to as the Hopewell Culture. The Earthworks embody the artistry, spirituality, and architecture of the Hopewell peoples. They also reflect the commitment to preservation and collaboration that archaeologists and Tribal nations have maintained over the years.

This designation would not be possible without the collaboration of the Ohio History Connection, the National Parks Service, and local Tribal communities. May the celebration and preservation of the Hopewell Earthworks tell the story of Ohio history for generations to come. Congratulations.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:40 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker appoints the following Members to be the managers of the conference on the part of the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2670) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, in lieu of their appointments on September 19, 2023:

From the Committee on Financial Services, for consideration of subtitle J of title X of division A, secs. 1085 and 1086, title LXVIII of division E, division