

into law before the clock strikes midnight tomorrow, portions of the Federal Government will shut down. And if nothing changes by the following Friday, we will be plunged into a full government shutdown.

I have made my feelings about government shutdowns crystal clear. No. 1, they don't save money. No. 2, they don't solve any problems. No. 3, they hurt innocent Americans and dedicated public servants. Government shutdowns are not in anyone's best interest, and I am glad that all four congressional leaders agree that we need to avoid a lapse in funding.

Before the end of this week—before tonight, I hope—I expect Congress to pass another stopgap funding bill. This will provide more time to advance regular appropriations bills, and I hope we can see some real progress this time.

But I must say that responsibility for where we are today lies at the feet of the majority leader of the U.S. Senate. Yes, the House has its problems, but here in the Senate, Senator MURRAY, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator COLLINS, and the entire Appropriations Committee have produced bipartisan—in some cases unanimous—appropriations bills that Senator SCHUMER has simply refused to put on the floor. So, without a doubt, he is complicit in where we find ourselves today.

It is just another example of how the Senate is broken. While the ongoing game of brinkmanship is extremely dangerous, it calls into question our military readiness and jeopardizes our national security at an increasingly dangerous time.

Making matters worse, this saga is completely avoidable. As I mentioned, the Appropriations Committee in the Senate passed 12 bills last summer, providing a lot of time for Senator SCHUMER to bring those bills to the floor. That is the earliest the Appropriations Committee has acted in the last 5 years. Thanks to Senator MURRAY and Senator COLLINS, they laid the groundwork for a thorough and ontime appropriations process. But Senator SCHUMER has ball control, and he simply failed to put those bills on the floor in a timely fashion, leading us to where we are today.

As I said, the Senate did not pass a single regular appropriations bill before the September 30 deadline. This was September 30 of last year. I don't know if people really appreciate how broken the Senate is, thanks to a lack of leadership. We are working on appropriations bills from last year. The fiscal year began the end of September of last year. As a result of the failure to do his job, Congress had to pass stopgap funding bills in September, November, and January.

And just think about it for a minute. If we weren't lurching from one crisis to the next, what other things might we do to benefit the American people? That is what economists call an opportunity cost. Each time, the Democratic

leader vowed to use the extra time to make progress on regular appropriations bills, but each time he failed to do so.

We are now 5 months into the current fiscal year, and it is embarrassing—it should be embarrassing—to note that not a single full-year funding bill has been signed into law.

Members of this body are charged to do the hard work of negotiating, debating, and passing bills to provide government Agencies with ontime funding. It is hard to do when Senator SCHUMER has us in session 2½ days a week—2½ days a week. It is hard to get your job done when you are working 50 percent of the time. But he is the one who controls the agenda. He can say we are starting Monday morning, like most Americans do, and we are not leaving until we finish Friday night, but instead, he has canceled votes on Monday so we come in on Tuesday. We have our first vote at 5:30 on Tuesday, and then we leave after lunch, typically, on a Thursday. No wonder the Senate is broken and not doing its job.

The Senate has a number of big cliffs that are fast approaching as a result of the mismanagement of the Senate schedule. We have major funding deadlines tomorrow, but we also have one a week from now, on the 8th. In addition, here is what else has not been done on a timely basis: the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. That has to be done by next Friday. We need to reauthorize and strengthen section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act before April 19 or else it lapses, making us blind to the efforts of our adversaries to undermine our national security. And, yes, we need to pass a new farm bill before the end of September. We can't do that working half weeks—2½ days a week.

It is important to note that all of these tasks—funding, the FAA, section 702 of the farm bill—should have been completed last year. We are doing last year's work. We are not doing the American people's work today, looking forward, with the challenges with which our country is confronted.

We should have wrapped up our work on each of these items in 2023 instead of punting the deadline to 2024. We are now 2 months into the new year and still struggling to complete the work that should have been done months ago.

As I said, this backlog comes with a serious opportunity cost. When the Senate is dealing with overdue assignments, we don't have the time to work on other critical issues that deserve our attention on behalf of the American people. We don't have the ability to work on legislation to address the border crisis, the fentanyl epidemic, public safety concerns, or other issues that are top of mind for the American people.

Virtually all of the time is focused on one of two things: rushing to complete work that should have been done last year or processing nominations. That is it.

Under Senator SCHUMER's leadership, regular order has been thrown out the window. He has broken the Senate. And this Chamber has simply lurched from one deadline to another.

This should be embarrassing. This is malpractice. It is not negligent because it is by design. It is intentional. This is, regrettably, what we have come to expect under Democratic leadership. This is the new norm.

For the sake of the country, I hope that in the coming weeks, the Senate will prove more productive than the past several months have been. And, yes, I hope we have new management next year after the November election. That is the best way the 330 million people in this country can contribute to changing the status quo, which is a broken Senate, and fixing it, which we know how to do if we change management.

I yield the floor.

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.

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

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

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. KELLY. Madam President, 3 weeks ago, I stood here and spoke about the consequences of my Republican colleagues walking away from the border agreement.

After decades of crisis after crisis at our border, we had a chance to be the Senators who actually did something about it. We had a real opportunity, a real bill ready to be signed into law by the President—technology to stop fentanyl, more than 1,000 additional Border Patrol agents, authorities and policy changes to prevent the border from being overwhelmed, visas to keep families together, and more. That is what Senators SINEMA, MURPHY, and LANKFORD worked on together for months, with both Democrat and Republican Senate leaders at the table and with the administration at the table, and that is what Senate Republicans turned and walked away from.

I said then that some politicians see more advantage in shouting about problems than actually solving them. Well, let's take a look at what has happened in the last 3 weeks.

A couple of my Republican colleagues traveled to Texas so they could record videos about how bad things were at the border. Neither of them supported the bipartisan border bill. Other of my Republican colleagues have stood on this floor giving speeches, pointing fingers at President Biden. They have done the same on cable news. President Biden supported the bipartisan border bill; they did not.

In fact, one of my Republican colleagues said in his floor speech the other day that he hasn't seen the two Arizona Senators on this floor giving

speeches about the border. To that Senator, I say this: That is because we are not here to just talk about the problem; we are here to do something about it.

By the way, that same Senator did not support the bipartisan border bill.

A group of House Republicans came to my State for what they called a "factfinding tour." What more facts do you need? That it is bad? Of course, it is. It would be better if Border Patrol agents had the resources and staffing and policy changes from the bipartisan border bill we could have passed. That would have helped them. But the folks who went on that trip didn't want to vote for that bill. So, no, this wasn't a factfinding tour; it was just another photo op, because they would rather keep talking about the problem instead of solving the problem. Who does that help? It doesn't help Border Patrol—who, by the way, supported this bipartisan bill. It doesn't help border communities that desperately need some relief.

The problems at the border do not go away when you fly back to Washington, DC. They just don't. And they don't go away when the TV camera stops rolling.

In Arizona, these aren't just talking points; it is a challenge that we face every day that strains our communities, and it strains law enforcement. That is why I am not going to stop working to solve these issues with our border and our immigration system.

Because while anybody can talk about a problem, those of us here in this building have the power to actually do something about it.

That is our job. That is what we were elected to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

ISRAEL

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, it has been several months now since Hamas carried out a truly heinous terrorist attack against Israel. The barbarity of October 7 should not be brushed aside and cannot ever be excused.

We are talking about terrorists gunning down innocent civilians—including in their homes—committing horrible acts of torture and sexual violence, and taking hostages, among them women and elderly people and infants.

As I have said repeatedly, Israel has a clear right to defend itself and its people against the very real and continued threat that Hamas poses to Israeli civilians.

As I have also said many times, that has to be done in accordance with the laws of armed conflict and international humanitarian law.

I appreciate that this is a tough, emotional topic. War always is. But at times like this, we cannot let passion kill compassion. We cannot let the horrors of the present end the hope for a brighter future.

As Israel seeks to eliminate the threat posed by Hamas, it must make every effort to protect innocent civilians in Gaza, who make up the vast, overwhelming majority of people in the Gaza strip.

But as we have watched this conflict escalate, it has become increasingly clear that is not what is happening. Just consider, hundreds of Palestinians were injured or killed today after Israeli troops fired on civilians crowded near aid trucks desperate for something to eat. While we are still learning more about the details, you have to believe that this kind of bloodshed should be completely avoidable.

I come to the floor today as a friend of Israel. I understand the very real threats Israel—home to about half of the world's Jews—faces outside its borders and in keeping its population safe.

And I come to the floor as someone who feels very strongly that Israel absolutely must change course. The collective punishment in Gaza has got to stop, and Israel must do more to protect civilian life.

We need a mutually agreed-upon cease-fire to end the fighting as soon as possible. We need the return of all the hostages by Hamas. And we need a massive surge in humanitarian aid.

Israel needs to understand the casualties they have inflicted on the people of Gaza. The devastation they have caused cannot continue. It is not in line with American interests nor does it make Israel safer.

The prosecution of this war so far by Netanyahu's far-right government has been nothing short of an unquestionable strategic failure. Many of the families of hostages have been protesting Netanyahu themselves, demanding a mutually negotiated cease-fire to see their loved ones safely returned.

Let's consider what is actually happening in Gaza, the human reality on the ground. There are over 2 million people in Gaza who have been displaced from their homes and 1.7 million people facing imminent starvation.

Most of the water in Gaza is unfit for consumption, and two-thirds of the hospitals are no longer operating—there are only 11 left.

Think about that. Think about what that means for the countless people who are starving, who are sick, and who are scared, the survivors. Or better yet, listen to the firsthand accounts. I did.

There are more than 150,000 pregnant and lactating women in harm's way. Doctors who had worked on the ground in Gaza spoke to me about performing emergency C-sections on rubble or in tents without anesthesia and women bleeding out because they couldn't get medical care.

Since the start of the war, 66,000 Palestinians have been injured, 29,000 have been killed, and more than half of them are women and children.

We all understand that war is not a simple thing. But I will just say, I don't know how you call a military op-

eration targeted when there are 29,000 deaths.

I don't know how you call it targeted when there are babies and children being pulled from the rubble. Who does this serve? It cannot continue this way. The situation in Gaza and in the West Bank where there has been a disturbing rise in brazen violence from rightwing Israeli settlers against Palestinian families does not lead to peace and security for Israelis or Palestinians. It just doesn't.

And the rhetoric and stated policies of the Netanyahu regime—like abandoning a two-state solution—have been nothing short of deeply dangerous and wildly counterproductive.

I have voiced my strong support for the President's Executive order to allow sanctions on Israeli settlers in the West Bank who threaten or perpetrate violence against Palestinians.

I also want to make it crystal clear now: Indefinite Israeli control over Gaza is unacceptable, as is any contraction of territory for the Palestinians.

As someone who voted against the war in Iraq, I am acutely aware of mistakes our country made. You cannot defeat terrorism through sheer military force alone. That much is clear. And it is my hope that Israel can heed that lesson.

Winning a war against terrorism isn't a matter of how many people you kill. That approach isn't just bloody and brutal; it can be self-defeating. Terrorists don't care how many people you kill. They certainly don't care how many civilians you kill, because terrorism is not a human enemy of flesh and blood. It is an idea, it is a hatred, a violence, and it thrives on suffering.

So while Israel must work to eliminate the threat posed by Hamas, that fight must be targeted if it is to be successful. You have to fight the hopelessness extremism feeds on. You have to fight the sprawl of violence that entrenches conflict. And you have to stay clear-eyed and strategic in pursuit of justice and in pursuit of lasting peace.

I may be just one of a hundred Senators here, but I have been using my voice to help move things in that direction. On humanitarian aid, I have pressed the Biden administration repeatedly in many conversations to take steps that would dramatically increase aid to Gaza.

And I made including humanitarian aid for Gaza in our national security package a red line for me as the Senate put together our bill—even as Republicans tried over and over and over again to chisel it away.

I also want to be clear about the fact that the taxpayer-funded military aid we provided for Israel for their self-defense is subject to the Leahy Law. I have insisted throughout many conversations that this law is implemented as intended and that civilians are protected and that international law is followed.

And, finally, on moving towards a lasting peace, as President Biden recently noted, talks are ongoing and