

should be the easiest thing they do today.

If words like Donald Trump's are not fiercely condemned, we are only begging for something far worse to happen to our democracy down the line. We cannot let this man, Donald Trump, or anybody else throw these kinds of matches to light flames that could burn our democracy. It is just horrible. I can't believe that someone would do something like that.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on judges, a much better note, today, the Senate reaches a significant milestone: 200 judges confirmed to lifetime appointments under President Biden and this very proud Democratic majority: 200 judges who are restoring balance in excellence to our courts, 200 judges who are increasing the diversity and dynamism of our judiciary, 200 judges who are committed to applying the law fairly, impartially, equally. Of those 200 judges—I am so proud—127 are women; 125 are people of color, both traditionally underrepresented demographics on the bench. We are making our courts look more like America. It is not just going to be male White partners in fancy law firms. It is much more diverse, and the bench is better for it. It is something we can all be proud of.

Mr. President, 127 women, 125 people of color, over twice as many women, and more than three times as many people of color have been confirmed under the last administration. We have confirmed more Black judges, more Latino judges, more Asian-American judges. We confirmed the first Muslim-American man and woman on the bench, the first Navajo Federal judge, the first Black woman to serve on the Supreme Court, of course, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

We have confirmed more judges who have served as public defenders and civil rights lawyers and consumer lawyers and immigration lawyers and labor lawyers; again, not just partners of big law firms. We have confirmed more judges, in other words, who embody the very ideal of America, a place where the rule of law is protected, where the rights of all are honored, and where everyone—everyone—gets a fair shake.

I commend Chairman DURBIN. I commend the Judiciary Committee for their great work processing judges in and out of our committee. I commend President Biden for nominating so many of these people and working with our Senate colleagues as to who would be best from their States and regions.

Senate Democrats are very proud of our record. We are proud of our judges, and we will keep going.

BORDER ACT OF 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the border, well, tomorrow, Senators face

an important decision: Will both sides come together to advance a bipartisan border security bill or will partisanship get in the way yet again?

Three months ago, Donald Trump told his Republican allies to block the strongest bipartisan border security bill Congress has seen in a generation. Luckily, we are trying again tomorrow, and I hope this time Republicans join us to achieve a different outcome.

The only way—the only way—we are going to fix the border is through bipartisan legislation, just like the one both sides spent months negotiating a few months ago and which we are taking up again tomorrow. We don't expect every Democrat or every Republican to support this bill. It wasn't designed that way. It wasn't designed to get all the votes of one party, which then almost inevitably means you get none of the votes from the other side. It was intended to be a compromise that could pass and become law.

We know there are disagreements, as there always are, about the best way to proceed on the border. But that is precisely why I have emphasized from day one, we need to have strong border support if we hope to get border done.

Unlike H.R. 2, a very partisan bill, the bipartisan border bill was written with the goal of getting 60 votes in the Senate, with support from both Republicans and Democrats. It had input from both Republicans and Democrats. H.R. 2 can't claim that. If anything is political, it is H.R. 2. It didn't receive a single Democratic vote in the Senate because Democrats weren't consulted. It didn't even get the full support of Senate Republicans. H.R. 2 was the definition of political theater, one side sitting in a room by itself writing what it wanted not even thinking of how you pass a bill.

Our bill, however, is what a serious attempt at border reform looks like. Now, most people might not remember, but a few months ago, there was a lot of bipartisan interest in getting our border bill passed before Donald Trump killed it in its tracks. Our Republican colleagues—including the Republican leader—was adamant. We needed to get border security done as part of the national security supplemental. This is what the Republican leader said right before our bill was released:

I think this is the ideal time to do it.

He then added, Leader MCCONNELL added:

This is a unique opportunity where divided government has given us an opportunity to get an outcome.

These aren't the words of someone who thinks our efforts were political theater. These are the words of someone who thinks we were close to reaching a breakthrough, and he wasn't alone. My friend from South Carolina also said that.

To those who think that if President Trump wins . . . that we can get a better deal, you won't.

He added:

This moment will pass. Do not let it pass.

Republican Senator from South Carolina.

So let's be perfectly clear: Our bipartisan border bill represented a real chance—in fact, the best chance in decades—to act on border security, to make a law, not just to make a political point.

Importantly, the bill would have made huge strides toward cracking down on the scourge of fentanyl. It would have given billions for DEA, for DHS to hire officers to focus exclusively on drugs and billions for state-of-the-art equipment to detect the flow of drugs at border crossings and ports.

And some of my Democratic colleagues will be talking about that, at 12:30, at an event, how this bill really does more than anything we have done thus far, and we have worked hard on it to deal with the scourge of fentanyl. So, today, my Democratic colleagues will shine a spotlight on the immense good this bill will do to protect our country from the free flow of this dangerous drug, fentanyl.

If you told me a year ago that this was the kind of bill we had before us, I would have been certain Republicans would have helped enact this bill into law. By any objective measure, it is strong, necessary.

And one final note, the last time we came close here was 2013 when we passed comprehensive immigration reform. We did it bipartisan. It was the only way to do it. I and my late friend, good friend, John McCain had a Gang of 8—four Democrats, four Republicans. We got, I believe it was, 69 votes on the floor of the Senate. Unfortunately, the House didn't pass it.

But it is just a lesson to all of us. Bipartisanship is the only way to go. H.R. 2 is not the least bit bipartisan. Our bill was completely bipartisan.

So, tomorrow, we are going to lay out a clear choice. Tomorrow, we will see who is serious about actually wanting to fix the border and who prefers to merely talk about fixing the border.

FARM BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on the farm bill, tomorrow, House Republicans will mark up their partisan farm bill that, frankly, completely misses the mark.

The farm bill should support the farmers who grow our food. It should protect our land. It should invest in jobs for rural communities big and small to rebuild their economies. The farm bill should provide lifesaving hunger assistance for the millions of Americans who rely on programs like SNAP, and it should extend SNAP benefits to our friends in Puerto Rico who have been excluded from this program for decades, and it will expand it to them.

It is sad to see that rather than working together to get a serious farm bill passed, House Republicans are playing games and pushing a one-sided, insufficient partisan bill.

Senate Democrats, on the other hand, have released a farm bill proposal that maintains a bipartisan coalition and invests in all of the areas I mention. So I commend Chair STABENOW for her work.

Let me be clear: A purely partisan farm bill that departs from the long-standing spirit of bipartisanship has no future in the Senate. And, unfortunately, I might add, it seems to be where this House—the Republican House leadership and party—always goes. They always retreat to a corner of partisanship. They are not interested in improving the lives of American people. They are just interested in scoring political points to a narrow group back home, the MAGA group that seems to have such power in the party.

So I hope that doesn't happen on the farm bill. It has always been bipartisan. House Republicans, come on. Wake up. Do you want to help our farmers? Work together with Democrats and pass a bipartisan bill.

RIGHT TO CONTRACEPTION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on contraceptives, yesterday, we began the process for the Senate to consider the Right to Contraception Act led by Senators MARKEY and HIRONO in June.

Now, more than ever, contraception is a critical piece of protecting women's reproductive freedoms, standing as nothing short of a vital lifeline for millions of American women across the country.

Senate Democrats are committed to restoring women's freedoms and will fight to protect access to contraception and other reproductive freedoms that are essential safeguards for millions of women to control their own lives, their futures, and their bodies.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

RUSSIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last week, just days after President Orbán rolled out the red carpet in Budapest for President Xi, the Chinese dictator rolled out a red carpet in Beijing for Vladimir Putin. The "friendship without limits" struck between America's

greatest strategic adversaries will now endure "for generations to come." And it appears to be rooted in a shared myth about the nature of world conflicts and a victim complex that would be laughable if it didn't carry such grave consequences for Western peace and security.

At last week's summit, Russia and China together accused the United States of threatening the world's strategic balance, as if it is Washington rather than Beijing or Moscow trying to redraw borders by force or to disrupt global order.

Well, if you are looking for the government that has doubled its nuclear arsenal in 3 years, you will find it in Beijing, not Washington. In fact, Americans' own strategic deterrent continues to suffer from chronic neglect. And the Biden administration continues to submit defense budgets that fail to keep up with inflation, much less with the growing threat posed by the PRC.

And if you are looking for the regime recklessly developing an insanely provocative and destabilizing nuclear weapon to deploy in space, you will find that one in Moscow.

The world's leading authoritarians never seem to let the facts get in the way. But economic and military realities matter enormously to the future of fledgling democracies and developing nations who are vulnerable to their economic coercion and thuggish political intimidation.

The challenge to Western peace and security is not confined to the Taiwan Straits and the trenches of Ukraine. Chinese debt traps and Russian security forces are expanding malign influence from Central America to Central Asia to Africa and to our own Western Hemisphere.

Russia's efforts to strangle democracy and wrestle free societies back under its control are perhaps most glaring along the borders of Europe.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the unshackled nations have largely chosen freedom and worked to build democratic governments and societies oriented squarely to the West. And the neo-Soviet imperialists in the Kremlin see that as a threat.

Leaders in Washington are prone to forget how fragile our own experiment in democracy was during its earliest days and how precious are the safeguards our Founders enshrined in our government to protect the minority from the excesses of authoritarianism of majority rule.

Sometimes, of course, politicians in Washington even flirt with the idea of tearing down these safeguards of democracies to deny the minority any meaningful power.

Fortunately, there is still a bipartisan firewall in the Senate against this sort of shortsighted radicalism. But for nascent, vulnerable democracies, such safeguards face even graver threats. And in Georgia, a parliamentary majority's quest for power

is threatening to suffocate the nation's civil society and unravel the guardrails of its democracy.

In an attempt to consolidate its hold on government, the Georgian Dream Party would stamp out the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the Georgian people.

And while the political opposition is large, it is chronically divided against itself. Despite their feckless party leaders, thousands of Georgians have taken to the streets to protest. Their desire for self-determination and freedom from Russian coercion is obvious. Four in five Georgians tell pollsters they want a distinctly European future.

They believe that planting themselves firmly in the West, among democratic nations where the rule of law prevails, is in their best interest.

Whether Georgia looks East or West matters to the United States. Standing with free people resisting the aggression of tyrants like Putin or Xi is in our own interests. This is true of Taiwan and Ukraine, Estonia, and Japan.

And it is true of Georgia. The Georgian people deserve the right to write their own future, not have it dictated to them by Moscow's preferred party chiefs.

And why is it that Russians obsess over controlling Georgia's future? It is about more than acting out Putin's neo-imperialist fantasy. Geography matters. For millennia, Georgia and its Black Sea coast stood at the crossroads of the civilized world. It is a key transit point for critical resources. And today, along with Armenia, it sits as a tantalizing link in the land bridge between authoritarian partners in Moscow and Tehran.

The people of Georgia have a long history of enduring conflict and conquest. They have a long tradition of resilience and a rich culture to be proud of. And they know there is a difference between bending to Russia and turning to the West.

So, like friends of the Georgian people across the West, I am hopeful this moment will be one which can take yet more pride, as a moment when the opposition to Russian coercion puts petty differences aside and stands united.

Of course, this must also be a moment for Georgia's ruling party to recognize the costs of ignoring their people's will in order to fulfill Putin's whims and to stop short of shredding their relationship with the West.

I hope those in power in Tbilisi will put sovereignty over subjugation and withdraw the coercive "Russia law" from parliament.

ENERGY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on another matter, last Thursday, the Biden administration announced its plan to sacrifice yet another source of affordable, reliable American energy on the altar of climate activism.

After years of freezes and bans on onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing,