

JOHNSON seems to accept reality that any CR we produce in the coming weeks will have to include that funding level.

But sadly—sadly—the good news ends there, because, on the whole, the House Republicans' CR is an unserious and uncooked product. It is not serious for Republicans to say they want to kick the can down the road for 6 months on funding the government.

Funding the government is the most basic responsibility we have in Congress. So to say "let's hold off for half a year" should be a nonstarter. It is also not serious for Republicans to release a proposal that endangers troop readiness, risks troop pay, hamstringing our efforts to outcompete the Chinese Government. You cannot run an Army on a 6-month CR. You cannot put everything on hold for 6 months, have the defense contracts put on ice for 6 months, and allow for Russia and the Chinese Government to gain on us. It is that simple. And the head of the Joint Chiefs sent a letter that said just that.

It is not serious for Republicans to say they want to pass a CR that fails to properly extend E-Verify, H-2B visas, and other border security programs that stop drugs like fentanyl. They talk a lot about the border, but then the fundamental ways that we toughen up enforcement on the border and interior of the country with E-Verify, they ignore.

It shows how political this document is. It is particularly egregious that the Speaker's own proposal disbands a critical law enforcement effort to stop drug smuggling, drug cartels, money laundering. But the parade of horrors keeps going. It just doesn't end there.

It is not serious for Republicans to say that they want to pass a CR that forgets to fund critical health programs. Under the Republican proposal, telehealth would be harmed. We know how important telehealth is, particularly for rural Americans. It has made healthcare much better, cheaper, and more effective in rural areas. But they don't fund it. Wait for 6 months to tell someone in a rural area who needs medical help?

People with diabetes would struggle to get the aid they need. And community health centers, often the only resource for millions of working-class Americans to get their healthcare if they don't have insurance but fall above the Medicare and Medicaid lines to get their healthcare—that is where they get it. That funding, again, would be in danger.

And if all that weren't enough, Republicans have no plan for extending farm bill funding. One of the consequences of failing to pass the farm bill is going over the so-called dairy cliff, which is what happens when the dairy margin coverage program dries up. For this to happen would decimate farmers across the country and, I know, in my own State. Farmers have told me. Some of them would go out of business if we want over that dairy

cliff. Monthly payments that help farmers cover the gap between the price of milk and feed would halt.

And it would not only affect our farmers, it would affect our consumers. The cost of milk needed for our babies and for healthy kids and all of us—I like milk; I look forward to drinking it a lot—but the cost of milk could potentially double if we went over that dairy cliff. It would create seismic disruptions in our supply chains and cause market panic.

So these are just some of the terrible consequences of proceeding with Speaker JOHNSON's 6-month, unserious CR proposal. It is a little surprise that the White House has already issued a veto threat.

Now, as far as their timeline, let's be very clear about what Republicans are trying to do with this 6-month CR. They are trying to lay the groundwork for Project 2025 in hopes they get a favorable result in the election. That is why the rightwing is pushing this. It is not just, you know, that they don't like government funding. They have this horrible document, Project 2025, which would turn America inside-out.

I believe it would create huge economic, social—all kinds of problems—problems of protecting freedom. But that is what they want to do. That is their goal. Why Speaker JOHNSON goes along with it is beyond me. But by trying to set up a funding fight in March, rightwing Republicans hope for the chance to hold government funding hostage in exchange for some of the nastiest, most harmful policies that Donald Trump promises in his Project 2025.

Let there be no mistake: Project 2025 is the Trump agenda. Some of his top advisers helped put it together. Some of the lead people on this have talked about their high-up positions in a Trump administration should, God forbid, it occur.

Over 140 people who have worked in the Trump administration contributed to it. To call the ideas in Trump's Project 2025 radical would be an understatement. Project 2025 would pave the way for the hard right's national abortion ban by restricting access to FDA-approved medication.

Project 2025 would abolish the Department of Education, decimate our public education system by wiping out school meal programs.

Hungry kids? We want to send people to school with an empty belly? They can't learn. Oh, we have to spend little money to provide a nutritious breakfast, which, incidentally, helps our farmers? Isn't that horrible? says the rightwing. They would rather—the billionaires who helped fund all of this stuff—pay even less money to the government.

It would defund public schools. They would end student loan forgiveness. All the young people who have this burden of student loans on their back—you and I and others are trying to reduce or eliminate that burden—forget it if this rightwing budget goes into effect.

Project 2025 would make healthcare less affordable for tens of millions of Americans. It would rip away benefits from our veterans. It would attack small farmers and small businesses and so much more. The list goes on and on and on, unfortunately.

These ideas aren't theoretical. No, no. They are not abstract ideas up in the clouds; they are real proposals that the hard right intends to push if they come into power. They are so narrow and so focused on their own agenda, as I said, in large part over the years funded by billionaires—greedy. Not all wealthy people are greedy; many of them understand their obligation to help the country that has been so good to them. But they are a narrow group, very greedy. They don't want to pay any taxes, some of them. "Let's have a national sales tax," some of them say. That would create huge inflation on the average middle class so they don't have to pay an income tax. Lord help us.

And Republicans right now are hoping that a funding fight early next year would turn into a hostage negotiation between keeping the government open and passing Project 2025's terrible policies.

But let me assure the American people, we Democrats are not fooled. And let me assure our mainstream Republicans, who quietly grit their teeth when they hear about this, that the American people are not fooled. Surprisingly, a large number of American people have already heard of Project 2025 and don't like it.

The more people learn about Project 2025, the more they realize how devastating it is and how horrible it would be for our economy, how disastrous it would be for public safety, and how catastrophic—catastrophic—it would be for our country.

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY

Mr. President, now, finally, on the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony later this morning. Later this morning, I will join with congressional leaders and with families of military servicemembers for a most solemn observance: the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal to the 13 servicemembers killed during the suicide bombing of Abbey Gate in Kabul.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor that Congress can bestow, but it is a small gesture when compared to the immense sacrifice of these brave Americans.

To us, these 13 Americans were sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, spouses, friends, loved ones. Some were even younger than the war in Afghanistan itself. But to the citizens desperately trying to escape the Taliban's rule through Abbey Gate on that fateful day, these 13 Americans were something more: heroes, guardians, saviors. They were fighting for a cause far bigger than themselves to deliver freedom to those who otherwise might never have known it.

Tomorrow, we honor the anniversary of September 11; and as we do so, we rededicate ourselves to the promise of “never forget.”

Well, that is what this morning’s ceremony will be all about. We will never, never forget the sacrifice of the fallen 13 servicemembers. We will never forget the obligation we all have to our troops in uniform and to care for them. We will never forget our duty to keep going, to defend the values of freedom and democracy that they so nobly fought for.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as students head back to school, college campuses across the country are hoping this academic year begins more calmly than the last one ended.

Back in May, the tantrums of campus radicals made some elite schools so inhospitable to learning, particularly for Jewish students, that administrators were driven to cancel commencement ceremonies. Since then, Columbia University’s president has resigned, along with three deans who were put on notice for anti-Semitic comments made about a panel on Jewish life on campus back in May.

These are, of course, steps in the right direction for an Ivy League institution that professes—professes—a commitment to “thoughtful, rigorous debate” and a campus culture “free of bigotry, intimidation, and harassment,” but Columbia and other universities have a great deal of work still to do to earn back the trust of students, parents, and alumni alike.

Other recent personnel decisions actually inspire less confidence. Remember, for example, the Columbia doctoral student who served as the unofficial spokesperson of the violent Hamasnik mob that forcefully occupied a campus building? In between her studies of Marxist poetry, she demanded that campus officials provide the trespassers with food and water. Months later, she is now scheduled to teach a required course for undergraduates on nothing less than contemporary Western civilization.

So the decline in the Ivy League’s academic rigor is well-documented, but it would seem that, at a bare minimum, its instructors ought to be able to distinguish between civilization and barbarism and to act accordingly. A survey conducted over the summer by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression found that 72 percent of

college students agreed that, in at least rare circumstances, it could be acceptable for students to have an encampment as part of a campus protest, and more than one-third agree that it would be acceptable to deface school property.

I have to wonder whether a survey of the parents of college students or, for that matter, the campus staff who clean up their misbehavior, wouldn’t paint a different picture.

Unfortunately, what used to be a reliable path to the middle class appears to have turned into a breeding ground for childish radicalism. Fortunately, this radicalism may begin to face limits to its own upward mobility.

Earlier this year, over a dozen Federal judges described Columbia as an “incubator of bigotry”; declared that they had “lost confidence in Columbia as an institution of higher education”; and announced that they will not hire law clerks from Columbia Law School until it undertakes serious reforms.

Predictably, this news is met with howling from liberal busybodies. In fact—get this—a State prisoner even filed an ethics complaint against a number of judges.

Apparently, the left would have the signs outside America’s courthouses read: “Hate must have a home here.”

Fortunately, Chief Judge Richman of the Fifth Circuit wasn’t having it. She observed in her opinion dismissing a complaint that “judges . . . have discretion to refuse to hire law clerks who graduated from a university that does not foster what the judges believe to be important aspects of higher education, such as viewpoint diversity and tolerance and differing viewpoints.” Indeed.

Columbia would do well to heed these judges’ warning, and their colleagues on the bench would do well to heed their example.

Meanwhile, the Biden-Harris administration hasn’t skipped a beat in ensuring that taxpayer dollars go toward subsidizing the post-modern indoctrination on display in so many American towns.

Over the summer, the Supreme Court upheld a stay on the administration’s SAVE plan. But the administration still won’t take no for an answer, pushing forward with yet another version of student loan socialism.

Last week, the scheme hit another roadblock in Federal court.

Remember, the Penn-Wharton model has estimated that previous iterations of this scheme would have cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars. Even left-leaning think tanks have criticized student loan socialism for the regressive nature of its beneficiaries. But the Biden-Harris administration, like the Marxists of Morningside Heights, keep coming back for more.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now on another matter, as we reconvene this week, the Democratic leader announced the Senate would, in his words, “continue confirming the Biden-Harris administra-

tion’s well-qualified judges and nominees.” Nearly all the way through the administration’s term, our colleagues would be right to wonder: What does he mean by “well-qualified”?

The Biden-Harris administration described Julie Su as well qualified to serve as Secretary of Labor after presiding over \$30 billion in unemployment fraud in her home State of California.

Undoubtedly, the White House also sold Rachel Rollins as well qualified to serve as U.S. attorney in her home State of Massachusetts, a position from which she resigned last year after she was caught attempting to influence an election and lying about it to investigators.

So it may be worth taking the term “well-qualified” with a grain of salt—even more so when you consider who is in this administration’s pipeline of upcoming nominees.

There are, of course, the ones about which the Senate has learned alarming and disqualifying details since we began our consideration, like Adeel Mangi, whose associations with terrorist apologists and advocates for cop killers seem only to have grown as the Judiciary Committee questioned him under oath; or Sparkle Sooknanan, who couldn’t seem to give our colleagues on the committee a straight answer about the nature of her involvement in advocacy for hedge funds’ right to collect on Puerto Rican debts; or Embry Kidd, who misled the committee about his record of letting sex offenders off easily.

There is the one so staggeringly unfit for life tenure on the Federal bench that the Judiciary Committee rejected her nomination itself: Sarah Netburn, whose political activism from the bench and failure to render timely decisions on the compensation claims of grieving 9/11 families cast doubt on both her ethics and her professional competence.

And there are the ones who, without a heavy dose of nepotism, wouldn’t have seen the inside of a Senate hearing room—from Kevin Ritz to Karla Campbell to Julia Lipez.

So the Democratic leader would have to forgive some of us for not suspending our disbelief. I can assure our colleagues that Senate Republicans are no more inclined today than we were in July to rubberstamp radicals for the Federal bench.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, have you ever seen an ad for a pharmaceutical’s prescription drugs on television? If the answer is no, then I would suggest you don’t own a television, because literally every single day we are bombarded with ads for pharmaceuticals. And they are very profitable because the drugs themselves are expensive, and people are encouraged to say to their doctors: I think I need Xarelto.