

open beyond the December 20 deadline. Letting the government shut down just before Christmas would be asinine, plain and simple, and nobody wants that to happen. Well, there may be a few in the other Chamber who do, but they are a distinct minority.

We must pass the annual Defense authorization bill to provide for our troops and hold the line against America's adversaries abroad. We have passed the NDAA every year over the last six decades. With so much going on around the world—in the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific, in Europe, and beyond—passing the NDAA is as critical as it has ever been. We intend to get it done.

We also hope to make progress on the farm bill to avoid going over the so-called dairy cliff at the end of December. Chair STABENOW released text of her bill earlier this week, and I want to commend her for drafting such a strong bill that provides for farmers and ranchers as well as working families through nutrition programs. I know that Democrats are ready to work with Republicans to get the farm bill done.

Another issue we hope to get done is disaster aid. Both sides know we need to act because both sides represent States that have been impacted by disaster. Earlier this week, the Biden administration released a comprehensive plan for disaster aid that does a lot of very good things. It replenishes not just programs housed within FEMA—which is what most Americans think about when they think of a disaster response—but other programs across the Federal Government that are dangerously low on funding, if not totally depleted.

A few days ago, I highlighted the important role that the SBA's Disaster Loan Program plays in times of crisis.

Another one I want to mention is the Department of Transportation funding to repair and reconstruct our highways and roads. When disaster strikes and highways and roads are damaged and rendered impassable, it brings everything to a standstill. Aid is slower to arrive, getting people out of danger is harder, and entire communities can be left isolated.

This is just one example of why we need to pass a robust disaster aid package, and I hope to work with Republicans to get it done as soon and as robustly as possible.

Finally, as I have said, when we return after Thanksgiving, we will pick up right where we left off, confirming more of President Biden's judicial and executive nominees. So it will be a very busy and consequential few weeks in the Senate when we return, and I thank my colleagues for their cooperation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant bill 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 Republican leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID POPP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, well, it is a busy time around Washington. Newly elected colleagues who will join us in January are hiring staff and getting acquainted with the rhythms of the Nation's Capital. I imagine that seasoned veterans are passing along a familiar piece of advice from Harry Truman:

If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog.

It is an observation colored by exposure to the more cutthroat, double-dealing corners of public policy. It seems to suggest that loyal, devoted counsel that you can trust implicitly is so rare that you might as well quit looking for it. Clearly, the 33rd President of the United States never had the privilege of meeting my friend David Popp.

Certain corners of the Capitol press corps may be surprised to learn that, indeed, my communications director actually has a first name. But like most folks in the building, I call him "Popp" as well. Around my office and, frankly, across Capitol Hill, this is one word that has become shorthand for fierce loyalty and a peerless capacity for hard work.

Early on, it wasn't exactly obvious that the proud son of Wilmington, OH, would end up applying these qualities at the highest levels of American politics. For many years, Popp's highest political loyalty and most significant vote went to his mom Leilani and her campaign for the school board. And at least until college, his appreciation for hard work had him following in the footsteps of his dad Tom, a longtime community banker. But for those of us who have seen Popp on the clock here in the Capitol, it is hard to imagine him winding up anywhere else.

By the time I got the chance to hire him, Popp was already a seasoned pro here on the Hill. And being the humble, self-effacing guy he is, I am sure he met the opportunity to join Senate leadership staff with the awe and wonder that the upper Chamber rightly commands.

Still, the thought must have crossed Popp's mind that working in communications for a notoriously tight-lipped principal might be a welcome break from the rambunctious world of the House, where he had cut his teeth. That, of course, was not to be. As it turns out, when I stay mum in the hallway and members of the Fourth Estate don't get the answers they are looking for from me directly, they simply go to Popp.

One of the immense luxuries of my time as leader is knowing that when you turn to staff to tackle challenges, you get your pick of the very best. I have never doubted that the man with

ultimate responsibility for broadcasting my views, eyeing blind spots, squashing rumors, and shaping stories is among the very best.

As the very best tend to be, Popp is modest. He often tries to convince his colleagues that he is really not much of a writer, that he couldn't cut it as a pure flack, that he doesn't have an eye for the creative side of political communications. But nobody buys that. Popp is a pro.

He is also an incredible teammate. Deflecting praise from his own work usually means showering it instead on the team he leads so capably. Popp treats the rest of my communications staff like his own family. When the Senate pulls a late night, he is quick to send as many of them home as possible. After a long session, he is known to appear with a stack of Italian subs from a favorite spot down Pennsylvania Avenue.

If Popp treats team like family, I should note that his real family makes a great team as well. Popp's wife and ultimate teammate, Monica, is herself a proven veteran of Senate leadership. As chief of staff in the whip's office, she was an essential member of our extended team. For anyone who has met Monica, there is no question where Dave Popp learned grace under pressure.

My field general for communications brings an invaluable combination of skills. He has both the warrior's instinct to anticipate and prepare for everything that could possibly go wrong and the even keel to stay on course when big waves do inevitably crash across the deck.

At moments of immense national importance, Popp is unflinching. In chapters of great personal significance to me, he has my utmost confidence. Around the office, no matter the news of the day, Popp is quick to remind us: all eyes on stakeout. And in the mold of a certain one-named predecessor who was once mistaken for an automated email system, he is even quicker to keep me and my team informed of the latest developments at all hours.

But lest anybody worry that I am working Popp too hard, I should point out that he does have hobbies outside of work. After all but the most demanding weeks in the Capitol, he and Monica find time to escape to their happy place on the water. In the near future, I suspect he will have a bit more energy to devote to the hunt for par—and a club championship—on the golf course and to more sundowners on the Bay with Tilly and Captain in tow. Until then, I will relish having such a trusted hand and consummate public servant in my corner.

So, Popp, my friend, thanks for everything.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. 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.

The Republican whip.

ISRAEL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I would like to say a word about the International Criminal Court's issuing arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Gallant.

The ICC's decision is outrageous, unlawful, and dangerous. Israel has the right to defend itself, and the ICC's rogue actions only enable the terrorists who seek to wipe Israel off the map. These actions threaten Israel, but, left unchecked, they could pose a threat to the United States in the future.

The Senate needs to stand strongly with our ally at this time. I am, again, calling on Leader SCHUMER to bring a bill to the floor sanctioning the ICC, which the House has already passed with bipartisan support.

Last night, the Senate sent a strong bipartisan message of support for Israel by rejecting resolutions that would have denied Israel the lethal aid that they need. Now, the Democrat leader needs to bring up the ICC sanctions bill.

If he chooses not to act, the new Senate Republican majority, next year, will. We will stand with Israel and make this bill and other supportive legislation a top priority in the next Congress.

In 6 weeks, Republicans will retake the majority here. And when we do, we will make it clear that the United States stands squarely in Israel's corner.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mr. President, a Democrat Congresswoman said the quiet part out loud the other day when she admitted that while she would have supported the abolishment of the filibuster if Democrats had won full control of Washington, she did not support abolishing the filibuster now that Republicans have regained control.

This is her quote:

Am I championing getting rid of the filibuster now, when the Senate has the trifecta?

She answered, and I quote again:

No. But had we had the trifecta, I would've been, because we have to show that government can deliver.

Let me repeat that: "[H]ad we had the trifecta, I would've been," supportive of abolishing getting rid of the filibuster.

In other words, one rule for Democrats and one rule for everybody else. Democrats should be able to do whatever they want; Republicans, not so much.

I happen to agree with the Congresswoman about preserving the filibuster. This essential tool encourages compromise and helps ensure that all Americans, not just those whose party is in the majority, have a voice in legislation.

The difference between me and the Congresswoman is that I believe the rules should apply all the time. I don't think there should be special rules for Republicans—or, as the Congresswoman believes, for Democrats.

The Congresswoman is perhaps more frank than some Democrats in admitting out loud that she thinks the rules shouldn't apply to Democrats. But her attitude, I have to say, is hardly new. If there is one thing that we have learned over the past few years, it is that Democrats firmly believe that the only legitimate government is a Democrat government.

Take Democrats' campaign to undermine the legitimacy of the Supreme Court. Let the Court issue any decision that Democrats don't like, and these days you can be confident you will hear some Democrat decrying not just the Court's decision but the Court's legitimacy.

Never mind the fact that this Court, like others before it, is composed of nine Justices duly nominated and confirmed in accordance with the Constitution, or that so-called liberal Justices and so-called conservative Justices vote together a substantial percentage of the time.

This Court sometimes issues decisions that Democrats don't like, and, therefore, in their view, the Court is somehow illegitimate. I find it ironic that a party that has spent a fair amount of time this election cycle talking about the importance of preserving our democracy, seems intent on embracing the thoroughly undemocratic notion that only one party should be making decisions in this country.

I hate to tell Democrats, but that is not how it really works. And the idea that one party should have a lock on power and the Courts is usually associated with forms of government that go by less pleasant names than democracy.

I am also always struck by the elitism that goes with Democrats' attitude. It is no secret that a lot of people on the left despise individuals who voted for President Trump. Words like "racist," "sexist," and "misogynistic" get thrown around to describe voters who are simply tired of Democrats' failed economic policies or who are worried about the crisis at our border or who disagreed with many of the Democrats' radical social policies. And Democrats' apparent belief that it is the Democrat Party and the Democrat Party only that should be calling the shots in Washington betrays some of that same disdain for voters.

Well, the filibuster is safe for now. And while I don't have high hopes for Democrats changing their tune on the Supreme Court, perhaps being a minority in the next Congress will at least remind Democrats of the importance of protecting minority rights, no matter what party is in power, and ensure that the next time Democrats are in charge, they are not quite so eager to tear down this important safeguard.

We can only hope.

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

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

The Senator from Massachusetts.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an issue that has been a dominant topic of conversation in this country: artificial intelligence, or AI.

Over the past 2 years, generative AI products like ChatGPT have exploded in popularity, while companies have invested tens of billions of dollars developing new AI models. The AI innovation race is in full swing, and I share much of this excitement.

AI holds great promise with the potential to transform the way we live, we work, and interact with the world. But as with any race, there are winners and there are losers, and I am deeply worried that we are too focused on the potential winners of this AI race and we are neglecting those who are already being left behind, because although AI may be having a moment right now, we have been living with its impact for years.

This is especially true for Black and Brown and immigrant and LGBTQ communities which have borne the cost of the "move fast and break things" mindset that pervades Silicon Valley.

To understand why, it is helpful to understand how these AI-driven algorithms actually work, because these algorithms are really just supercharged pattern recognition systems. It is not all that different from teaching a dog a new trick.

For example, to teach a dog to fetch, you gather a bunch of balls and treats and instruct the dog to run after and return the ball and provide feedback—treats—along the way. Over time, the dog recognizes the pattern: Run after it and return the ball and receive a treat.

The same principles apply to algorithms. A company will feed historical information into a computer with basic instructions. Like a dog that looks helpless when first told to fetch, an algorithm may first provide confusing responses to these instructions. But over time, as the algorithm receives feedback from a trainer, the algorithm will improve at responding to the instructions.

Here is the problem: This training and the algorithm's decision making and recommendations happen outside of public view. This lack of transparency and the failure to properly test for bias in algorithms create serious risk.

What happens when the information being fed into an algorithm reflects