

my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize without alloy the sweet enjoyment of partaking in the midst of my fellow citizens the benign influence of good laws under a free government—the ever favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors and dangers.

GEO. WASHINGTON,  
UNITED STATES, 19th September 1796.

Mr. CARDIN. I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jacqueline Becerra, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Mr. CARDIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

The majority leader is recognized.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. So, Madam President, the Senate gavels back into session with a lot that Congress must do, but with little time to act. In less than a week, the Federal Government will begin to shut down unless both sides—both sides—work together to extend funding.

Meanwhile, the moral obligation from Congress to help the people of Ukraine and fortify our own national security grows heavier with each passing day, and it is imperative that we make real progress in the coming weeks toward our ultimate goal of finishing the appropriations process. These are just a few of the tasks facing

Congress as winter turns to spring. The margin for error on any of these is razor thin; and, unfortunately, the temptation to choose chaos and disorder, instead of cooperation, will be strong for some here in the Capitol.

By now, it is clear that when serious-minded Democrats and serious-minded Republicans engage each other with a desire to get things done, with a desire to get to “yes,” good things happen, even in divided government: We avoid shutdowns; we invest in the American people; we make our country stronger.

The Senate ended the last work period with a powerful example of bipartisanship by a resounding 70 votes passing the national security supplemental. It wasn't easy to get it done. But now that we succeeded, it should serve as a model for both Chambers moving forward.

Over the recess, negotiators in both Chambers continued the difficult work of the appropriations process. While we have made some good progress on a number of fronts, unfortunately, our House Republican colleagues are still struggling to figure themselves out. There is a lot of uncertainty over how the House will proceed in the coming days. So I ask all Senators to keep their schedules flexible.

Now, Senate Democrats have been crystal clear: We want to avoid a government shutdown. We want to work with all our House counterparts to spare the American people the pain that a shutdown would bring. But for that to happen, Congressional leadership must resist the centrifugal pull of extremism emanating from the hard right. We must resist basing our choices on what people like Donald Trump want Congress to do. We need to remember our responsibility to the American people and do our jobs.

Even a partial shutdown would mean chaos and pain for the American people. And let me just list a few examples of why that is true: A shutdown of the Agriculture Department would threaten higher food costs for all Americans, threaten critical services for farmers in rural communities—from homeownership programs to food banks—and delay access to critical programs just as spring is arriving. A shutdown of the Veterans Administration would close our veteran outreach offices and thereby freeze critical programs that support our Nation's heroes, those who risked their lives for us. A shutdown of the Housing Department would leave American families high and dry without key federal housing loan support, potentially causing rent and housing prices to spike. A shutdown of the Transportation Department would risk travel delays and traveler safety by freezing the hiring of air traffic controllers—as, Madam President, you well know.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. A shutdown would also throw a wrench into our economic recovery and would raise costs just as inflation has returned closer to normal levels. It would make communities less safe.

I am hopeful—hopeful—that pragmatic Republicans will engage in responsible governing by working with Democrats to avoid a shutdown this week. Senate Democrats want to do the right thing and keep the government open. I hope the House continues to work with us in good faith to make that happen. But time is short. Time is short.

#### UKRAINE

Madam President, on Ukraine, this past weekend I led a congressional delegation—unlike any I have been a part of before—to visit with the people of Ukraine as they marked 2 years since the start of Putin's illegal invasion. It was one of the most memorable and moving trips I have ever been on—3 days that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

We traveled to Ukraine because we all felt a deep obligation to be there on the ground now as the war reaches a pivotal turning point. As President Zelenskyy said to us: If Ukraine gets the armaments they need, they will win the war. But if they don't get those armaments, they will lose.

We went because this is an inflection point in history. The future of Ukraine—but not just Ukraine, Western democracy—hangs in the balance. We went because the Ukrainian people needed to hear directly from us that America stands by their side, that we will not turn our backs on them during their fight for survival. And we went because the nations of Europe must know that America will not abandon them, that we must stay part of NATO, and that we in the Senate will ensure the greatest alliance the world has ever known remains strong and remains prosperous.

I thank my colleagues who joined our code: Senators REED and BLUMENTHAL, BENNET, and HASSAN. It was an immensely productive, insightful, sobering trip. We were honored, above all, to meet with President Zelenskyy, whose courage and resolve are an inspiration. He was an amazing man. He still has strength. He still has that optimism that Ukraine can win this war, and he keeps the people together. To watch him was awe-inspiring, a man with so much on his shoulders moving forward, doing the right thing, and doing it with vigor and without complaint.

As I mentioned, during our meeting, the President was blunt. He said: If Ukraine gets the aid currently stalled in the House, they will win the war. But he also said that if Congress does not pass the supplemental with all the ammo and anti-air defenses and long-range artillery it would provide, they will lose. It was that simple: With aid, Ukraine wins. Without it, they lose.

And we learned about the details of what they need. I spoke to a Ukrainian army officer. Their drones are extremely—extremely—precise. In fact, they are probably even better than the ones we have now. And the drones can find out where the Russian artillery is, exactly and precisely, but then they

don't have the ammo to take out that Russian artillery because they lack that ammo. It is so frustrating to this soldier who is doing his job, risking his life.

Then we heard another instance that Ukrainian artillery is not as long range now—because we haven't given them what they need, and it is in the supplemental—as the Russian artillery. So the Russian artillery can fire and take out Ukrainian artillery, but then Ukrainian artillery can't fire back because they don't have the reach of the Russian artillery. We heard these stories over and over again.

We learned how the withdrawal of Avdiivka is, in large part, a consequence of insufficient weaponry. The top Ukrainian generals told us, if they would have had adequate armaments, Avdiivka would not have fallen. And now they are being pushed back on the front but only because—not because they lack courage, not because they lack strength, not because they lack good leadership but only because they don't have the weaponry they need.

We must help them, and any American who thinks, "Oh, this is far away. It doesn't matter," hasn't learned the lessons—learned the lessons of 1938 and 1960. It is not an exact analogy, of course. But back then, people said: Oh, this is far away. We don't have to pay attention. And in both instances, Americans paid for that lack of foresight, that lack of strength, that lack of vision with lives and of course billions and trillions of dollars spent—certainly billions in those days.

So there was no moment more heart-wrenching, no moment better crystalized the stakes and cost of the war than with the new head of the Ukrainian army, General Syrskyi. We paid a visit to the cemetery dedicated to the courageous Ukrainian dead. Four months earlier, he told us, it was just a parking lot in Lviv, but they needed a place to bury so many of the dead. And we walked up and down the grave sites and saw the pictures—of men, women, young, old—of the dead. On their tombstones, there is a picture of each one. Then, if you look across the way, Ukrainians were busy digging more graves for those they knew who would die in the next few weeks.

It was an amazing, moving moment of the stalwartness of the Ukrainian people, the bravery of the Ukrainian people.

So I believe that if every Congress Member saw what we saw, heard what we heard, learned what we learned, they would understand the urgency of passing the supplemental. With this urgent aid package, Congress has a chance to ensure Ukraine wins the war, to ensure Putin is not victorious, to ensure that Western democracy can thrive in the 21st century.

And let me say that if our allies see that America doesn't support its ally Ukraine, they will no longer be our allies. They will know that they cannot depend on America. And even worse, if

the autocrats and vicious dictators like Putin, like Xi, like the heads of North Korea and Iran see that the United States will turn away from a challenge like this, they will be emboldened.

So anyone who thinks that, "Oh, this is far away, this does not have consequences for the American people," they are wrong. If we turn away from Ukraine over the next decade and several decades, the American people and America will pay the price diplomatically, politically, economically, and militarily.

It is a moment. History is looking at us.

So we must do it. I urge Speaker JOHNSON to go visit and see what I saw. No person of any decent conscience and sight would vote no if they saw what we saw. I hope the Speaker does the right thing. I hope he puts the supplemental that we passed here in the Senate with 70 votes on the floor of the House. I am confident—absolutely confident that if Speaker JOHNSON were to put this supplemental on the floor, it would pass with strong bipartisan support like it did in the Senate.

I hope, I pray, for the sake of our values, for the sake of our country, for the sake of the brave people in Ukraine and those who have died in this war—I hope Speaker JOHNSON recognizes that history is watching us and watching him; that the world is watching; that if he does the wrong thing, I am confident he will regret it in the years to come, no matter what the political outcome. And I am hopeful that Speaker JOHNSON will not just in blind obeisance to Donald Trump do what just about everyone who studies this issue knows is the wrong thing and not give Ukraine the aid it needs.

#### ALABAMA IVF COURT DECISION

Madam President, on Alabama and the court decision, last week, the Alabama Supreme Court handed down a stunningly radical opinion jeopardizing access to in vitro fertilization—IVF—and other forms of fertility care.

The decision by the Alabama court is utterly revolting. The damage it will cause women, doctors, and families is both heartbreaking and enraging.

Let's not kid ourselves. This didn't happen in a vacuum. What happened in Alabama is a direct consequence—a direct consequence—of the hard-right MAGA Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Thanks to MAGA extremism, today the United States is an embarrassment to the world when it comes to reproductive freedom.

Here in the 21st century, we live in a country where women have to travel hundreds of miles for basic healthcare, where doctors fear criminal prosecution for just doing their jobs, where some Republican State legislators want to police women's movements, and where families who want to get pregnant are worried that even in vitro fertilization will be taken away.

Now we have seen a lot of desperate backpedaling over the past few days

from Republicans trying to sound reasonable and supportive on procedures like IVF because it is dawning on them that their agenda is horribly unpopular with most Americans.

But let us be very, very clear. Republicans who have spent decades packing our courts with hard-right judges, who have called for national abortion bans, deserve zero benefit of the doubt now that the consequences of their agenda are sinking in. The shameful state of women's healthcare and women's healthcare freedoms is a product of the hard-right Republican agenda. Republicans own what happened in Alabama.

Let me repeat that. Republicans own what happened in Alabama.

Republicans own the disasters of *Roe v. Wade*. And Republicans will learn, when it comes to attacks on their personal freedom, the American people do not easily forget.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 472.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 472, Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Mazie Hirono, Tina Smith, Gary C. Peters, Amy Klobuchar, Raphael G. Warnock, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Mark R. Warner, Tim Kaine, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch.