

round E15 and save—actually save—\$3 billion to \$4 billion for the American taxpayer. This is a win-win for the real America, and it would be a real win for where we work here in Washington, DC, that island surrounded by reality.

Any legislation with ad hoc payments to farmers should include allowing year-round, nationwide E15; bring certainty to the market; get that investment in infrastructure that is so very, very important to get the most massive benefits out of E15 year-round.

These ad hoc payments are nothing but a bandaid. We better stop what is causing the bleeding.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it has been 2 weeks since our first vote on a clean continuing resolution to keep the government open. This shutdown could have been avoided well before it began. But because Democrats have not budged from their partisan demands, the shutdown is now entering its third day.

There is a lot that we could be doing right now. We could be considering bipartisan appropriations bills through regular order, going to conference on the three appropriations bills we passed in August, or passing the bipartisan annual Defense bill. But instead, we are stuck in a shutdown mess of Democrats' making, and the American people are suffering as a result.

Republicans remain united around a clean, nonpartisan funding extension. It has passed the House of Representatives, and it is currently sitting right here in the Senate, ready to be voted on. It has no new Republican policies, no partisan policy riders. It is straightforward, simple, and clean.

All it does is reopen the government through November 21 to give us more time to pass appropriations bills here on the floor. We have a number of bipartisan bills waiting for floor consideration right now. The only thing standing in the way of reopening the government and getting back to doing the important work is Democrats' \$1.5 trillion in partisan spending demands. That is right, \$1.5 trillion.

Their partisan proposal demands more money—think about this—more money than our entire defense budget just to keep the government open for 4 weeks. That is not a credible proposal. It is a far-left wish list, and it is not how we are going to do things around here.

We can end this shutdown in just a few hours. We need to take one rollcall

vote—just one rollcall vote—on the House-passed clean continuing resolution. The President of the United States says that he is ready to sign it. We just need a handful of Democrats to agree.

Now, once we get the government back open, then we can talk about the issues that Democrats are raising, but we can't do that while they are holding the Federal Government hostage to their partisan demands.

Whatever Democrats are saying publicly, I think, privately, they are all well aware of the problems with their current position.

The senior Senator from Massachusetts has said:

Hostage tactics are the last resort for those who can't otherwise win their fights through elections, can't win their fights in Congress, can't win their fights for the Presidency, and can't win their fights in the Courts.

The Democrat leader called shutdowns "a politics of idiocy, of confrontation, of paralysis."

Mr. President, this shutdown needs to end sooner rather than later, and there is only one way out of it: Democrats need to vote for the clean, nonpartisan continuing resolution sitting right there. All it takes is one rollcall vote—the government is back open. We need to get this government back open, which we can do very, very quickly, and then we can talk about whatever we need to talk about.

Just a few years ago, the Democrat leader had this to say:

We're allowed to come here and disagree over policy. In fact, our system of government was designed to allow for progress despite our large and sometimes raucous differences. But when one side . . . throws a temper tantrum and uses the basic functioning of our government as leverage in a policy argument, our system of government breaks down.

Let's hope the Democrat leader decides to heed his own words and that Democrats' temper tantrum ends sooner rather than later.

Later today, in a couple of hours, Democrats will have another opportunity to vote for the clean continuing resolution, and we will see if they are still committed to their shutdown politics. Republicans remain ready to reopen the government and to get back to doing the American people's business.

How much longer this shutdown lasts depends entirely on Democrats. The choice is theirs.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, it is day 3 of the Trump shutdown, and the government remains closed because Donald Trump and Republicans insist on raising Americans' healthcare premiums and kicking millions off their insurance.

Sending premiums skyrocketing, as Republicans insist, is fundamentally unsustainable. The American people overwhelmingly support affordable healthcare. Seventy percent of Americans support extending the ACA premium tax credits according to a poll released yesterday by the Washington Post, and another poll by KFF yesterday found that nearly 80 percent support an extension. Guess what. Even a majority of Trump supporters support an extension. Even a majority of Trump supporters—nearly 60 percent—support an extension.

You don't need the polls. Just go into a barbershop. Just go into a diner. Just go into a supermarket and ask people. People are learning about this issue, and they are aghast that their premiums could go up so much. They are aghast that our Republican colleagues don't even want to fix it when it affects so many tens of millions of people and the amount that it goes up is so high—so high. It is not difficult. We know Americans want this, and we know many of my Republican colleagues want this as well.

Failure to act would be devastating, and Republicans know it. Even Donald Trump knows it. He talked about it a little bit with us in the White House when we went a few days back.

If we don't act now, then at least 22 million people will see their healthcare premiums double—double—on average. But for many people, it is even worse than that. If these ACA premium tax credits aren't extended, the average 55-year-old couple making \$85,000 a year would see their premiums not just double but triple—\$25,000 a year. How does a senior citizen—even one who has a little bit of savings and a little bit of a cushion—afford \$25,000 a year?

So that is all Democrats want to fix. We are on the side of the people. People know it and want it and need it. It is not complicated. Americans want it. Republican voters want it.

Democrats remain ready and willing to work with the other side. We are ready to work on a path forward to lower healthcare costs for the American people and fund the Federal Government.

I yield to the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

FREEZING GRANTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am sure that you can agree, having been involved in public service for a large part of your life, that sometimes it takes a long time to make an idea a reality. That has happened many times to me in my public career and, certainly, in my home State.

In 1969, 56 years ago, former Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley proposed extending the Red Line of the Chicago

Transit Authority, and yet, still, to this day, residents of the Far South Side of Chicago don't have that transit option, at least not as they should.

Transportation can make or break not only employment but attending school, even making it to a doctor's appointment. For decades, residents of the Far South Side viewed this extension as just politicians talking.

That changed this past January, when the Federal Transit Administration officially obligated \$1.9 billion in Federal funding for this crucial extension. After waiting over 50 years, it was finally going to be a reality. This project will expand transit access to 100,000 people. It will be an economic boost for the city and create tens of thousands of jobs for working families.

However, guess what: today, a news flash from the Trump administration. We received news that the OMB Director, Russell Vought, and the U.S. Department of Transportation have decided to illegally freeze \$2 billion in grants for Chicago, including the obligated grant for the expansion, and risk decades worth of effort.

This is in addition to the \$7.5 billion in Department of Energy grants Director Vought canceled yesterday, including 33 projects totaling almost \$700 million in Illinois.

So why would this administration decide to target thousands of working families when it comes to their electric bills and when it comes to transportation? Because President Donald Trump wants to punish States like Illinois and the people who live there because they didn't vote for him in the last election.

This is petty. It is unfair. It is wrong.

These vindictive actions will cost Illinoisans jobs. Many of them will lose their employment. And it is going to raise the cost of electricity across the country.

Freezing funds for these projects is a blatant abuse of power by a President and an administration that would rather settle petty personal scores than actually help people.

OMB should immediately release any freeze on these funds, and I will do anything I can, with Senator DUCKWORTH, to hold this administration accountable for its decisions, which continue to hurt working families.

NOMINATION OF STANLEY WOODWARD, JR.

Mr. President, on a separate subject, the upcoming vote on more than 100 nominees is exactly what I feared would happen when Senate Republicans violated Senate rules to fast-track nominees. This has opened the door to rushing through more extreme nominees who have one qualification for office: They are blindly loyal to President Trump.

That extends to a man named Stanley Woodward, the nominee to be the No. 3 official at the Department of Justice.

Let me make this clear: Mr. Woodward is not even close to qualified. He has never—never—worked at the Jus-

tice Department before this administration. What he has done is show his loyalty to Donald Trump by representing Trump associates for their roles in thwarting investigations into the President.

As Associate Attorney General, Mr. Woodward would oversee some of DOJ's most critical programs, including the Office of Justice Programs and the Civil Rights Division. As senior adviser to Attorney General Bondi, Mr. Woodward has already been involved in gutting these offices.

The Trump administration has terminated hundreds of millions of dollars in grants administered by the Office of Justice Programs that support State and local law enforcement. The Trump administration also has gutted the Civil Rights Division, which has been known for years as the "crown jewel" of the Justice Department.

About 70 percent of the Division's attorneys have been forced out—70 percent—and many, many staff have been diverted away from crucial efforts to protect the civil rights of all Americans, so long as they sign up for the mass deportations of the President.

Mr. Woodward also overruled Antitrust Division officials to personally negotiate a settlement with lobbyists in DOJ's challenge to Hewlett Packard's \$14 billion acquisition of Juniper Networks. The acquisition resulted in two firms controlling more than 70 percent of the wireless network market, a market duopoly.

To Trump administration political appointees in the Antitrust Division who objected to this settlement, what happened to them? They were forced out of office. One of them said of the settlement:

[C]orrupt lobbyists with no relevant expertise are perverting actual law enforcement through money, power, relationships, and influence. . . . Stanley Woodward perverted justice and acted inconsistent with the rule of law [in this deal].

I asked Attorney General Bondi about Mr. Woodward's involvement in the scandal. Crickets. No response. Nothing to say.

It is wrong to fast-track unqualified, unfit nominees whose only goal is to advance a political agenda at the expense of the American people. Previous Associate Attorney General nominees have received a rollcall vote on the floor of the Senate and committee, of course.

Take President Biden's nominee for this position, Vanita Gupta. In 2021, Republicans tried to filibuster her nomination in committee and then tried to shut down committee business before we voted.

On the floor, Republicans forced extra procedural votes to slow down our confirmation. Despite my frustration at the time with Republican colleagues for obstructing a highly qualified and experienced nominee to serve as Associate Attorney General, I never sought to short-circuit the constitutional responsibility of Members in the Senate of advice and consent.

Now when the shoe is on the other foot, Republicans are intent on taking away yet another core duty of the Senate in deference to President Trump. I hope they remember this moment when they resume their minority positions in the future.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on these nominations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, we are now in the third day of this government shutdown, and once again, our Democratic colleagues are going to have the opportunity to vote for a clean, nonpartisan continuing resolution that would open the government and allow us to continue working on the appropriations process.

Just to kind of give a little perspective on that, here are the statistics showing all of the Biden-era clean CRs that were passed. There were 13 of them—13 of them during the Biden administration, and 96 percent of the Democrats voted for it. Now they can't vote for a clean resolution. How do you explain that?

Unfortunately, Democratic leadership is demanding more than \$1 trillion in new spending just to keep the government open. So instead of voting for this clean CR, they want more than \$1 trillion in new spending in a CR that—the CR has no Republican priorities in it; it is just a clean CR.

So how is it we are supposed to put trillions of dollars of Democrat priorities in a CR that goes until November 21? That is what Leader SCHUMER has said, and that is exactly why this is the SCHUMER shutdown.

They have taken our government hostage with a list of demands that is really quite astonishing. They want funding for healthcare for illegal immigrants, and they want more subsidies for pandemic-era health insurance, all while actually repealing a \$50 billion healthcare fund for rural hospitals that was put in the One Big Beautiful Bill. How does that make sense? In the meantime, vital programs that support hard-working American families have either been shuttered or are very nearly out of money.

Let's end this Schumer shutdown and pass a clean, short-term CR—the same kind of clean CR, mind you, that, as I said, 96 percent of Democrats voted to support 13 times during the Biden administration. That is what this shows.

Let's pass this clean CR, get back to work, and move our appropriations bills through regular order. That is how we are supposed to do it—through regular order. Already, we have made progress in this Congress by doing just that. The Appropriations Committee has passed 8 of the 12 approps bills on a bipartisan basis. As a matter of fact, we just approved, not too long ago, three of them—one of them was my Ag appropriations bill—by big bipartisan majorities here on the floor in the Senate. Compare that to last Congress,