

So many things have happened this year that it is tough to keep track, but the combination of them has led to a reduction in trust between our two caucuses—trust that is essential to having an understanding and an agreement to move forward.

Let me be clear about this year's appropriations process. It was positive from when we started in March-April to when we concluded on the committee in July and voted out eight strong, bipartisan bills. The Senate appropriations process for at least eight of the bills—the biggest bills—was constructive and bipartisan. In fact, the bill that I worked on closely with Senator McCONNELL was voted out of the committee by 26 to 3. So, too, were other key bills that deal with housing, that deal with education, and that deal with healthcare. They came out of the committee 26 to 3 and are ready for action on the floor of the Senate. Yet we are not proceeding to them today.

There are four bills remaining in committee that are unaddressed, and the committee should focus on them, take them up, and work them through. There are three bills that have already passed the Senate and are all but done being conferenced with the House.

What I have heard from my Republican colleagues is that Leader THUNE is trying to move ahead with a process that would put the Defense bill, the Health and Education bill, the Housing and Transportation bill, which we call Labor-HHS, and T-HUD—very compelling names, I know—he wants to put together a package of many of these bills. Well, if that is the intention, we need communication between our leaders and our caucuses.

We have had a positive and productive process in Senate appropriations this year, but the leader's motion to go to the House Defense bill was not expected, was not discussed, and was not clear to my caucus as to what happens next. So it is with some real regret that I will vote no today but will continue to talk with my colleagues about how do we move forward.

I want to take a moment and just speak to the Defense bill that we have worked so hard on and that came out of the committee with such strong bipartisan support. It would provide a better quality of life to the men and women of the American military and their families. It would invest, in total, \$852 billion in our national defense—expanding shipyards, expanding munition production, creating stockpiles of critical weapons that we know we need for the future, investing in cutting-edge technologies—and would reject some of the Trump budget cuts in aid to Ukraine, to Taiwan, and to our Baltic allies, who are making positive progress in key areas.

Our work together on this bill has generally been a positive experience between Senators and our staffs. Our challenge was the Department, and it was the Secretary and his budgeteers, who often appeared at hearings and

meetings without their homework done, without the details ready, without a budget ready to go.

Some of you may have forgotten this, but a principal focus of the administration and the majority here during this same time was the so-called Big Beautiful Bill and trying to put \$160 billion onto the Defense Department not through regular order and not through the usual budget processes but through this one-time infusion of cash.

Senator McCONNELL and I historically haven't agreed on much, but we certainly have agreed on this in hearings and in speeches: If we are trying to invest in the future of our Armed Forces, whether it be new planes, new ships, new systems, or new technology, doing it with 1-year money is unwise and unsound.

We need to get back to regular order. We need to get back to a reliable and predictable appropriations process. In order to do that, we need bipartisan agreement that rejects severe cuts; that restores funding for programs like the NIH and the CDC, which is done in the bipartisan Labor-H bill; and that rejects cuts to WIC and rural housing, which is done in the Ag bill. We need to move these bills forward.

The way we move these bills forward is by linking arms and making it clear: We reject rescissions. We want to appropriate beyond just defense. We want a broader package and to have clarity from our President, the House, and the Senate about how we address the imminent health security crisis that confronts millions of Americans and, for today and tomorrow, keeps our government shut down.

Americans care about security. We care about security for our families from healthcare costs, and we care about security for our Nation from the threats that are greater than at any time in my adult life.

Let's find a path toward working together to address them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I came in at the tail end of the comments from my colleague and my friend from Delaware. He has underscored some points that I think are important to remind us here in the Senate but also people who are watching as we are in day 16 of the government shutdown.

There is no great secret as to how we get the government fully functioning again. It is going to come about through cooperation. It is going to come about through good-faith efforts by good folks who are intentioned to address the matters in front of us.

We deal with politics. This is a political world. But I can tell you that so many of the people who I am talking to don't really care about the politics of our situation. They don't care if the Democrats are winning or the Republicans are winning. They feel like, as Americans, they are the ones who are

being caught in this backwash. They don't understand why their flight was delayed or canceled this morning. They don't understand why the individual that they are trying to get through to at an Agency is not picking up the phone or they get a message saying that this office is going to be closed until the government is reopened. What they care about is that we figure it out—that we figure it out. That requires communication. It requires talking with one another.

That is why I appreciate much of what my colleague has shared today, because as we are positioning as two sides that are seemingly dug in on this 16th day of a shutdown, real people are wondering: Is their government going to be there for them?

ALASKA FLOODS

Mr. President, I didn't come to the floor this afternoon with a focus, necessarily, on the shutdown. I came to speak about a situation in my State that has literally—literally—closed off, shut down, collapsed whole communities.

We had a storm—actually, a series of storms—hit the west coast of Alaska, just over the weekend. In this smaller inset here, you have got the State of Alaska, but this square panel is where the extent of the damage is.

This was a thousand-mile storm going from the north up in Kotzebue all the way down into the Bristol Bay region, with the bulk of the damage on these small Native communities that are focused on the coast and up, going into the Kuskokwim River. It has been a disaster of major proportions.

As we speak, we have communities that are being evacuated. And we understand, when we talk about evacuation with them, what I mean. But people in these villages—in the villages of Kipnuk and Kwigillingok—are being told that everyone from your village is being evacuated. And it doesn't mean that you go to a town that is a few miles down the road to get to safety. It means that you are airlifted 500 miles to Anchorage or possibly closer, to Bethel.

Before I detail some of that, I think it is important to recognize that what we had happening over the weekend, while this massive storm—a storm that was bringing winds in excess of 100 miles an hour, flood surges that were pummeling the coast with inundation levels like we have never seen before—we heard, saw, and read the stories of people who were trapped in their homes at night when the home was literally lifted off of its foundation and carried away in the current with families inside.

One detail was of a father and four children, who woke his children up to say: We all need to go to one corner of the house in case the house tips—but to hear the fear, really the terror, of being trapped into your own home as it is moving out into the ocean current.

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Alaska National Guard were on deck, as they

always are, saving lives. The U.S. Coast Guard rescued and saved 34 people. The Alaska Air Guard saved eight. The Alaska National Guard saved nine. Unfortunately, we did have one individual who is confirmed dead and two others who are believed and feared deceased, as well, with one yet unaccounted for. But sharing pictures of the extent of the damage, it is amazing that more did not lose their lives.

This is a picture of the village of Kipnuk, with the inundation. Here is the airport here, the airstrip, and the community literally entirely beneath the water.

In this, you can see a little more clearly how the floodwaters have come forth throughout the entire village. Again, you see boats that are upended, the roofs that are ripped off of homes. The destruction is just violent—a home that is drifting in the river water.

This is in Kipnuk. This is a picture also in Kipnuk. Kipnuk is a community—most of these communities, many of the communities are what we call boardwalk communities—boardwalk communities because we don't have roads. So you move about on small four-wheelers. That is how you get to where you need to get, whether it is to school or otherwise.

But, literally, everything in the community was upended. Power poles snapped in half. So you can imagine the condition: There is no power. There is no water. There is no safe place.

These individuals have been initially rescued to the schools where they were kept safe, but now what we are in the midst of is this massive, massive evacuation project. More than 1,000 people—again, from 11 communities—have now been displaced.

You had a situation where, in Kipnuk, this village, you have about 680 people who were evacuated into this small school. In Kwigillingok, about 400 people took shelter at the local schools for a couple of days. And keep in mind, they don't have running water, and restroom facilities aren't functioning.

So the efforts that we saw from our search-and-rescue efforts, from our Coast Guard, from the Guard, from those who have come to the aid now—everyone from the World Kitchen to Samaritan's Purse, to the Red Cross—those efforts have been considerable, and we are getting people to shelter and to safety now.

This is a picture that was taken late yesterday evening. This is the inside of a C-130. There are about 300 people from Kipnuk who have been put inside the C-130. They are all sitting on the floor there, and they are being evacuated to Anchorage, AK. Again, this is 400 miles away.

The efforts in Anchorage are considerable to make sure that they are going to be safe. It is a mass shelter. Basically, it is in our sports arena, the Alaska Airlines Center, in an auxiliary gym. They are able to put 350 to 500 people in there. We are putting a con-

vention center facility together to house another 800.

This is all very, very temporary. But the reality is that for so many of these people, they will not have homes to go back to. About 120 of the homes in Kipnuk are not repairable. They are completely, completely destroyed. About 40 are possible to be repaired.

Again, this is the 16th of October, and the conditions in this part of the State of Alaska right now are that we are moving into winter. We are moving into winter. So the idea that you can do construction in the wintertime, it doesn't happen. The last fuel barge to this region until next spring, until probably late May or June—the last fuel barge—has come and gone. That means the ability to move supplies in and out, to do any kind of construction—that is not happening.

So for so many, these are going to be people who will be without a home. But I would remind you, they are not homeless. They are not homeless. They are evacuees. And all they want—all they want—is the ability to be safe somewhere for the moment. But looking forward, it is going to be hard. It is going to be very, very challenging to address the issues that they face in their community with the threats that they have.

The storm that they had—we get storms every year. We get storms every year, but what we are seeing is an increasing frequency of lethal storms.

Several years ago, we had Typhoon Merbok, again, coming across from Japan, that just pummeled the coast. Again, it was a thousand-mile storm.

We were still recovering from Hurricane Merbok—or Typhoon Merbok; and then just last year, again, another series of disasters along this same coast; and then, this weekend, Typhoon Halong, once again, coming across from Japan.

So the reality is that we are seeing more and more of these. The reality is that these storms come in October, but it used to be that we would already have ice that was coming into these northern waters by then, and the ice was enough to slow things down, to cool the waters down. When you don't have the ice in the water, the water is warming. This was perhaps an unusual weather pattern that came, and combined with that warmer water, it just churns this typhoon.

So our reality is that we are seeing in real time the impacts when you have a warmer ocean and less ice, which leads you to how you deal with these issues and these matters of resilience.

This is hard. This is extraordinarily hard right now. Our hearts are with those who have lost their loved ones, who have lost so much, who have lost their homes, but who are so anxious about what this means going forward and how we can be there for them.

So I have a great deal of respect and thanks and admiration for all who are pulling together to provide relief efforts and thinking more long term

about how we ensure that the people of Kwig and the people of Kipnuk and the people of Nightmute and Napakiak and Stebbins and Toksook and all up and down the coast are safe in their homes, where they have lived for thousands of years.

Right now, we have the largest gathering of Alaska Natives that are convening in Anchorage for their annual convention, and so much of the convention this year is going to be focused on the matter of resilience and support for our communities.

I share these observations with colleagues not because Alaska's storm is more powerful or more lethal or more devastating than the storms the Presiding Officer may have in his State. Tennessee has seen some awful, horrible flooding. We are seeing this now. But it is a reminder to us here in Congress of the role we do play, because all of our communities don't have the ability to provide that protection for themselves.

So how do we build out more resilient communities? And then, to further that point, when the disaster happens, how can we be there to support them in ways that make it real and meaningful for them, particularly in cultures where traditions may just be different than what we know and understand here in Washington, DC?

I am going to end with a couple of comments that were made just the other day when the Governor held a briefing, a press conference, about the ongoing impacts of this disaster.

One comment was made by U.S. Coast Guard Captain Christopher Culpepper, who said:

If you think about previous instances of major inundations, such as hurricane Katrina, that will start to paint the picture for what you might imagine what has happened along Western Alaska.

Our Adjutant general, General Saxe, said:

This may end up being the largest off-the-road-system response for the National Guard in about 45 years.

So our reality is hard right now. It is challenging. But one thing that I know about the people not only in this region but the people in my State is there is a level of resilience, there is a level of determination. They are connected to their place. They are connected to their lands. And we want to make sure they are able to have that cultural connection, that identity, to the place they have called home for thousands of years.

My final point is that those who were literally engaged in rescue efforts to ensure that people were taken out of homes that were floating in the ocean, those that were doing the overflights in miserable storms, those that are there on the ground now, they were all out there doing their job at a time when it was not certain they were going to be paid. Now that tension point has been resolved because the President announced that our military

would be paid through this next pay period—the Coast Guard as well—which is critically, critically important.

But I think our job, our responsibility, is to make sure that they don't have to worry about that; that when they are flying a rescue mission, they are not thinking about whether or not their spouse at home is concerned about whether they are buying groceries or paying the rent. So we have work to do here.

But to those back home in Alaska who are working so closely on the ground to care for those who are truly afraid right now, truly afraid about their future, know that we are all working with you, and our hearts are with you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2983

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about something that threatens nearly every American: cyber attacks.

I call on my colleagues to pass the Protecting America from Cyber Threats Act—a no-brainer step to defend our citizens from cyber threats.

This is a very wonky law, but it has a very, very simple objective: to encourage companies, private sector companies, to report hacks to the government so that together we can prevent it from happening again. This bill extends protections defined back in 2015 that encouraged companies to report cyber attacks to the Federal Government. It minimizes the risks companies once faced in reporting these hacks, and in doing so, it makes us all safer.

Extending these protections has never been more important. Today, cyber attacks are top of mind for Americans across the country and certainly across the political spectrum.

Two months ago, I traveled to Benton Harbor, MI, and Troy, MI—two communities—to talk about national security threats and what is keeping Michiganders up at night. Nearly every single person, regardless of profession or party, had a story about cyber crime: identity theft, robocalls, and scams robbing people of their life savings; hacks on hospitals for patient data; and shutdown access to electronic records.

As a former CIA officer and Pentagon official, I have responded to countless threats to American security, but never before have we seen American citizens so exposed to security threats here at home. In the age of cyber warfare, everyday Americans are quite literally on the frontlines. And Americans know the stakes. That is why they are scared. One Michigander said to me: Warfare is still on the ground—still things like rockets—but it has also changed; cyber warfare can be just as brutal.

But more than scared, Michiganders are frustrated. They don't believe that their government is taking the threat

of cyber crime seriously, and if we don't renew this law, we will prove them right.

On October 1, the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015 expired—this last October 1. That means that companies are no longer incentivized to report hacks to the Federal Government.

When a company self-reports a cyber attack, there is no longer a law to prevent the Justice Department from using that admission against them, and companies once again are incentivized to hide hacks from the government, which makes us all less safe.

Companies have to see the government as an ally, not as a threat, and our safety depends on it because, unlike other threats like tanks and nukes and subs, the weapons used in cyber crimes are not created, owned, and controlled by a government; they are from the private sector. So we have to work together to prevent these attacks.

This law has already been consequential. The Department of Homeland Security used it to respond to China's relentless Salt Typhoon campaign, which targeted every single American's unencrypted phone calls and text messages.

As long as the law remains expired, America is less safe. As long as we refuse to renew it, we are moving backwards in keeping the country secure.

Today, very simply, I am calling on my colleagues to renew these protections for another 10 years—they are renewed for 10 years at a time—so we can restore our cyber security defenses and better protect our Nation. There is no good reason not to renew it. Businesses support it. The Trump administration supports it. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle support it.

I know there is a proposal out there to extend the law—instead of 10 years—for just 5 weeks, in the House's version of the temporary funding bill, but it is such a pivotal time for something that is actually a bipartisan consensus idea, half measures shouldn't do. We have known that this was going to expire for 10 years. Americans deserve to have us not kick the can down the road for another 5 weeks. There is too much at stake, particularly given the losses among the American public.

Some things are bigger than party politics, and national security should always be one of them. This law is essential to keeping the country safe, to keeping Americans safe, so I urge my colleagues to renew it.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 182, S. 2983; that the Peters substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, further, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to cloture on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 136, H.R. 4016.

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today the Senate has the opportunity to begin consideration of an appropriations bill that is vital to our national defense and to the well-being of the brave men and women who serve in our Armed Forces.

The fiscal year 2026 Defense appropriations bill would provide U.S. military services with the funding needed to deter China and Russia, to support our servicemembers and their families, and to strengthen the defense industrial base.

The bill would remove the uncertainty that our American troops face about when they will be paid because of the needless and reckless government shutdown that Leader SCHUMER has directed.

I would point out that passing a continuing resolution, as we have tried to do 10 times now, would also remove the cloud of uncertainty hanging over military paychecks.

In July, as the Presiding Officer is well aware, the Appropriations Committee advanced the Senate version of the Defense appropriations bill by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 26 to 3.

The Senate version addresses major funding gaps across the board. It would invest in shipbuilding, including providing a critical downpayment toward an additional DDG 51, the workhorse of the U.S. service fleet, along with investments in additional Columbia- and Virginia-class submarines.

It would expand critical munitions production, including air and missile defense interceptors, long-range missiles, and next-generation hypersonic weapons developed by our most innovative firms.

It would fund drone and counterdrone technologies, which are increasingly changing the nature of the battlefield, as we have seen in both Ukraine and Israel. And it would sustain security cooperation with close allies and partners whose growing defense capabilities are force multipliers for the United States and contribute to the deterrence of shared adversaries.

Finally, this bill would invest in our most precious asset: the courageous,