

And now they have blocked the Senate from considering the National Defense Authorization Act. And who knows what is next?

In either a fit of self-delusion or an attempt to distract from their actions, Democrats are trying to peddle the narrative that somehow they can't agree to anything because Republicans are trying to make things partisan. That is right. Well, let me spend just a minute correcting the record here.

The National Defense Authorization Act the Democrats voted against yesterday? Bipartisan. That is right. The National Defense Authorization Act is bipartisan legislation. Four Democrats voted for the bill—for the bill—at the committee markup.

Democrats' recordbreaking full government shutdown in the fall? Well, that was because they wouldn't accept a nonpartisan, short-term, clean government funding extension to allow bipartisan negotiations to continue.

The Democrats' recordbreaking Department of Homeland Security shutdown? Well, that was also because Democrats couldn't take yes for an answer.

Democrats and Republicans had agreed on a bipartisan DHS funding bill. Democrats reneged on that agreement because they wanted to negotiate for more, and Republicans said yes to negotiation.

And then Democrats shut down the Department anyway, even though Republicans were willing to negotiate further—even though the White House repeatedly offered a robust package of reforms.

So as I said, I don't know whether it is self-delusion or deliberate deception, but I have heard few things more ludicrous than Democrats' narrative that they can't agree to legislation because Republicans are being partisan.

Here are the facts: Democrats can't bring themselves to authorize funding for our Nation's security, whether that is security at our border, funding for our military, or paychecks for our troops. It doesn't matter how bipartisan the bill is; Democrats can't bring themselves to support our Nation's security.

Is it politics? Do Democrats think that voting against our national defense and our Nation's military will gain them points with their base or do they simply think they can afford to ignore our Nation's defense needs until some hostile actor takes advantage of our weakness?

I don't know, but I do know that our Nation is less safe because of Democrats' actions.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 MINORITY LEADER
The Democratic leader is recognized.

TODD BLANCHE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, anyone who can represent a known pathological liar like Donald Trump can have no integrity and should never be Attorney General.

We all know lawyers are supposed to represent their clients, but when you represent a client who just lies and lies and lies, pathologically, you should never be Attorney General.

The only thing today's hearing will confirm is that Todd Blanche represents one client alone, Donald Trump, and he will continue to represent that lying client when he is Attorney General. There will be no integrity. There will be no real basis of fact. He will just do whatever Trump wants. We know that.

But the central question today, at this hearing and on into the process, is not of what Trump wants but what Senate Republicans will do. Let me repeat that. The crucial question today is not what Trump wants, but what Senate Republicans will do.

Where are the Senate Republicans? Are Republicans really going to go to the mat for Blanche, after he aided Trump in his corruption every step of the way? Do Senate Republicans have no issue with Blanche masterminding Trump's MAGA slush fund, arranging Trump's sweetheart deal from the IRS, and refusing to release 3 million pages of the Epstein file? Come on, Republicans, you have no shame? Is there no bar that can block you from, prevent you from, putting a man like this as Attorney General?

Republicans have set the bar so low for our Nation's top law enforcement official that you have to dig for it. The American people don't trust Todd Blanche. Neither should Senate Republicans, plain and simple.

SAVE ACT

Now, let me talk a little bit about the SAVE Act. Republicans keep screwing around in reconciliation with Trump's voter suppression SAVE Act. Republicans should know by now that it ain't going to fly with us, with the courts, or with the American people. I will say it as many times as it takes: The SAVE Act is dead on arrival here in the Senate.

I don't care how Republicans try to package their plan to resurrect the old ghost of Jim Crowe. We will kill it.

Trump's blatant effort to strip Americans of their voting rights is withering in the courts, too. Yesterday—just yesterday—Trump lost his 14th and 15th cases trying to demand state voter rolls.

Hey, Donald, what you are doing is illegal and unconstitutional, and the courts are making that very clear.

Rightwing Republicans like the Senator from Utah can bluster all they want, but the SAVE Act is not going to become law. Trump will have to face all the voters, not just the ones he wants, in November.

And the mess the Republicans find themselves in right now won't go away until they realize just how futile this effort to disenfranchise millions of Americans is.

Instead, Trump has bragged on national TV that he plans to force a shutdown if he doesn't get his way on the SAVE Act. Trump said: Republicans have to pass SAVE, otherwise we are going to have a shutdown in November.

Hear that, Republicans? You hear that, Americans? You hear that, voters?

Trump says he is going to shut down the government to take away Americans' voting rights. Are Republicans going to go along with that?

I remind Donald again—as I did yesterday—last time you bragged about shutting down the government with Nancy and me in the Oval Office didn't come out too good for you, Donald. This one will come out even worse.

So I hope Republicans hear this. Trump says he is going to shut down the government so he can take away Americans' voting rights. How do you think that is going to go over in this country?

Democrats aren't saying we want a shutdown; Trump is. Republicans ought to do themselves a favor and bury the SAVE Act once and for all.

IRAN

Now, on Iran, the hole Donald Trump keeps digging himself into has turned into a chasm. Trump continues to escalate his asinine war of whim with Iran.

Yesterday, Trump renewed his threat to bomb Iran's civilian infrastructure—something that was criticized across the board the last time he lashed out.

Democrats voted unanimously against the NDAA—unanimously—because the belief of our caucus is wide and deep: Congress cannot continue business as usual on the annual Defense bill when Trump is actively escalating one of the worst national security disasters in American history. That is what he is doing.

Trump can't launch a directionless war, defy Congress' bipartisan demands that it end, refuse to level with the American people about the cost, and then expect Democrats to follow quietly and vote all the money he wants to continue this absurdity.

We will not act like a rubberstamp when our servicemen are in harm's way abroad and Americans are getting crushed financially and at the gas pump here at home. No way. Democrats have not and will not go along with this war.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

On the ICE shootings, there's so much that mounts up: The cost, chaos, and corruption in this Trump administration is unfathomable.

On the ICE shootings, we continue to see the painful consequences of the Republicans' refusal to make common-sense reforms to ICE.

We recently learned that the ICE agent behind the shootings in Maine was a new recruit, only getting the job

a few months ago. The victim of that killing wasn't even the target of the operation.

ICE's recent orders to pause vehicle stops is too little too late, and that is before Trump reinstated the order 20 hours later. We need to stop this violence before it happens.

The tragedies in Maine and Texas could have been prevented if Republicans had passed our bill to hold ICE to the same standards we expect from all other law enforcement.

If Republicans had agreed to our proposal for body cameras, use-of-force training, warrant requirements, other basic reforms, the victims killed in Texas and Maine so tragically might be alive today. We can't let Trump's untrained, unaccountable agents continue to bring chaos to our streets.

Republicans, where are you? Wake up. Rein in these rogue agencies.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Kuntz nomination.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, few votes in this body are as important as the vote to fund our troops, our military.

Yesterday, right here on this floor, the U.S. Senate—every single Democrat—voted to block that funding. And just 10 minutes ago, the minority leader came to the floor and bragged about the fact that the Democrats had blocked the funding for our military. He stood here and said they are proud of the fact that they are, once again, choosing politics over the security of our Nation.

That is what we're facing here in the U.S. Senate today. We're talking about the National Defense Authorization Act, and this Congress has passed this bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act every year for the past 65 years.

And when it came to the floor of the Senate yesterday, the minority leader said to the Democrats: Say no. Say no to the military.

I am going to go through the list of all the things they said no to yesterday. This year should be no different than the other years—65 years in a row.

This year's Defense bill gives our military every tool it needs to keep us, as Americans, safe. It invests in peace through strength at home and abroad. Importantly, this bill provides a pay raise for the men and women who defend our Nation.

Every single Democrat in this Chamber joined Senator SCHUMER, joined BERNIE SANDERS, and joined ELIZABETH WARREN and said: No, we are not voting for it. We are not voting for it.

That is what they said. They refused to allow the debate to even begin. This was before the bill even started the debate here on the floor of the Senate. And it is interesting because many of them flip-flopped. What do I mean by that? It means that, first, many of them voted for the bill in the committee in order to send it to the floor. Then it gets to the floor, and what happens? All of them vote to block it from even beginning the debate. Apparently, Democrats were for it before they were against it.

Here is what Democrats voted against: They voted against higher pay for our troops. They voted against better healthcare for our service members and their families. Democrats voted against better housing for our troops. Democrats voted against stronger deterrence. Democrats voted against a more lethal military. Democrats voted against a larger, stronger Navy.

Democrats even voted against a modern nuclear deterrent. Don't we want to deter nuclear war? This is at a time when nuclear weapons are proliferating all around the world. In my home State of Wyoming, we have F.E. Warren Air Force Base. The airmen who serve there are the lynchpin of our land-based nuclear force. The deterrence there has been known over the decades as our Nation's "ace in the hole." That is how it works—the desire to protect us as a nation.

Democrats voted against all of it. They actually even voted against expanding our military recruitment effort. They don't want us to be able to recruit for the military, and they don't want the military to be properly funded and equipped in a way that protects us as a nation.

Democrats actually even voted against more savings for taxpayers. Democrats voted against protecting women's sports at our military schools. No, they don't want any of that. Democrats voted against promotions based on merit and merit alone: Oh, no. You have merited and earned a promotion? No, you are not getting it on merit alone.

That is who the Democrats have become. That is the threat to our Nation—this far-leftist group that is telling the Democrats here on the floor of the Senate what to do. And for things that had been bipartisan in the past, they said: No, we can't do that anymore.

This far-left wing of the party is telling us what to do and how to march in step.

Democrats voted against ending harmful DEI mandates. They voted against stronger border security. They like open borders. They don't want border security. They voted against funding to combat against the cartels that are moving poison into the country—

killing young people in record numbers. Democrats voted against stopping the flood of deadly drugs and illegal border crossings.

Just 2 days ago, right here on the Senate floor, the Senator from Maryland, Senator CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, said this: Missile defense—to defend against incoming missiles for the American people—was wasteful spending.

It is remarkable. Defending the country is wasteful spending. That is who the Democrats have become.

The Democrats act like penny-pinchers when it comes to paying our troops to protect our homeland; yet, they accept the astronomical cost of the waste, the fraud, and the abuse—free healthcare for illegal immigrants, the fraud that is happening like we are seeing in Minnesota, and all of those things. The Democrats are for all of that, but they are not for our troops, and they are not for defending our Nation. That is the Democrat Party of today.

The Democrats of today are radical; they are extreme; they are dangerous; they are scary. Well, the world is a dangerous place, and by voting against the National Defense Authorization Act, the Democrats are disrespecting the American troops; they are undermining American security; and Democrats are jeopardizing America's strength.

Look, our friend Lindsey Graham believed in peace through strength. I do, as well as do most Americans—but not the Democrat Party of today. It is time for us to act on that belief: that America is best when we are strong and it helps make us more safe. It is time for the Senate to pass a bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act, and it is time for Democrats to act like Americans.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote at noon now begin immediately.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill 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. 779, Jeffrey T. Kuntz, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.