

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, before the end of this week, Congress must agree on a continuing resolution to sustain the critical operations of the Federal Government. In this process, it is vital that we ensure that our men and women in uniform have the resources they need to protect Americans and face the challenges of a dangerous world.

During the Obama administration, the readiness of our all-volunteer Armed Forces was hurt by irresponsible cuts to the Department of Defense, which have damaged combat readiness. The military suffered a disproportionate burden under the Budget Control Act. The arbitrary demand that increases in defense spending must be equally matched by increases in nondefense spending should not stand in the way of delivering the resources needed to restore near-term and long-term readiness. Earlier this year, we rightly set aside that misguided standard and took steps to fully meet the needs of our warfighters. This week, we need to do so one more time.

If Congress fails to reach agreement on government funding, our military will suffer intolerable budget cuts that would jeopardize the tools and the training our servicemembers need to fulfill their missions. Our responsibilities run deeper than keeping the government open and ensuring our warfighters have the resources they need.

Before the year ends, we must also deliver results in several additional areas of vital importance to the American people. We must renew funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program so the parents of 9 million children who are covered by CHIP can know that their children's healthcare is secure. We must reauthorize a critical foreign intelligence program that the men and women of American law enforcement need to keep our Nation safe from those who wish to harm us. We must renew the popular Veterans Choice Program, which aims to cut wait times for VA healthcare and to give our veterans flexibility to access care outside of the system. We must approve supplemental disaster funding for States and Territories that are still struggling to rebuild after a year of devastating disasters. We must pass a routine waiver to avoid unacceptable cuts of Medicare funding and other vital programs.

Since the enactment of the pay-go law in 2010, Congress has never allowed a sequester to take effect, especially for tax bills, and we must act again this week to ensure that vulnerable Americans are not harmed.

Of particular importance, faced with the continued failure of ObamaCare to keep health insurance affordable for working Americans, we must take this opportunity to pass bipartisan solutions that will help stabilize collapsing health insurance markets and lower premiums for individuals and families across the country.

Across all these critical areas, Congress must do what is right for the American people and take action this week. I urge each Member of this body to come together and help pass a funding agreement that fulfills our responsibilities to the Nation. I look forward to working with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure that happens.

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. SCHUMER. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRAIN CRASH IN WASHINGTON STATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, our hearts go out to everyone who has been affected by that horrible train crash near Seattle, WA. I know that authorities are still investigating what caused the crash. We have to find out what went wrong and then work to fix it. We in New York know what this is like. We have had a few of these derailments and crashes—Spuyten Duyvil on the Metro-North, where four people died about a year and a half ago or a year or two ago. It was very bad. We have to work on train safety, and there are lots of things to do. I am not going to talk about that now, but we do have to. For now, we are wishing the very best for everyone on that train, and we remain deeply grateful to the first responders who reported to the scene.

REMEMBERING BOB WILMERS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on another sad note and before I move to the substance of the day, I want to spend a moment in recognizing a dear friend of mine who passed away this weekend, Bob Wilmers, one of the most respected and prominent benefactors in Buffalo, NY—one of the great cities in my State and in our country.

Very few men had done as much for Buffalo since its founding hundreds of years ago as Bob Wilmers had done for the last several decades. He was the chairman of M&T Bank. He helped the bank grow from a small bank into one of the largest employers in the region—6,500 employees. As he built the business and created thousands of good-paying, middle-class jobs, he helped Upstate New York dramatically.

M&T Bank was a large bank, but it was not one of these banks that engaged in swaps overseas or other risky

types of investments. It lent money to small businesses, and it had a deep caring for the communities which it served. It was a model bank, in my opinion. It did an amazing job in helping to revitalize our upstate economy, which has had trouble over the last several decades due to so many different things, including bad trade policies.

Bob was also not just committed to the bank, which he loved, as he loved the employees, cared about them, and was such an honorable employee; he was also committed to Buffalo and philanthropy. He directed almost \$5 million to local nonprofit organizations in New York—the bank did under his leadership. That is because Bob himself was a philanthropist. He was a man with a big heart, and he always gave in every way. He spent many years supporting one of the great art museums in America, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, just to name a couple. He was a booster to everything Buffalo. He was never in the camp that thought Buffalo's best days were behind her. He always believed in Buffalo's potential and its future and helped to make that happen. The city of Buffalo is turning around. We are so proud in so many different ways. It is, in good part, because of Bob Wilmers.

On a personal level, my wife and I will miss him. He visited my wife for lunch a few months ago. He was 83 years old, and he was on his rickety, old bike and rode through the streets of New York City to meet her so that they could have lunch.

Bob's wife Elisabeth and Iris and I spent many happy hours together. He was a brilliant man, a brilliant banker, decent, caring, and civic-minded. The loss is the Wilmers family's, and our condolences go to Elisabeth. It is a loss for Buffalo and the United States. Bob will be truly missed. His untimely death has sent shock waves throughout New York State, and we will miss him so.

SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on a different subject, I again warn about the danger of the smear campaign against Special Counsel Mueller.

Over the weekend, allies of the President in the media escalated their phony attacks on Special Counsel Mueller to an outrageous degree. One of the assertions that arose this weekend was that Special Counsel Mueller improperly obtained emails from the Trump transition team. This is a bald-faced lie. There is no proof behind the allegations. There is no substance behind the allegations. They can't point to any indication that Mueller's team did anything that was improper, let alone illegal. The Mueller team is allowed to request whatever it wants. They are special counsel, special prosecutors. They either have to get the account holder's permission or go