

such as combatting the opioid crisis, improving healthcare for veterans, and building rural infrastructure. We must extend the FISA program and shore up pensions for over 1 million Americans. We still need to reauthorize CHIP and end the sabotage of our healthcare markets. We have had a bipartisan deal on a stabilization package for months now. It is a product that should have been easy to include in the end-year deal. After all, it is the product of bipartisan negotiations between Chairman ALEXANDER and Ranking Member MURRAY, two of our most effective Senators. But now, because the Republicans are repealing the individual mandate in their tax bill, the Alexander-Murray deal will not have its intended effect. Even worse, Speaker RYAN has just said the agreement will not pass the House unless the Hyde language is attached to it—another eleventh hour partisan demand on a bill that has already been negotiated in the Senate. What should have been an easy addition to the year-end package is getting more difficult by the hour because of Republican demands.

We still need to pass disaster supplemental funding to aid storm-stricken parts of our country—California, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, as well as Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. The disaster supplemental bill coming out of the House, while it has much better funding levels than the administration's proposal, still does not treat Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands fairly. It does not provide for cost-sharing waivers, and it doesn't include enough funding for resiliency, mitigation, Medicaid, or drinking water infrastructure. It is a step in the right direction but not good enough.

I would reiterate my plea. Texas and the Texas delegation have constantly criticized government funding. All of a sudden, now that there is a disaster, they want money. Fine. Yet what about that \$10 billion rainy day fund? Let Texas spend that. I guarantee you that if it were in a blue State, some of our friends from Texas would be calling for it—the very same people who opposed aid to Sandy, the very same people who have relished putting State and local deductibility in the bill. Well, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Let Texas dip into its \$10 billion fund before it gets FEMA money. That is what seems fair and right, particularly for those who don't want to see Federal Government spending increase.

Of course, last, but certainly not least, we still need to protect the Dreamers—young people brought into this country through no fault of their own, many of them who know no other country but ours. These are people who are in our Armed Forces—over 800—who are going to our schools, who are working in our factories and offices and stores. They, like everybody else—like our ancestors—want to be Americans. They contribute to America. They help America.

Yet there are people on the other side of the aisle who have this nasty immigration attitude that affects the Dreamers and everybody else. It is so un-American. It is so against the statute with the torch in the harbor in the city in which I live. It is so against what the American people believe. Eighty percent want to help the Dreamers. Yet we are stymied so far, and 1,000 Dreamers are losing their status each week.

On all of these things, the time to act is now. Bipartisan negotiations continue to seek a compromise to ensure DACA protections as well as to provide additional border security. We Democrats are all for that—real border security that makes a difference. We should strive to reach a deal as soon as is humanly possible.

If we are not able to reach a global deal by this Friday on these many issues, there will be a temptation to do a short-term funding bill with some of these items but not others. That won't work. We should be doing all of these things together instead of in a piecemeal, week-by-week fashion. Our Republican friends cannot pick and choose what they want and do what they did on the tax bill and do what they did on the healthcare bill in saying that Democrats are not welcome to be part of the deal—because this one ain't under reconciliation.

We want to work in a bipartisan way, but a bipartisan way means just that, not Republicans deciding on their own and telling us that we should just be for it. The best way to get a good, bipartisan result, which by the Senate rules is necessary for spending bills, is for us to work together.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I will have further comments on the tax bill that I will deliver on the Senate floor late tonight after the conference report, but I just want to say that this bill will be an anchor around the ankles of every Republican. It so helps the wealthy and the powerful corporations, and it does so little and even hurts many in the middle class. It is a loser.

In a CNN new poll, a majority of Americans oppose the tax bill. When did you ever hear that Americans are against a tax cut bill? Well, you are hearing it now.

It is because our Republican friends are listening to the thousands of really greedy multibillionaires who want their taxes cut, even though they are doing great, and don't want to share those benefits with the middle class even if they make millions of middle-class people pay more.

The Republicans will rue the day that they passed this tax bill—will rue the day—because it is so unfair to the middle class. It so blows a hole in our deficit. It so threatens Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. They will rue the day.

SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we have a lot of business to get to this week, but because the topic is so important, I would like to address Special Counsel Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in our elections and the Trump campaign's potential involvement.

Over the past several months, the investigation and the FBI have been the target of a smear campaign by Republicans, in the media primarily—in a media outlet that is hardly regarded as down the middle, in a media outlet that just seems to ask "how high" when President Trump says to jump.

Now it has been joined, quite naturally, by several Republicans here in Congress. Their intent is not to push back on the special counsel's findings or to introduce exculpatory evidence on behalf of Manafort, Gates, Papadopoulos, or Flynn, who have been indicted or convicted. Their intent is not to make an argument about the substance of the investigation at all. Their intent is to discredit the investigator and the investigation itself, by falsely painting it as biased or partisan. That way, whatever its findings are at the end of the day, they have created a permission structure to dismiss them.

When you are afraid of the result, you attack the process. When you are afraid of the message, you shoot the messenger. That is what is happening right now with the escalating rhetoric in the rightwing echo media chambers. The commentators at FOX News have actually called Mr. Mueller's investigation a coup—an outrageous charge that has been repeated by a Republican Congressman on the floor of the House. That is how overblown this rhetoric has gotten.

Mr. Mueller is one of the most trusted and respected public servants in America. He has served administrations of both parties. He was first appointed by a Republican and was installed as a special counsel by President Trump's pick for Deputy Attorney General, Republican Rod Rosenstein. As everyone in America knows, he is as straight a shooter as one comes. Impugning his motives and calling his investigation a witch hunt or a coup is, frankly, hysterical.

I regret even repeating those ridiculous comments because there is not a shred of evidence to back them up—not a shred. If any of these critics had evidence, they would pursue their claims in court, but, of course, there is no evidence. So, instead, they wage a warped campaign in the press, fueled by an avalanche of trumped-up allegations and disinformation.

What are they so afraid of?

We all know why. The special counsel's investigation is an important one for our democracy. We have to get to the bottom of what happened in last year's election no matter who ends up on the short end of the stick when those results are announced: How was