

past and the resources now requested by the President and his team. There is no big difference in principle. There has just been a shift in the political winds on the far left. This is knee-jerk, partisan opposition to the administration's reasonable and flexible requests. This is making political obstruction a higher goal than the integrity of our Nation's borders. Frankly, it is just political spite, and the American people know it when they see it.

So the Senate will continue our work on the remaining bills—the products of much bipartisan hard work and collaboration, and, in the meantime, we will turn to a clean continuing resolution later today so we can make sure we don't end this year the way we began it—with another government shutdown because of the Democrats' allergy to sensible immigration policies. That is what they did at the beginning of the year.

We need the government to remain open for the American people. We need to wrap up our work for this year, and I hope that my Democratic friends return next year ready to join the President, this Senate majority, and the American people in our desire to secure our border.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL RYAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on a completely different matter, from time to time, each of us has indulged in jokes and finger-pointing that sustain the friendly rivalry between the House and the Senate—the Founders' metaphorical teacup and saucer. Make no mistake. I am thankful every day that so many former Representatives see the light and come over to join us in the Upper Chamber, but for the past 3 years, there is no one outside of the Senate with whom I have partnered more closely than the Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN.

As history will remember, the speakership was far from the destination that the contented Ways and Means chairman had in mind when our friend John Boehner announced his retirement in 2015, but to the great fortune of the entire Republican Party, PAUL had demonstrated over his years in the House the very qualities his conference needed most.

Everyone knew he had uncompromising integrity, seemingly inexhaustible energy, the trust and admiration of his fellow Members, and he had an aspirational message about what we stood for as Republicans. He has reminded our party, as clearly and forcefully as any leader of his generation, about all that our party can and should aspire to be—“not pale pastels,” in Ronald Reagan's timeless words, “but bold colors.” His colleagues knew he had all of these qualities, and we knew it here in the Senate.

While I was far from the most crucial member of the pressure campaign—a draft effort that even roped in the Cardinal Archbishop of New York—I will

admit that I picked up the phone too. I called PAUL and told him exactly what he didn't want to hear—that he was the right man at the right moment. Conveniently, I was about to get on a plane to Iraq at the time. So PAUL didn't have much of an opportunity to push back.

Over the past 3 years, I have had more opportunities than most to see the right man in action. We have met weekly to coordinate the efforts of our majorities and present a united front on behalf of the American people. At times the cohesion between our teams made it feel like we shared one large staff. So I have seen firsthand how much of what we have been able to accomplish this Congress has been due in huge part to PAUL's serious approach and to his principles and his pragmatism alike.

He helped lead the way on last year's comprehensive reform of our Tax Code, turning his decades-long personal mission into a brighter future for millions of American workers and job creators.

He navigated tense funding negotiations with a deep understanding of his Members' concerns and stood firm in support of America's military, helping to deliver the largest year-on-year increase in defense funding in 15 years.

He stayed true to his heart, putting Catholic social teaching into practice and fighting for policies of all shapes and sizes to lift up the most vulnerable among us, from the working poor to the victims of human trafficking.

His tenure as Speaker has proved a perfect capstone to a remarkable career in Congress. Every step of the way, PAUL has shattered myths and stereotypes about what conservative leaders are like.

Through his long list of accomplishments and his personal witness alike, he has demonstrated that faith in American free enterprise and individual liberty are not quaint, outdated ideas but essential and timeless principles.

He has helped prove that right-of-center values are not only the basis for protest movements, as some cynics had liked to suggest, they are also the foundation for governing majorities.

He has shown that our party's ideals and principles do not clash whatsoever with the moral priority we should place on those at the margins of society but rather that those ideas are often the best means to honor that commitment.

Talk about a product of the Jack Kemp coaching tree. It is safe to say the Speaker's cherished mentor would be mighty proud. PAUL's time at the center stage of our Nation's politics has inspired countless Americans, including a new generation of leaders, but speaking personally, more than any one of the accomplishments that I have been proud to work with PAUL to help to secure, I think I will most remember how he has done that job; how energetically and happily the Speaker has poured himself into each task at

hand. No matter if some said it couldn't be done, no matter that he hadn't sought the job in the first place, the happy warrior has been undeterred.

For all this says about PAUL RYAN the Speaker, it says even more about PAUL RYAN the man. He has a big heart and a razor-sharp mind. It doesn't take long to notice either one, and he knows how to lead with both.

He is a man of profound faith and abiding patriotism, and even after 20 years of Washington, he remains a staunch optimist. PAUL is quick to insist that America's brightest days are yet to come and even quicker to back up the sentiment with action.

Working with Speaker RYAN has been among the great joys of my career in the Senate. The Nation is so much better for his leadership, and I am better for his friendship. I am so grateful to PAUL for everything. I wish him, Janna, and their lovely family great happiness in whatever adventures lie ahead.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN CORNYN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now I am down to my very last end-of-year tribute to a Member of this body. I offer this one with the very greatest reluctance.

This one isn't occasioned by any retirement. Fortunately, for all of us, Senator JOHN CORNYN isn't going anywhere. He will be right here with us when the 116th Congress convenes in January, but he will no longer be serving as Republican whip. His tenure in this key leadership role is almost complete. So I could not let the week pass without sharing for the official Record—and with all of our colleagues—a small slice of the tremendous gratitude and respect and admiration I feel for the senior Senator from Texas.

JOHN and I were already well acquainted when he took over the whip role 6 years ago in relief of JON KYL, but still, I wasn't sure exactly what our relationship would look like. You never quite know in advance. Everybody is different, but just a few weeks into our partnership as leader and whip, JOHN presented me with a birthday gift that told me at least three things about him.

He framed and autographed a picture of ourselves—just an ordinary, not particularly glamorous shot of the two of us, plus JOHN BARRASSO, probably talking with the press there in the Ohio Clock corridor.

A somewhat unusual gift, I thought. Lesson No. 1: This guy has a sense of humor and good cheer. In this photo, I am kind of standing front and center. Six-foot-one JOHN is standing right behind me, a little out of focus and halfway in the shadow. So there is lesson No. 2: Humility.

Then there was his handwritten message: “Happy birthday, Mitch—I've got your back.” That was lesson No. 3. It spoke for itself and how fortunate I