

can demonstrate his commitment to protecting our Nation and leaving it better prepared for his successor.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW CONGRESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, last November the American people elected a new Congress to get Washington working again. Nearly every day seems to bring more signs that we are. Over the weekend, President Obama signed the FAST Act, a multiyear highway bill, into law. It represents a significant departure from years of short-term extensions and congressional inaction. In fact, the FAST Act is the longest term highway bill to pass Congress in almost two decades, providing 5 full years of highway funding.

Here is what Kentuckians for Better Transportation—a top transportation advocacy organization in my State—had to say about it:

After many, many years of short term continuing resolutions we finally have a long term authorization that will give our states the opportunity to plan for and implement major road projects. . . . We can [now] plan for the future.

That is because in a new and more open Senate, Senator INHOFE, a Republican, and Senator BOXER, a Democrat, were able to work together for its passage. Senator BOXER herself called it “a major accomplishment.”

Here is another major accomplishment: the Every Student Succeeds Act. It is a bipartisan, reformist replacement for No Child Left Behind. Pundits in Washington could never agree on how to replace No Child Left Behind. The issue went unresolved for many years, but in a new and more open Senate, Senator ALEXANDER, a Republican, and Senator MURRAY, a Democrat, worked hard and found success in the bill before us. The House already passed it, 359 to 64. The Senate previously passed a very similar version of the bill, 81 to 17.

Tomorrow we should work together to pass it for a second and final time and send it to the President for his signature. It will be the latest important achievement for the American people from a new Congress that is back to work and back on their side.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

PRESIDENTIAL STRATEGY TO DEFEAT ISIS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last night the President addressed the Nation. It was one of the few times during

his Presidency that he addressed the Nation from the Oval Office, signifying that this was going to be an important address by the Commander in Chief. Unfortunately, what the President communicated was that little, if any, change will be made in the current administration’s approach on terrorism following the attack on San Bernardino last week. The President’s approach to eradicating this terrorist threat has only resulted in a tactical stalemate that has kept the morale of ISIS high and their recruitment efforts robust, as we have seen.

In the wake of the shootings last week, an event the President himself called an act of terrorism, the American people deserve a credible and aggressive strategy to combat this terror threat that clearly poses a danger not just over there but over here. A good start would be for the President to listen to his own military leadership as well as members of the intelligence community. If the reports are true—and they certainly haven’t been denied—the President has turned a deaf ear to his own military leadership and leaders of the intelligence community on how to fight and defeat the ISIS threat. Despite the President’s rhetoric on his so-called strategy against ISIS, one thing is clear: It is not working. So our country clearly needs to change course, and that should start with a real plan and real candor from the Commander in Chief on how he intends to defend our interests abroad and at home to keep our people safe.

While I was eager to hear what the President might say about the bad results from his current strategy, unfortunately, we didn’t hear it last night. However, what we did hear was this recent theme from some of our colleagues across the aisle—as we voted on the repeal-ObamaCare set of votes last week—as well as from the President himself during his weekly address, the Democratic leader, and some other Members of the Senate, that what they are basically trying to do is to change the subject. You will recall that one way they tried to do that was by offering an amendment that said people on watch lists would be denied their core constitutional rights under the Bill of Rights, and in this case it happened to be the Second Amendment; that is, you are presumed to be guilty without the necessity of having to go to court and actually prove what you are claiming is true.

I was struck by the fact that the New York Times, back in 2014, noted in an editorial entitled “Terror Watch Lists Run Amok” that “A 2007 audit found that more than half of the 71,000 names on the no-fly list were wrongly included.” This is the New York Times making the case that basically I and others argued for, which is that there cannot be any presumption of guilt just because the government includes your name on a list, particularly when it comes to denying your core constitutional rights. If the Second Amend-

ment isn’t strong enough to withstand this so-called presumption, neither is the freedom to worship according to the dictates of your conscience, the First Amendment rights to free speech and freedom of association. You get my drift.

Rather than address the real problem, which flowed from another speech the President gave a few years ago out of the Oval Office where he announced the precipitous withdrawal of our troops in Iraq that created the vacuum that is now being filled by ISIS and Al Qaeda—rather than talk about the lessons learned and how a new and different strategy was going to be employed after consultation with our military leadership and members of the intelligence community, the President and his supporters decided to try to change the subject and produce a red herring that has nothing to do with the fight to degrade and defeat ISIS. Of course the threat is not only about people traveling from abroad to our country, it is about Americans here and other people on visas, perhaps from visa waiver countries, traveling from the Middle East to the United States. Perhaps the most dangerous of all is the radicalization of people already in the United States. If the preliminary indications prove to be true, that seems to be the thread that connects so many of these attacks, whether it is in San Bernardino or Garland, TX, a short time back, or MAJ Nidal Hasan at Fort Hood back in 2009.

What we need and what the American people deserve from their Commander in Chief is candor and the willingness to show a little humility and say: You know what. The way we have been handling things really isn’t working very well. Instead, the President tries to play partisan politics, and he tries to distract the American people by suggesting that our Constitution is too generous when it comes to the right to keep and bear arms.

For the sake of all Americans, I hope the President reconsiders his flawed strategy and produces a more effective one to eradicate ISIS soon because the safety of the American people is clearly at stake.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, we are on the downward trajectory of this year’s Congress, the 114th Congress, and I thought it would be appropriate to take a few minutes to talk about what this Chamber has been able to accomplish since we convened in January. I know there is a lot of cynicism and indeed outright fear about the way the Federal Government has been operating, and unfortunately I think a lot of that is attributable to the fact that this President has shown a complete unwillingness to work with Congress in many areas; for example, such as immigration reform. So when people see the President acting unilaterally—thank goodness the courts have stopped it,