

And our infrastructure agenda is not just about bridges and tunnels either. The administration announced recently over \$42 billion in broadband funding is heading to the States across the Nation—more money so kids can access high-speed internet at home and so more families in both rural and urban communities can stay connected across the country.

I thank my colleagues who worked over the July 4th weekend to announce all the great projects happening around the country. Implementation will remain a top Democratic priority.

#### BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now, on the Senate July work period, as the Senate gavels back in, our North Star remains unchanged: to build on our historic work over the past few years to strengthen our economy, make life better for the American people, and do it in a bipartisan manner whenever possible.

A little over a month ago, both parties came together to avert a catastrophic default on the national debt, while agreeing on spending levels that will keep our country and our economy strong.

This month, the work of funding the government will continue. It won't be easy but must get done with good faith and bipartisan work. I am pleased so far that this process is moving along in the Senate through the Appropriations Committee, through regular order, in a bipartisan way. And we will do everything we can to ensure that it remains that way.

In another act of bipartisanship on something equally significant, the Senate will move forward on the annual National Defense Authorization Act so we can keep our country safe, support our friends in Ukraine, outcompete China, and give our troops the pay raise they rightfully deserve.

I thank Chairman REED and Ranking Member WICKER for moving the NDAA through the Armed Services Committee last month. I hope that we can move quickly on it here on the floor in July.

These two areas—Appropriations and the NDAA, the Defense Act—are prime examples of the kind of bipartisan work we want to see in the Senate and which I have worked with my colleagues to foster.

We also need that bipartisanship on other issues too—to reduce the cost of insulin prescription drugs, to hold bank executives accountable, to modernize Federal aviation programs, to reauthorize the farm bill, to make progress on safe banking, and outcompete the Chinese Government.

And, of course, every one of these issues requires bipartisan cooperation. Getting there won't be easy, but we are going to do everything we can to make them happen because every one of them will benefit the American people, and, of course, we will also need bipar-

tisanship to prepare for the radical transformations that AI will unleash in the coming years.

Tomorrow, the Senate will have the first-ever classified all-Senators briefing from the Department of Defense and intelligence community on AI and how it affects our national security.

Our briefers will include Avril Haines, the Director of National Intelligence; Kathleen Hicks, the Deputy Secretary of Defense; and other top experts from our Defense and intelligence Agencies.

We are still in the early stages of understanding AI's role in our national security. So this briefing will be critical for Senators to learn more about how we are using AI to protect our country; also, how it is being used by our adversaries; and what we can do to make sure that we maintain our advantages.

And we have no time to waste. Our adversaries won't wait to deploy this technology against us. Congress cannot behave like ostriches when it comes to artificial intelligence. We need to learn as much as we can about AI, as quickly as we can, so we can play our part to ensure the AI revolution brings prosperity, safety, and unparalleled innovation.

So I thank all of my colleagues on both sides who attended the previous briefing and encourage them to attend this one. And I thank Senators HEINRICH, ROUNDS, and YOUNG for their bipartisan work on our little group that is spearing AI in the Senate.

#### U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, this work period, we must continue to confirm President Biden's nominees and rebalance the Federal bench with judges who respect the rule of law. Sadly, Americans' faith in the Judiciary is at an alltime low after the extreme MAGA right captured the Supreme Court.

In the last few weeks, this MAGA majority on the Court has gutted affirmative action, blocked student debt relief for millions of Americans, and green-lit discrimination against the LGBTQ community.

What we are seeing at the Supreme Court is a sickening hypocrisy: As some Justices feel free to accept lavish gifts and vacations from billionaire friends, they are refusing to help everyday Americans just trying to get a fair shake. And the billionaires who have provided these trips and emoluments are no ordinary, run-of-the-mill billionaires. They are ideological MAGA extremists who bankroll hard-right MAGA causes and then bring those cases before the same judges they patronized.

Congress has clear authority to oversee the Federal judiciary, and that includes making sure that the highest Court in the land is held to equally high ethical standards. So I support Chairman DURBIN and the Judiciary

Committee's efforts to advance SCOTUS ethics reform and look forward to working with them on this issue.

In the meantime, Senate Democrats will continue to help restore faith and balance to the Federal judiciary by keeping up our historic pace of confirming President Biden's judicial nominees.

#### VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. SCHUMER. On voting rights, the great John Lewis said, "Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to build what we called the Beloved Community."

We should heed these words in our day and age because today House Republicans introduced their latest broadside against the fundamental right to vote, a sweeping bill that one lawmaker called "the most substantive and conservative election integrity legislation that will come before the House in over a generation." Let me say that again: "the most substantive and conservative election integrity legislation that will come before the House in over a generation." Democrats here in the Senate will never allow such a terrible proposal to become law, and very soon, we will once again move to bring real, much needed voting rights legislation before Congress.

People think that the attacks against democracy came and went on January 6. Unfortunately, sadly, that is not true. In States as diverse as Georgia, Texas, Iowa, Florida, and Arizona, partisans have rewritten the rules of our elections in broad daylight to make it harder to vote—harder to vote—in a democracy that, of course, for centuries has hailed the right to vote and advanced it.

Today's bill from Republicans is the latest example of the giant step backward the Republicans these days are taking when it comes to voting rights, and Democrats will fiercely oppose it.

#### MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2178

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2178) to extend the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, over 25 years ago, America made a noble and necessary commitment—never again to deploy or produce chemical weapons and to destroy our remaining stockpiles.

The Blue Grass Army Depot in my home State of Kentucky has been home to the bulk of our Nation's legacy chemical weapons for decades. On Friday, the depot safely destroyed the last nerve-agent rocket in the U.S. arsenal.

Last week marks a major milestone in an effort that dates back to President Reagan's call for a global prohibition on chemical weaponry altogether. After a decade of bilateral negotiations, the United States made an international commitment to ban their use, production, and stockpile for good.

At that time, Blue Grass Army Depot stored over 500 tons of lethal chemical agents. The Army's initial plan for eliminating the depot's stockpile was incineration—literally burning the rockets. Understandably, local residents were concerned about the potential for poisonous leaks into the community, with schools and family homes literally in spitting distance.

When I joined the Senate in 1985, our first victory was putting a stop to new munitions entering the Commonwealth. The second came when I passed legislation forcing the Army to explore more advanced disposal options that ensured the safety of local residents. Over the years, I have been proud to call greater national attention to this important local issue. I fought to bring home nearly \$7 billion in Federal funding to support the responsible destruction of these munitions, and I will continue to fight for Kentuckians until the mission is complete.

It has been the honor of a lifetime to lead this charge in the Senate and to push for the safety of Madison County families each step of the way. We wouldn't be here today without the singular focus and determination of community leaders like Craig Williams, an extremely effective local advocate who devoted much of his career to seeing this project through. And, of course, we owe a debt of gratitude to the operators, technicians, construction workers, and other staff for their work on the ground.

Today is as much a story of local success as it is a reminder of worldwide

significance. The United States is firmly planted in a wide international coalition that recognizes the moral imperative to reject chemical weapons, and unfortunately, that coalition is more important today than ever.

The authoritarian regime in Moscow that escalated a brutal war in Europe last year is the same one that repeatedly and brazenly ignores the Chemical Weapons Convention that governs our efforts. Vladimir Putin has repeatedly used deadly nerve agents on foreign soil and supported the Assad regime's use of devastating sarin and chlorine against Syrian civilians.

As we condemn this horror, the American people can be proud that our Nation stands squarely on the right side of history. Families in my home State of Kentucky can rest a little easier.

Thanks to the dedication of so many, the United States has shown the world that our commitment to the global prohibition on chemical weapons is ironclad as ever.

#### U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now on another matter, last month, the Supreme Court wrapped up its productive term by deciding some especially consequential decisions in favor of equal protection and Executive restraint. In response, Washington Democrats offered a fresh example of just how profoundly they misunderstand the Court and its role in our government.

The President, who has flirted with calls for Court packing, warned ominously that a coequal branch was "not a normal court." The Democratic leader who threatened Justices by name from the steps of the Court branded it as "MAGA." And this month, the Judiciary Committee will attempt to force the Court to restructure itself in the name of "ethics."

But for all the Democrats' breathless fearmongering, the record of the Supreme Court's latest term tells a very different story. By the numbers, the Court remains as ideologically diverse and unpredictable as even passing students of our Constitution know it was designed to be.

Nearly half the cases the Court heard this term produced a unanimous outcome. It ruled overwhelmingly in both directions—striking down union thugery and declining to stop the Biden administration's open border policy.

By contrast, just 9 percent of cases were decided 6 to 3, with each of the Republican-appointed Justices in the majority. The exact margin liberal commentators use to claim that the Supreme Court is irredeemably polarized actually decided fewer than 1 in 10 cases this term. This is the institution our colleague from New York likes to call a MAGA Court. Really.

Here is the reality: In case after case, the exceptionally qualified Justices Washington Democrats have spent years vilifying continue to prove their

strength and independent jurisprudence.

Justice Barrett was just as likely this term to vote with Justice Kagan as with Justice Thomas. Let me say that again. Justice Barrett was just as likely this term to vote with Justice Kagan as with Justice Thomas. Justice Kavanaugh was more likely to vote with Justice Kagan. And the Court's two most conservative Justices, Thomas and Alito, voted together less frequently than liberal Justices Sotomayor and Jackson.

The Supreme Court is not in crisis when it refuses to reliably and predictably advance Democrats' priorities. The Court is not in crisis when it puts the text of our law above politics. The Supreme Court is a coequal branch of government, and it should continue to do its job.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Xochitl Torres Small, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REED. Madam President, today I rise to speak on general and flag officer confirmations, specifically, the urgent need to confirm the next Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps.

The Senator from Alabama strongly objects to an entirely legal and appropriate travel regulation implemented under a long-established Department of Defense authority which ensures all servicemembers and their families have equal access to medical care.

To show his disagreement with the legal civilian-crafted regulation, the Senator from Alabama has held up the apolitical nominations of 251 senior military officers for over 4 months. My colleague from Alabama has made it clear that he will continue his hold on these military officers unless and until he gets his way. He does so despite