



For Immediate Release

Date: March 13, 2017

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SENATE DEM LEADERS URGE REPUBLICANS TO WORK IN BIPARTISAN WAY TO AVOID GOV'T SHUTDOWN IN APRIL – WARN THAT POISON PILL RIDERS INCLUDING DEFUNDING PLANNED PARENTHOOD & BORDER WALL WOULD RESULT IN REPUBLICAN SHUTDOWN

In New Letter To Leader McConnell & Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Cochran, Senate Dem Leaders Lay Out Path Forward For A Cooperative Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations Process; Urge Majority Leader To Adhere To Framework Of Bipartisan Budget Act Of 2015

Letter Also Urges Republicans To Comply With Previous Budget Agreement To Help Ensure Possibility of Completing the Process In The Time Available – Senate Dems Say That Means Full Funding of Agreed Upon Levels and No Poison Pill Riders Or Attempts To Fund New Southern Border Wall

Senate Dem Leaders to GOP: Honor Previous Budget Agreement & Work With Dems To Return Senate To Regular Order During Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations Process

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senate Democratic Leader Charles E. Schumer, Senators Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Dick Durbin, Patty Murray and Debbie Stabenow today released a new letter to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Chairman Thad Cochran urging them to adhere to the principles agreed upon in Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, as Congress prepares to begin the 2018 appropriations process. In the letter, the Senators urged Senate Republicans to adhere to that framework by providing full and fairly allocated funding, rejection of poison pill riders, and parity in extra funding between the Pentagon and domestic needs, including other security priorities. The Senate Democrats said it is particularly important these appropriations bills not include provisions that would roll back protections for veterans, the environment, consumers, and workers, or prohibit funds for critical healthcare services for women through Planned Parenthood. In addition, the Senators argued that attempts to fund the administration’s proposed Southern border wall through the upcoming appropriations process would be inappropriate, as its construction has been contentious among members of both parties and the administration has yet to propose a plan to physically build and pay for the wall.

“We hope our Republican colleagues will work with us in a bipartisan way so that the appropriations process meets the needs of the American people,” said Schumer. “If Republicans insist on inserting poison pill riders such as defunding Planned Parenthood, building a border wall, or starting a deportation force, they will be shutting down the government and delivering a severe blow to our economy. Rather than pursuing this partisan path, we hope both sides can work together to ensure the government remains funded going forward.”

The full text of the letter is below:

Dear Leader McConnell and Chairman Cochran:

We are writing to express our interest in working with you to complete action on bipartisan legislation to fund the federal government for the remainder of the fiscal year.

As you know, funding for the government will expire on April 28th unless Congress acts. Fortunately, there is no reason why the two parties should not be able to resolve our differences before then. Under the bipartisan budget agreement reached in 2015, the Congress has already agreed to the spending levels for defense and non-defense programs. We also agreed that any extra funding (beyond that for legitimate Overseas Contingency Operations and emergency expenses) should be divided equally

between defense and non-defense priorities. Finally, we agreed that bills to fund the government should not be filled with poison pill riders.

We remain committed to complying with these principles and are encouraged that bicameral, bipartisan negotiations continue in an effort to reach an agreement consistent with the 2015 Bipartisan Budget Act. However, we want to reiterate our position that all 12 appropriations bills should be completed and they should not include poison pill riders such as those that roll back protections for our veterans, environment, consumers, and workers and prohibit funds for critical healthcare services for women through Planned Parenthood. We strongly oppose the inclusion of such riders in any of the must-pass appropriations bills that fund the government.

We are also concerned with reports that there may be an effort to include funding for a very expensive new wall along the southern border with Mexico and a “deportation force.” According to non-partisan experts, the proposed new border wall could cost as much as \$25 million per mile and raises considerable issues that have not been resolved by the Congress or the Department of Homeland Security. First, many experts believe that such a border wall will not work. Second, there is real concern that the Administration, put simply, has no plan to build the border wall. For example, the Administration has not detailed how to 1) use eminent domain and other procedures to acquire land from private landowners and Native American tribes, 2) design the wall, 3) locate the wall, 4) construct the wall, and 5) require Mexico to pay for the wall given the President’s clear and repeated promises that he would force Mexico to do so. Finally, there are objections to the construction of a wall from Democratic and Republican members of Congress that represent border states. Given these and other concerns, we believe it would be inappropriate to insist on the inclusion of such funding in a must-pass appropriations bill that is needed for the Republican majority in control of the Congress to avert a government shutdown so early in President Trump’s Administration.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. We look forward to working with you in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Richard Durbin
Senator
Senator Debbie Stabenow
Senator Patrick Leahy

Patty

Murray

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