

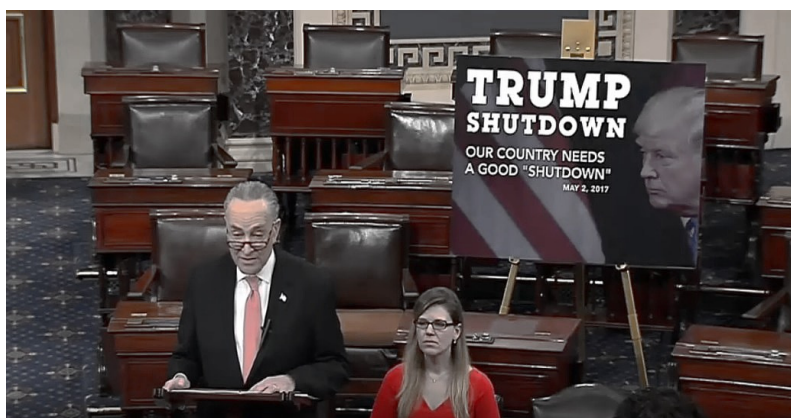


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**Chuck Schumer**

*Senate Floor Speech on US Federal Government Shut Down*

20 January 2018, Washington, D.C.



[AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED: Text version below transcribed directly from audio]

Mr. President,

I address you and this Body in the shadow of a government shutdown, something that nobody wanted and almost everybody strived to avoid; and yet, we are here.

The C.R. last night barely received 50 votes, let alone the necessary 60. Several Republicans joined Democrats in rejecting the House continuing resolution, which hurts our military, does nothing for urgent domestic priorities like opioids, veterans, and pensions; nothing on disaster relief, and of course nothing on the immigration issues we have a real urgency to solve. It just kicked the can down the road one more shameful time. I believe it was the fourth time that we've done that.

My Republican friends speak often of the damage done to our military by lurching from continuing resolution to continuing resolution. We Democrats agree. That's why we offered Secretary Mattis his full budget request, something I offered yesterday in the White House to President Trump as well.



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My Republican friends know that we have to stop these C.R.s, and it's time to actually do a budget, and fully fund our military. We can't forget about urgent domestic priorities in the budget, but military has to be given the certainty it needs.

This is one of the main reasons the bipartisan coalition last night rejected the House C.R. -- because of the damage that Secretary Mattis has said it has done to the -- to the military.

Another reason we rejected it was because it was constructed without an ounce of democratic input -- and I suspect very little input from many Republicans in the Senate. In our democracy you have to compromise if you wish to govern. That's how our Founding Fathers designed our government to operate. And yet, time and time again the Republican leader [Mitch McConnell] believes he can drop legislation on the floor, say take it or leave it, and then gear up the machines of partisan war if we decide to leave it.

The leader crafts a partisan approach without consulting us, and then tries to blame us for not going along. That kind of behavior would not pass in any part of civil society. It would be called "bullying." We are happy and eager to compromise but we will not be bullied.

The most important point is this: The Republicans control the White House, the Senate, the House [of Representatives]. That's why America and the world are calling this shutdown the "Trump shutdown." It's the President['s] and congressional Republicans responsibility to govern. It's their responsibility to keep the doors open and the lights on around here. But the Republican leadership can't get a tumultuous President on board with anything and they don't offer us any compromises on their own.

The breakdown of compromise is poisoning this Congress -- and it all springs from President Trump. He's turned blowing up partisan by -- sorry -- he's turned blowing up bipartisan agreements into an art form.

The President can't take "Yes" for an answer.

Twice in this long debate, President Trump walked away from partisan deals to solve all of the issues before us.



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A week ago last Tuesday, President Trump appealed to Congress on national television to come up with a deal; and he said he'd sign it -- he'd sign whatever Congress sent him. He said he'd take the heat for it. But when a bipartisan group of Senators, led by Senators Graham and Senator Durbin, brought him that compromise, he blew it up at -- in a volcanic meeting at the White House.

The same script played out with myself and the President yesterday. The President called me in the morning and asked that I come to the White House. And, of course, I accepted. We had an extensive and serious negotiation about every single outstanding issue. We came close to a tentative agreement on the budget after I offered the Pentagon's full budget request.

On the thorniest issue of immigration, the President said many times he would take a deal that included DACA in exchange for the wall. I put that deal on the table in the Oval Office in a sincere effort at compromise. I put the wall on the table in exchange for strong DACA protections in the Graham-Durbin compromise. It was a generous offer, and I believe President Trump was inclined to accept it and was willing to do a very short-term C.R. -- he suggested Tuesday night -- in order to get the deal finalized.

Hours later I got a phone call telling me this is not good enough. First, from the President, saying, "I hear it's three weeks." I said, "No one told me about that. That's not what we discussed." And then a few hours later, "Well, we want what you've offered and four or five more things" -- which they knew were unpalatable to Democrats but appeased the hard right anti-immigration wing of the Republican Party.

The bottom line is simple: President Trump just can't take "Yes" for an answer. He's rejected not one but two viable bipartisan deals, including one in which I put his most prominent campaign pledge [the wall] on the table.

What's even more frustrating than President Trump's intransigence is the way he seems amenable to these compromises before completely switching positions and backing off. Negotiating with President Trump is like negotiating with Jell-O. That's why this compromise will be called the "Trump Shutdown."



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The President's behavior is inimical to compromise, which is required to getting things done in government. It's impossible to negotiate with a constantly moving target. Leader McConnell has found that out. Speaker Ryan has found that out. And I have found that out.

Now, Republican leaders refuse to move ahead without President Trump. And President Trump is so mercurial it's been impossible to get him to -- to agree to anything. Again, to sum it up, the President can't make a deal and congressional Republicans won't. As a result, a paralysis has descended on Capitol Hill.

As Donald Trump said in 2011, "If there's a shutdown I think it would be a tremendously negative mark on the President of the United States. He's the one that has to get people together."<sup>1</sup> That's President Trump's quote -- then, 2011. Getting people together -- that's just about the opposite of what he's done in these negotiations.



So, on the one-year anniversary of President Trump's inauguration today, his government has closed its door to the American people, and he hardly seems to care. Early on, he said our country could (quote) use "a good 'shutdown.'"<sup>2</sup>



Today he tweeted, "This is the one-year anniversary of my presidency and the democrats wanted to give me a nice present." He called the shutdown an anniversary present.<sup>3</sup> A "present" -- it shows just how out of touch and how callous he can be.



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A government shutdown is no present -- for the country, for his party, and for him; and it's entirely the President's doing. The only way out of this is for the President to take "yes" for an answer, to accept a bipartisan compromise we bring him.

So we, on our side, will keep trying.

Last night, I suggested the four leaders and President Trump meet -- meet immediately to sort all this out. I still hope we can do that. Otherwise, this Trump shutdown could go on longer than anyone wants it to.

I yield the floor.

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<sup>1</sup> Today Show television interview with Donald Trump, 11 April 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Tweet dated 2 May 2017 (Screenshot taken 1/22/18)

<sup>3</sup> Tweet dated 20 January 2018 (Screenshot taken 1/22/18)