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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Wrong Priorities Expose Senate Stall Tactics

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**Congressman Smith Capitol Report
Wrong Priorities Expose Senate Stall Tactics
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On Friday night, January 19th, Senate obstructionism was on full display for all of America to see as a handful of Senators voted to shut down the United States government in order to advocate for unrelated illegal immigration policies. That's right, they chose to prioritize illegal immigration over paying our troops and making sure our men and women in uniform had the tools they needed to protect our freedoms. They also said no to funding important Children's Health Insurance Programs that more than 87,000 kids in Missouri rely on every day –something I have supported during numerous different votes in the House of Representatives dating back to last year.

In reality, the bipartisan proposal to keep the government open and running had nothing to do with the immigration policies liberals were advocating for. However, since a deal had yet to be finalized regarding the status of illegal immigrants brought here at a young age, an issue not facing an immediate deadline until later this spring, Chuck Schumer, Dick Durbin, Elizabeth Warren and the rest of their Senate followers decided it was more important to stand with their progressive base than pay our troops on time, than allow the government to process new social security benefit claims, than to keep your government agencies open and running.

Already, weeks of bipartisan talks had been taking place to fund a border wall, increase border security forces, end chain migration, end the visa lottery program and to find a solution to the illegal immigrant community given temporary status through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The Democrats had a choice, and they chose to stomp their feet, throw a fit and shut down the government instead of keeping the government open and continuing the bipartisan talks which had already begun.

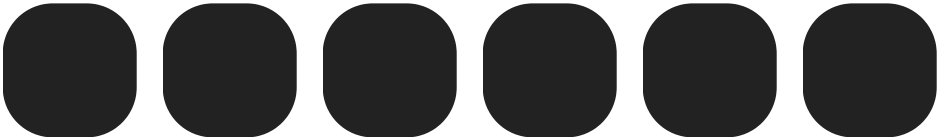
It was especially frustrating since just a day earlier the House of Representatives had voted in bipartisan fashion to keep the government running and open – this is on top of passing numerous pieces of legislation with both Republicans and Democrats to fund agencies like the Department of Defense, Department of Transportation and Department of Agriculture for the entire year. Simply put, the Senate had ample time to figure out how to fund the government, but failed to act.

The truth of the matter is that arcane Senate rules are leaving the White House, House of Representatives, and the Senate hostage to the demands of just a handful of Senators in the minority party. A Senate parliamentary tool found nowhere in the U.S. Constitution allows the minority to require 60 votes on virtually any piece of legislation they choose. When it comes to funding your government, from 1984 to 2007 the Senate minority party only utilized the 60-vote parliamentary tactic on 4% of government funding bills, since 2007 that has grown to 89% - that's right, Senate Swamp rules have been abused to virtually require every vote of the Senate to require a 60-vote threshold.

Liberal obstructionists took advantage of arcane Senate rules and held healthcare for children and funding for the military hostage in order to appeal to their progressive base, not because they actually objected to any policies contained within the bill to keep your government open. This kind of gridlock and obstruction cannot continue to happen, we must change the swampy-Senate rules and require a simple majority to move forward on government funding bills. Not only would this help keep your government open and running, but also help us cut additional waste, fraud and abuse rampant throughout the government, it would also help us attach work requirements to significant welfare programs and allow us to protect taxpayer resources from typical Washington waste. While this government shutdown ended after three days, another deadline is fast approaching because the Senate funding bill only keeps the government open until February 8th. Americans expect action. In the House, I'm proud we've delivered on that, but it's time for the Senate to pick up the pace and do the same.

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