

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 17, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Chairman Shelby:

It was our hope that after working together to pass the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019, we could build off that success to deliver a bipartisan appropriations process for the American people.

However, it appears that Republicans are pursuing the same path that led to last year's 35-day government shutdown—funding the President's controversial, ineffective wall no matter the cost to the American people. We were frustrated to see that the Republican spending proposals for Fiscal Year 2020—the so-called 302(b) allocations—steal \$5 billion, primarily from the Labor-HHS-Education bill for programs such as mental health, opioids treatment, and education and allocate it to the President's border wall. In addition, there could be another \$7.2 billion made available for the President to steal from the Military Construction bill for the border wall, and nothing was included in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill to prevent him from raiding more money from that bill intended for our troops.

As you recall, just nine months ago, President Trump demanded that the American people fund his request for a wall along the border with Mexico—a wall he previously promised Mexico would pay for. President Trump then said he would shut down the federal government if Congress did not fund his wall. Democrats support smart border security investments, but we do not support diverting taxpayer dollars to build an ineffective and controversial wall along our southern border, especially when those funds are stolen from our military and important investments for American families, such as college affordability and our fight against the opioid crisis.

Democrats have long made clear that we will not support appropriations bills that include these funding allocations. America has a significant deficit of investments in programs our citizens need. At a time when the majority of Americans who need and seek opioids treatment cannot get it, we should not be wasting money on an ineffective border wall.

Let us take the lessons learned from last year's Trump shutdown and move forward. We ask that you immediately begin working with us to secure bipartisan, bicameral 302(b) spending allocations that better reflect our shared commitments to, among many other things, the health of our veterans, funding critical science and technology initiatives, the education of our children, and the safety of our communities.

As the Senate has yet to pass any appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2020, we look forward to your timely response.

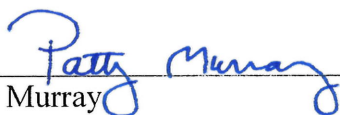
Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



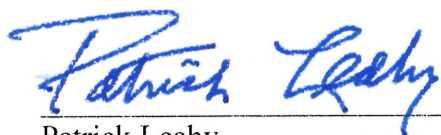
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator