

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

July 13, 2026

Dear Colleague:

This past week, Americans in every corner of the country celebrated 250 years of independence. Amid deep political division, those celebrations reminded us of what binds us as a people: the conviction that America's future is something we build together. As we return to session, our divided Congress should strive to live up to that ideal.

The challenges before us are real, urgent, and consequential. The cost of living is crushing American families. Our nation is mired in a chaotic, ill-conceived war with Iran. And our President — unchecked and emboldened by a recumbent Republican Congress — has pursued corruption and self-enrichment on a scale without precedent in American history.

But Congress is not powerless. We can deliver on the promise of the American Dream for millions of Americans. We can demand answers, conduct real oversight, and bring this war to an end. And we can check the administration's corruption, starting by permanently barring the President's MAGA slush fund.

Meeting that moment, however, requires our Republican colleagues to work with us — to see Democrats not as partisan foes, but as fellow Americans.

So far, they have chosen a different path: lopsided spending bills that supersize the President's war budget, leave families behind, and let corruption go unchecked. Now they are pushing to advance the annual NDAA while refusing to negotiate on the President's bloated, partisan topline budget request that would dump billions more into the defense industry while long-overdue investments in American communities wait.

Senate Republicans claim this has been a "normal" appropriations process and accuse Democrats of weaponizing the budget. Both claims are objectively false.

There is nothing normal about putting forward a lopsided proposal that shuts down bipartisan input and jams through one-sided bills that shortchange families, prolong a war, and shield corruption. There is nothing normal about manufacturing a partisan process and then accusing Democrats of wanting a shutdown because we refuse to rubber-stamp the result. Fighting for a budget that delivers for the American people is not weaponization. It is our job.

But let me say to our Republican colleagues: all is not lost.

Let's be clear about what Democrats want: we want to fund the government, avoid a shutdown, and pass strong bipartisan appropriations bills that improve people's lives. At a time when families are struggling to make ends meet, our nation's budget should help them afford groceries and childcare, build new housing, and fund life-saving medical research. Eleven weeks remain

before the September 30 funding deadline — time enough for Republicans to abandon my-way-or-the-highway budgeting and begin the serious bipartisan negotiations required to fund the government responsibly.

Democrats remain ready to do that work right now — but we need Republicans to join us instead of holding out.

Ultimately, the stakes of the weeks ahead extend well beyond any one spending bill.

In November, Americans will cast their ballots in the first midterm elections of this presidency, and the sanctity of that vote must be beyond question. The ballot is how a free people holds its government to account; everything else in our republic rests upon it.

Yet the President and his allies continue their assault on that foundation — spreading lies about lawful results, intimidating the election officials and even terminating workers who make democracy function, and bending the machinery of government to punish opponents and escape accountability. A President who believes he cannot be held accountable at the ballot box will soon believe he cannot be held accountable at all.

Defending free and fair elections should not be a partisan cause; it is the oath every one of us took. Over the coming weeks, Senate Democrats must continue to do everything in our power to ensure that every eligible American can vote and have that vote counted — and we invite our Republican colleagues to stand with us. That means continuing to reject the pernicious and anti-democratic SAVE America Act.

For 250 years, our nation has found a way forward against long odds. That history is not a relic; it is a charge. We still write our own story. Let us write it well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Schumer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" and last name "Schumer" clearly legible.

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator