



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025

No. 39

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TIM SHEEHY, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, empower our Senators to make consistency a top priority. Lead them over life's mountains and through life's valleys with the spirit of faithfulness and trust in You. Help them to live their lives on an even keel, refusing to give in to despair. Whether in life's sunshine or shadows, may they be aware that You will walk beside them, making the crooked places straight. Keep them from making critical decisions without consulting You or succumbing to the temptation of taking the easy way out. Lord, infuse them with the spirit of gratitude for Your involvement in our Nation and world.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 27, 2025.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TIM SHEEHY, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SHEEHY thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO "WASTE EMISSIONS CHARGE FOR PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS SYSTEMS: PROCEDURES FOR FACILITATING COMPLIANCE, INCLUDING NETTING AND EXEMPTIONS"—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following joint resolution, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 12) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Waste Emissions Charge for Petroleum and Natural Gas Systems: Procedures for Facilitating Compliance, Including Netting and Exemptions".

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, when Donald Trump and DOGE began their work, they kept saying the same thing. Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and DOGE said: This is about cutting waste; it is about efficiency; it is about meritocracy. Unfortunately, the truth has not been as advertised. It has been utter chaos.

Yesterday, the Department of Veterans Affairs said they were reversing course on canceling billions of dollars in contract work because, as it turns out, slashing billions in funding that helps veterans is extremely harmful for veterans. These VA cuts were lauded by DOGE as an example of eliminating waste. The VA Secretary claimed these contracts were for consultants "to make PowerPoint slides and write meeting minutes." That is not even close to the truth.

Let me read some examples of what DOGE was actually prepared to cut: Funding for chemotherapy and imaging services, those were going to be cut—hardly make-work, hardly writing meeting minutes. Funding for veterans with disabilities—cut—even funding to help veterans suffering from toxic exposure in burn pits. One contract would help over 20,000 veterans track down their military service records from DOD in order to prove their toxic exposure, as is required. Without these records, getting affordable treatment would not likely be possible, and DOGE said: Let's cut that, too.

Even if the VA reverses course, canceling these contracts and firing VA staff is still immediately damaging—very damaging. There is the risk that you can't rehire workers back in time because they have moved on to other jobs or contracts aren't available because they took their business elsewhere, and, by then, the damage is

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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