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## House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, October 17, 2025, at 2 p.m.

## Senate

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025

### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, we Senators disagree on a lot of issues in this body. However, there is one topic that we should all agree on, and that is the effectiveness of the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

Recently, the Department of Health and Human Services announced that they have awarded the contract to run

the hotline to a new contractor—very good news. The Trump administration moved on from the current contractor, Polaris.

On March 5 this year, I sent a letter to HHS. The letter makes public alarming whistleblower disclosures. These disclosures allege that Polaris failed to report tips of human trafficking, including child sex trafficking, to law enforcement.

On July 29 of this year, HHS sent me a letter confirming that Polaris had failed to report some tips to law enforcement.

For example, an audit of 294 cases was carried out. According to HHS, of the 294 cases, 4 trafficking cases weren't correctly reported because of clerical error, and in 24 trafficking cases, staff managing the hotline didn't follow reporting protocol.

That is nearly a 10-percent failure rate in a sample of 294 cases. Now, project that failure rate to the hotline receiving nearly 1.5 million tips.

So, as you can see, the Trump administration has thus far shown an aggressive commitment to fighting human trafficking.

This Senator will continue his oversight of the hotline and its new contractor to ensure that women and children who fall victim to these horrific acts have a way out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Democrats are dug in. Fifteen days into a government shutdown, Democrats show no sign that they are ready for it

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



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to end. Not even the prospect of military families going without a paycheck was enough for Democrats to reopen the government. Nor are Democrats concerned about needy families uncertain about the future of nutrition assistance or Americans in flood zones who are unable to update their insurance or close on a home in the midst of hurricane season.

No, Democrats are dug in. And all those Americans living in uncertainty? Well, they are just going to have to wait until Democrats' far-left base is satisfied.

Democrats attempt to defend their funding blockade by complaining that Republicans won't negotiate. But what exactly is there to negotiate?

Negotiation happens when you have two sides, each with its own demands. Republicans have no demands. We have offered Democrats a clean, nonpartisan funding extension. Democrats, on the other hand, are insisting on \$1.5 trillion in new partisan spending in exchange for their votes.

Now think about that. Let's put this in perspective: \$1.5 trillion in new spending in their proposal to keep the government open for 4 weeks until the end of October.

Well, we are already at the middle of October. So, basically, they are saying they want \$1.5 trillion in taxpayer dollars to keep the government open for the next 2 weeks. Think about that one.

As our colleague from Louisiana put it, you need a spreadsheet to keep track of everything they are asking for. The truth is that what Democrats really want is something Republicans can't give them, and that is the approval of their far-left base.

They are looking for praise from the likes of moveon.org and Indivisible. This weekend, Indivisible is holding rallies around the country, and Democrats' motivations are laid bare by what one of the leaders of that far-left group told CNN last week.

He said:

I'm telling every elected I talk to: millions will be out cheering you on, or they'll be calling for new leadership.

"Cheering you on or calling for new leadership"—that is Democrats' motivation, pleasing their far-left base and preserving their political careers.

Meanwhile, we are reading stories about military families lining up at food banks, flight delays because of understaffed airport towers, needy families uncertain about the food assistance they depend upon.

But our Democrat colleague from Rhode Island says: For "Democrats, it's so far, so good."

"So far so good"—I doubt military families and Federal workers would agree.

If there was ever anything to make it clear that Democrats are in this for their own political advantage, it is callous comments like this one or the Democrat leader's statement that "every day gets better" for Senate Democrats.

While Democrats may be basking in praise from their far-left base, polls show that most Americans want this shutdown to end. Two-thirds of voters think Democrats should reopen the government, rather than hold out for their partisan demands.

And if just five more Democrats would show some courage, we could do just that. We need five more Democrats to say, "Enough is enough," to put the American people ahead of the far-left, and to support this clean, nonpartisan continuing resolution sitting right there at the Senate desk, ready to be picked up and passed today, put on the President's desk, signed into law, and the government reopens.

If just five more Democrats would show some courage, we could do just that. With five more votes, this bill could be on its way to the White House. As I said, President Trump stands ready to sign it. It is clean. It is nonpartisan. It has no policy riders, no partisan gimmicks. It simply funds the government for a foreseeable time, until November 21, to give us an opportunity to finish the appropriations process under regular order and to deal with the funding of the government in the way that it should be funded—in an open, transparent process that uses the committees under regular order, the Appropriations Committee, the subcommittees, and the floor open to amendments.

Again, I know that is a novel concept—that is a novel concept—compared to the way the Democrats did it when they had the majority. Even though the Appropriations Committee did its work last year and 11 of the 12 appropriations bills were reported out, not a single one was brought to the floor of the Senate because they like to negotiate behind closed doors, with a handful of people deciding on behalf of everybody else.

That is not the way this place ought to work.

Troops need to get paid. Families need to get the help they need. All the uncertainty for the American people needs to go away, and we can get back to work on the things that really matter.

But the question is, Are Democrats interested in that or are they more interested in being cheered by far-left groups at Saturday's rally?

Well, I guess we will see soon enough.

Will today be day 15 of the Democrats' shutdown?

We will have another opportunity, later today, to vote on that bill sitting right at the desk. Five more Democrats, it passes, goes to the White House, gets signed into law by the President, and the government opens up.

Will today be day 15 of Democrats' shutdown, or will it be the day we reopen the government and get back to the business of serving the American people?

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

MR. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

MR. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it has now been over 2 weeks since Republicans shut the government down because they refuse to work with Democrats in a serious way to fix the healthcare crisis looming over the American people. Open enrollment starts in just 2 weeks, and Americans will be forced to choose healthcare plans that will send costs skyrocketing.

As we speak, families are receiving letters for their new health insurance rates, and more States—more States—are opening their window-shopping period for what health insurance will look like next year.

With open enrollment around the corner, Republicans cannot continue to kick this can down the road. It is happening now. The healthcare crisis is now. The public agrees. Democrats agree. The White House privately admits it.

Even some Republicans in Congress know it is the truth, and yet Republican leaders, especially Speaker JOHNSON, continue to dig in.

The Speaker has now kept the House Republicans on vacation for 3 weeks, as if they can make the issue go away by letting House Republicans hide. Well, the American people don't have time for Republican inaction.

This morning, let me show my Republican colleagues precisely what will happen if they continue to insist on "no negotiation."

Let's take a look at this chart. These are real numbers. These are the actual numbers for New York's healthcare exchange for the average couple in Plattsburgh, NY.

This is in the heart of New York's rural North Country, and it is Congresswoman ELISE STEFANIK's district. Right now, with the ACA tax credits, this healthcare plan, a bronze plan, is \$282 a month. That is still a lot for a family, a working family. It is a lot of money. It ends up, you know, coming close to \$4,000—\$3,500 a year. But that is nothing compared to what will happen if these credits expire.

If the tax credits expire, the same healthcare plan will go up to nearly \$1,700 a month next year—\$1,700. Mr. President, \$1,400 extra every single month—a 495-percent increase.

For the average family or small business owner or farmer in upstate rural New York, an extra \$1,400 a month on healthcare is financial ruin. That is \$15,000 a year. How are people—even people making decent money—going to afford that?

And this is not just true of New York. This is similar to what is happening in all the States around the country. Every day now, people are getting notices, and we are getting close to November 1, where people are going to have to decide: Do they give up health insurance altogether and watch their people, their children, their spouses suffer?

So I say to my Republican colleagues, especially in the House: You can't hide from your constituents forever. The American people expect Congress to fix this healthcare crisis, because otherwise people will go bankrupt; people will get sick; people will lose insurance; people will fail to get the care they need; and more people—more people—will needlessly die.

Republicans know this, and yet neither the Trump administration nor Republicans in Congress are even pretending to try and solve the healthcare crisis.

Democrats are ready and willing to negotiate with Republicans. We want to work in a serious way to reopen the government and spare tens of millions of Americans the threat of financial ruin—financial ruin—\$15,000 more or even more a year.

#### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, last week, the Trump administration vindictively fired thousands of Federal workers in a mistaken attempt to try to hurt the Democrats in this shutdown.

Let's be very clear: Nobody forced the administration to do these firings. They did it because they wanted to, period. They did it on their own.

This decision, which they made—Trump made and his administration made, Vought—was so callous, so unnecessary, so deeply hurtful to hard-working Americans, and yesterday we learned it is even worse than they thought.

Yesterday, we learned that the administration admitted in court that nearly 800 employees in HHS were laid off in error. Not only are they mean and vicious and uncaring, they are incompetent. It is despicable. How careless, how incompetent is this administration? How cruel are they that they will throw away people's livelihoods like this with the flick of a pen without even examining what is happening?

These accidental firings show you how stupid it is for Russell Vought to treat Federal workers as political pawns. It is destructive; it is cruel; it is vicious, and it will backfire in the eyes of the public.

That is why even Republicans in Congress have urged the administration not to take vengeance out on Federal workers. The administration should reverse every single firing from last week and should stop playing politics with people's livelihoods and their lives.

They should instead get serious about negotiation with Congress to end this shutdown at once.

#### YOUNG REPUBLICANS CHAT GROUP

Mr. President, and finally on the Young Republicans, it is a frightening

time in America as we witness the rise of political violence and violent rhetoric.

Yesterday, as most people now know, Politico published a story about thousands upon thousands of text exchanges reported from prominent members of the Young Republican organization across the country, showing racist, sexist, outright violent language.

This wasn't a casual mention. This happened thousands and thousands and thousands of times from a group called the Young Republican organization. They made jokes about Hitler, about gas chambers. They talked about torture. They made jokes about sexual assault. They used almost every racist obscenity, including the N-word.

Now no matter who it comes from, right or left, all of us have an obligation to denounce vile rhetoric like this. But a full day after these texts have leaked, most Republican leaders haven't said a peep about these gas chamber and Hitler jokes coming from the Young Republicans.

Too many Republicans seem willing to call out violent rhetoric only when it comes from the other side. But these same Republicans never seem willing to denounce it when it comes from their own ranks, and that is dangerous. Violent political rhetoric is an attack on everyone.

And Vice President VANCE yesterday, amazingly, seemed to excuse these vile texts as just a college group chat and "refuse[d] to join the pearl clutching."

That is outrageous. Leave it to JD VANCE to preach about violent political rhetoric only when it serves his interests and then ignore or excuse it when it comes from his own side.

The hypocrisy is disgusting and shameful coming from supposed national leaders. If you don't like hate speech, you don't like all hate speech, not just hate speech from political groups you don't like. The real test is to denounce it from groups that might be on your side of the aisle, the Young Republican organization.

And let's be clear: These aren't random college kids. These are individuals who work in government, who have held positions of leadership at the State level, and one person in the chat is actually an elected official. Of course, some Republicans at the lower level have spoken out, and good for them; they should do so. But where is everyone else? Where are all our Republican colleagues? Where is President Trump?

Here is what needs to happen: Every single Republican leader from the President on down has to condemn these attacks immediately or all their cries about hate speech seem to be one-sided or bogus.

The people who made these vile comments should be out of a job and never allowed to work in politics again. And both sides must make it clear to the entire country that vile rhetoric like this is unacceptable.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today is day 15 of the Schumer shutdown. Here we are, over 2 weeks into this, and the Democrats continue to play a dangerous game. The Schumer shutdown continues to put lives at risk, and it is doing it each and every day.

Every day an airplane takes off and lands, there is increased risk because of the Schumer shutdown. Thousands of air traffic controllers across the country keep us safe. Right now, they are working, but they are not getting paid. Yesterday, they received a partial paycheck, and it was their final paycheck until Democrats end the Schumer shutdown.

It is not just air traffic controllers. It is TSA agents. It is Border Patrol agents. It is ICE agents. It is FBI agents. They have also received their final paychecks. These are the people that we expect to make life-and-death decisions, and they shouldn't be distracted by financial matters that are affecting them as a result of the action by the Democrats in this body.

As of today, there is one bank that I want to refer to that serves members of the military. They serve Federal workers. They serve their families. They say that during the Schumer shutdown, 70,000 members have come asking for loans. That is 70,000 families of military and Federal workers who need extra help to make ends meet because Democrats have blocked their paychecks.

A recent headline from the Wall Street Journal reads "Furloughed Federal Workers Turn to Side Hustles to Survive Shutdown." People with full-time government jobs are desperate for the actual income that is necessary because their regular paychecks are being withheld by the Democrats. These are workers who are struggling to make ends meet, and they are not going to see another dime until SCHUMER and the Democrats end this shutdown.

These people, when they go to work—life-or-death decisions—need clear heads and clear minds to do their jobs. They shouldn't have to worry about the distractions of putting food on the table and keeping the lights on because the government is shut down. They shouldn't have distractions; they should be focused on their job when they are at work, not having to be worried about what is going on at home because the paychecks haven't come because the Democrats have stopped the flow of their paychecks.

One air traffic controller was very blunt about this and the consequences of the Schumer shutdown. He said:

The financial anxiety doesn't just hurt morale; it directly affects safety.

This is an air traffic controller.

Sometimes that small moment where your mind is elsewhere can have serious impacts.

That is what we are dealing with today. This is the seriousness that the Nation is facing while the Democrats and CHUCK SCHUMER play political games, and it is a dangerous game.

Let me tell you what is going on at airports across the country because air traffic controllers aren't getting paid thanks to CHUCK SCHUMER and the Democrats.

In Burbank, CA, the air traffic control tower was unmanned for 6 hours. Flights were grounded.

In Nashville, similarly, hundreds of flights were delayed in 1 day because the air traffic control tower went dark.

In Charlotte, nearly 2,000 flights have been delayed since the start of the Schumer shutdown.

Airport after airport.

In Atlanta, the Nation's busiest airport, air traffic controller staffing challenges and delays are mounting with each passing day.

More than 53,000 flights have been delayed nationwide because of the Schumer shutdown.

Most air traffic controllers live paycheck to paycheck, as do most Americans. Senate Democrats expect them to work for free. Why? Because the minority leader says: "Every day gets better for us." The Democrats say that every day gets better for them. Better for whom? Not better for the American people, whose lives are put in danger as a result of what the Democrats are here doing despite the needs of the Nation.

CNN recently published a shocking quote from a Democrat staff member. Maybe it is a member who is sitting on the floor right now in the U.S. Senate. A Democrat staff member said this published by CNN. A staff member, a Democrat, said that the Democrats aren't going to change course with the Schumer shutdown strategy until "planes [are] falling out of the sky." That is the approach of the Democrat staff to the Democrat Senate, that they are not going to end the shutdown until there are "planes falling out of the sky."

Mr. President, is that where we are now because of what the Democrats are doing to this country? The shutdown doesn't end until planes are falling out of the sky.

Today's Democrat party has completely surrendered to the radical left. They have abandoned the American workers, the American people, American families. Those workers and families want to keep America safe. The safety of the American people has now become a punch line for the Democrat party in this Nation.

The far left is controlling today's Democrat party—make no doubt about it. These people are radical, extreme, dangerous, and scary, and they are coming to Washington this weekend. And they have told us how dangerous they are by admitting that their shutdown strategy will not change until planes are falling out of the sky.

Innocent people are collateral damage in this dangerous political game the Democrats are playing.

Democrats will have their ninth opportunity today to reopen the government. They will have their ninth opportunity to vote for a bipartisan, clean continuing resolution—a clean continuing resolution that they voted in favor of 13 times when Joe Biden was President.

Democrats are going to have their ninth opportunity to pay the brave men and women who keep our skies clear and who keep our borders secure and keep our communities safe.

Democrats have an obligation to reopen the government, and they need to do it before there are planes falling out of the sky.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Republican Party controls the Presidency, the Senate, and the House of Representatives. Despite that trifecta, the government has been shut down for 15 long days and counting.

As Americans suffer, Majority Leader THUNE and Speaker MIKE JOHNSON insist that congressional Republicans will address expiring Affordable Care Act health insurance premium tax credits after the government reopens. But do the American people have any reason to believe that congressional Republicans really are going to work to help save healthcare for millions of Americans? Not if you look at the record.

In the past 8 months, Democrats have repeatedly tried to extend these ACA premium tax credits. What does it boil down to? Health insurance is expensive. For some families, it is too expensive. We created a program to provide tax credits for many families who otherwise couldn't have a good health insurance policy.

The Republicans, in the big, beautiful, blue budget—whatever they call it—ended up basically eliminating these tax credits, which means the burden will fall on these families, without any help in the Tax Code, in a matter of weeks.

In the past 8 months, we have tried to extend these tax credits, which were eliminated in the Trump big, beautiful budget.

In February, Senator SHAHEEN of New Hampshire offered an amendment to the first budget resolution to protect these tax credits. Senate Republicans voted against it, and the amendment failed.

In April, Senator SHAHEEN went again and offered another amendment to the second budget resolution doing exactly the same thing. Once again, the Republicans had a chance to correct the error they made in this big, beautiful budget, but they voted against it.

In June, Senator JON OSSOFF from Georgia offered an amendment to the Republicans' One Big Beautiful Bill to save the enhanced premium tax credits a third time. You know what happened. You can guess it. Every Senate Repub-

lican voted against the amendment. It failed.

Let us not forget that for the past 15 years, the American people have been waiting for the Republican Party's Affordable Care Act replacement plan.

In Donald Trump's first term, he made an attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act. He wouldn't describe to the American people what he was going to replace it with, but he was damned determined to get it repealed.

It led to a moment I will never forget on the floor of the Senate. It was about 2 or 3 in the morning. All the Members were in their seats. It came down to one person as to whether or not the Affordable Care Act would be repealed under the Trump administration, in his first term. It was a moment of high drama because we knew what was at stake: Millions of American families, without the help of the Affordable Care Act, couldn't buy or afford health insurance.

So it came down to the vote of John McCain—former Senator, Republican from Arizona. He went through those doors to my right and was gone for a few minutes. People said: He is talking to President Trump. Trump is trying to convince him to put an end to ObamaCare and the Affordable Care Act once and for all.

John McCain was his own man. He wasn't a creature of membership in an organization. He voted his conscience.

He walked through that door. A hush fell over the Chamber. He stood in the well right on the corner of that table and lifted his right arm as far as he could—remember, his arm was broken many times when he was a prisoner of war—and came down hard with a "no." With that single vote, John McCain saved the Affordable Care Act for millions of Americans and gave them health insurance they can afford for their families. The Republicans had failed again to put an end to the Affordable Care Act.

Well, here they are doing the same thing with the big, beautiful budget bill. And what does it mean for families? CHUCK SCHUMER was on the floor earlier this morning talking about the impact on the premiums.

Each State has a target date when the health insurance industry is going to announce the new premiums for the new calendar year, which starts in just a few weeks.

Our date in Illinois is October 27—12 days from today. Those who are part of healthcare.gov, those who are part of the Affordable Care Act will find out what happens to their premiums.

If history is an indicator, it shows that my Republican colleagues have no plan. They didn't have one in Trump's first term; they certainly don't have one now.

The President said, when he was asked point blank "What is your plan to replace ObamaCare?" he had concepts of a plan in his mind—nothing in writing—to make healthcare more affordable for the American people.

So it is a bit over the top for the Republicans to ask Democrats and the American people to wait and trust them to fix this issue, to let the premiums go up, and then maybe they will get around to changing the law.

That is what this is all about. There are a lot of words used on the floor of the Senate to describe the government shutdown. I am sorry it has reached this point, but I think there is a reason for it, and it is a good one. We believe that 20 million American families will see the cost of health insurance go up because of the Trump budget and reach a point where it is not affordable for many families to have health insurance. How about that?

What about your family? If you are a person who has health insurance, children, perhaps someone in your family with a serious illness, you understand the value of health insurance, and you understand your vulnerability. One broken bone, one automobile accident, one bad diagnosis, and you are going to end up with a bill you cannot pay. It will exhaust your savings. That is the reality of the cost of health insurance.

My Republican colleagues, like the one who just spoke, don't seem to understand that, and I think he should. What is at stake here is not a political custom match. What is at stake here is a decision by this body to help millions of American families. If Republicans in Congress fail to extend the enhanced premium tax credits before the end of this year—and that is just a few weeks away—premiums for 22 million Americans will double. Take a look at what you are paying each month for health insurance for your family, multiply times two, and that is the result of the Big Beautiful Bill that was passed by the Republicans.

Let me give you an example: In Illinois, a 60-year-old couple with an income of \$32,000 could see their annual premiums increase \$17,000 a year if the enhanced premium tax credits are not extended. That is an increase of \$1,400 a month. Ask any family, working family, whether paying \$1,400 a month more for health insurance will have an impact on the family budget. You know the answer.

Now, compare that additional cost of the tax cuts that some billionaires will enjoy because of this so-called Big Beautiful Bill that was passed by the Republicans. Billionaires will receive a tax cut of more than \$310,000 a year. I am sure Elon Musk needs that money—\$25,000 a month in tax breaks. Contrast those two numbers, an increase in health insurance premiums of \$1,400 a month because of the Republicans' vote and an increase in the tax breaks, the reduction of taxes for billionaires in America of \$25,000 a month. That includes more than 100,000 people in my home State of Illinois who will be forced to make the impossible decision that most Americans pray they will never have to make, like whether to purchase groceries or insulin or whether to pay the mortgage or take the kids in for their checkup.

Don't take my word for it. Listen to what my constituents have written to me. Stephanie from Evanston, IL, is a business owner. And many business owners count on health.gov for their health insurance. Stephanie told me if her enhanced ACA tax credits are allowed to expire, the result of the Big Beautiful Bill with the Trump budget would "cripple" her budget and that she is "not sure [she] could cover the doubling of this cost."

Most people wouldn't be able to. She asked me how "our country claims to support business owners if [they] can't afford to take care of their family's health?" More than 4 million other small business owners who get their health coverage through the Affordable Care Act are asking the same question.

Take Jennifer, she is a mother and a small business owner from Illinois who told me her costs have skyrocketed under this President. She told me her food costs are up and "utilities are up, gas is . . . expensive, [and] the costs of supplies for my business have tripled."

Jennifer is concerned her ACA premiums will double next year unless we do something.

That is what the shutdown is all about. It is not some source of pride for politicians to argue back and forth. There is a purpose in this debate. The purpose is to make sure we come to the rescue of tens of millions of Americans who face the doubling of their health insurance premiums. Jennifer is concerned her ACA premiums will double, as I mentioned, next year. If that happens, she would have "no choice but to pass those costs on to my customers or to close my doors."

As you know, small businesses employ almost 50 percent of private sector workers. They are the engine of our economy. If our Nation's small businesses start closing, there will be a ripple effect throughout our local economy, and it will happen, in part, because Republicans in Congress refuse to lower healthcare costs.

I like JOHN THUNE. He is the Republican leader here in the Senate. We have known one another for years. We have our differences politically, but I think he is basically a good person. I heard him come to the floor over and over again saying pass this clean continuing resolution, open the government, and, by golly, we are going to sit down and talk to you about health insurance.

Why can't we do that now? Why can't we do that this morning? There are enough tables in this building for people to gather. Now that the House of Representatives is back in town, they can participate as well. We need the President at the table, as well, as far as I am concerned. There are many Republicans who basically will wait for a signal from the President to agree to anything. Bring him to the table. He brought a cease-fire to the Middle East. Let's see if he can bring a cease-fire to the Senate and House.

It is past time to address this issue. Insurance companies are making their

final decisions about monthly premium costs for next year right now. They sent out notifications, and people will soon be picking their healthcare plans based on these costs. As I mentioned, October 27 is the target date for this announcement in Illinois. I guarantee you, if we don't bring some relief to these families, we are going to see premiums increase dramatically.

That is what this government shutdown is all about. We want to sit down and deal with healthcare costs directly and now. Leader THUNE and Speaker JOHNSON seem to have made the political calculation, when it comes to tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires, they have no problem moving fast and breaking things. But when it comes to healthcare for more than 24 million Americans, that can wait. My constituents, like Stephanie and Jennifer and their families, can't wait any longer. It is time to get this done.

One last point: I am from Downstate Illinois. I live in Springfield, 200 miles south of Chicago. I am honored to represent the city of Chicago. I, basically, do my best to represent the entire State. We have problems downstate because of these healthcare costs as well. Nearly 400,000 Illinoisans currently receive the ACA tax credits, which are at risk of disappearing because of the Republican vote. If the tax credits are not extended, eligible enrollees will pay an average of \$1,032 more per year in Illinois for healthcare coverage, \$1,700 more per year in rural areas. Smalltown, rural Illinois is going to feel this as well.

These increases will be higher for families. A 60-year-old couple earning \$32,000 a year would see an annual increase of \$17,000, \$1,400 a month. A family of four earning \$64,000 a year in Downstate Illinois would see an annual premium increase of 226 percent, \$2,571. Counties that will be hardest hit financially are conservative, Republican-dominated counties, by and large. Hamilton County will see an increase of \$2,772 a year; White County, \$2,496 more a year; Union County \$2,400 more a year. Counties with the highest number of enrollees impacted: Cook County, our largest, 170,500; DuPage County, 35,900; Lake County, 23,200. We estimate we will lose up to nine hospitals in Downstate Illinois because of changes in Medicaid and because of these increases in health insurance premiums. Is that of concern? It is to me. I represented these Downstate Illinois counties for many years.

I know what it means to lose a hospital. I know what it means to add 45 minutes to an hour to your drive time for the delivery of that baby or critical traumatic care. It really makes the difference between life and death. That is what we are fighting for.

Before the Sun sets today, let us hope that at some table here in the U.S. Capitol, the leaders of Congress will meet, and the President will promise to join them in an effort to get this solved. There is no reason we can't do

it. We hear from the Republicans that they want to make some changes. Let's make those changes now and make sure we get this done quickly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, it has been 15 days since congressional Democrats shut down the Federal Government. Let's call it what it is: It is the Schumer shutdown.

In that period, we have voted eight times on a clean continuing resolution. It is straightforward. It is a short-term bill that funds government at current levels without adding any kind of partisan policies to it. This would give us, here in Congress, time to finish the full-year funding bills responsibly.

Instead, Democrats pushed for over a trillion dollars in new spending to recklessly eliminate the \$50 billion rural hospital stabilization fund. Why in the world would Democrats want to do that? Why would they want to eliminate this crucial fund for our Nation's rural hospitals? It is unthinkable.

The fact is, the Democrats' so-called proposal to reopen the government is packed with unrelated items. This includes the COVID-era bonus payments, overseas climate resilience projects, and taxpayer-funded healthcare for noncitizens. That is not responsible governing, and it is not fair to American families.

House Republicans passed and they sent to the Senate a clean CR. That means that it has no poison pills, no policy riders on it. Democrats rejected it eight times. It is now time, folks, for Senator SCHUMER and his caucus to drop this partisan wish list and do their jobs.

Meanwhile, it was reported in Punch-bowl News on October 9 that CHUCK SCHUMER said:

Every day gets better for us.

And by "us," he means the Democrat party.

If the Democrats think it is better that our troops aren't paid and that it is better when people are worried about being furloughed, then that just shows their arrogance. That just shows that they are tone-deaf to the uncertainty and the stress people are feeling. That just shows CHUCK SCHUMER is in his Schumer shutdown only for political theater.

This shutdown is hurting people. Farmers are losing access to Federal support at a time when the ag economy is already strained. Construction projects that rely on Federal funding are stalling. Air traffic controllers and Federal employees face uncertainty about their paychecks. None of this—none of this—is necessary.

Let's be clear. A short-term funding bill is not the place for sweeping policy changes. If this continues, deeper cuts to essential services may follow, and that is entirely preventable.

Remember, the House sent us a clean CR, with no new policies included. It

simply continues current funding until November 21. Then we will take up appropriations bills that have strong bipartisan support. And they have that because it was already negotiated within that Appropriations Committee and, as a member of that committee, we passed it out of the committee.

I am deeply committed to that transparent process—one where Senators debate, amend, and vote on each bill individually before the end of the fiscal year.

All we are asking is to reopen the government so that we can continue that funding process. Leader Thune promised that we would take appropriations bills up, here on the floor, and we have already passed three of them. Let's show the American people bipartisanship and transparency and continue this important work.

So why are we here today and still shut down? Because the Democrats are more focused on appeasing the far left than funding the government. I believe they are caving to political pressure when they should be fulfilling their most basic duty: keeping the government open and operating for their constituents.

Republicans' goal is simple: Reopen the government now, protect our military and families, and return to regular order.

At the end of the day, Americans deserve a functioning government, not political theater. If just a handful of Senate Democrats join Republicans, we can end this shutdown. And I hope when we next vote to reopen the government, my Democrat colleagues will join us in doing the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

#### AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to highlight a growing crisis that threatens our farmers, rural communities, food security, and our national economy. I am concerned that as American agriculture and rural communities face very hard times, many Americans are unaware of the stakes ahead.

Here is the bottom line. American agriculture is in serious trouble, and Congress must act now with short-term assistance.

That is not hyperbole. I continue to hear from producers in Mississippi and across the country that the numbers don't add up and the outlook is grim. Without immediate action, we risk losing not only farms but also the rural communities and the food security they provide. This is no longer a warning; it is an emergency.

Over the past three crop years, rising input costs for seed, fertilizer, fuel, labor, and more have collided with falling commodity prices and high interest rates. Even with strong crop yields this year, many farmers are facing losing between \$100 and \$400 per acre. For a 2,000-acre farm, that is a financial hit in the hundreds of thousands and some-

times millions of dollars in losses. Farm bankruptcies have already surpassed last year's total, and if we do not step in, that trend will accelerate.

The ripple effect is real. In small towns across America, family farms are the economic engine. When farms thrive, so do local grocery stores, schools, equipment dealers, banks, and churches. When farms fail, the community fails with them. Jobs disappear. Families leave. Main Street goes silent.

We have seen this before. In the 1980s, a generation of farmers was nearly wiped out by high interest rates, collapsing markets, and inadequate safety nets. Today's producers are starting to feel those same pressures. Bankers, economists, and lenders are sounding the alarm again.

While we may differ on policy, we must agree on the urgent need to act while we still have time to do that. The significant updates we secured in the reconciliation process this summer will strengthen the farm safety net, and I am proud of that progress. But those changes won't take effect until next fall. That is too late for many farmers already on the brink. We need short-term assistance now to help producers survive the coming crop year.

Let me be crystal clear: Farmers do not want a handout; they want a fair shot.

Food security is national security. We cannot afford to lose a generation of American farmers or become dependent on foreign countries to feed and clothe us. That is a risk that we cannot take.

Over the long term, we know American agriculture will be stronger if we secure fairer trade deals and build stable markets at home and abroad.

Our competitors—China, Argentina, Brazil, and others—are moving aggressively. I believe that if we don't act quickly, we will lose vital export opportunities and long-term stability for our producers.

In this world of global competition, we must revive American-grown cotton to be the center of our supply chains, providing reliable markets for our producers and bolstering industries that depend on cotton.

I introduced the Buying American Cotton Act to help us get there by incentivizing U.S. retailers to produce, purchase, and manufacture American cotton here at home. This legislation would help secure a resilient, self-reliant, and prosperous cotton industry for the future by reinforcing our supply chain—from farm to textile, to market—and by reducing our reliance on cotton produced under forced labor practices and environmental destruction.

I call on this body to consider this legislation as we seek long-term solutions to the problems that beset American farmers today.

I am encouraged by the bipartisan work underway to complete a 5-year reauthorization of the farm bill, which is long overdue.

Last winter, we secured farm support funding, which was a lifeline for many of our farmers this crop year, but the crisis hasn't passed. Farmers are still facing impossible choices about whether they can afford to plant next year or even to stay in business at all. I fully support ongoing work to provide additional Federal bridge funding before the end of the year to ensure more of our family farms can stay in business.

We all represent different sectors of American agriculture, but the crisis does not discriminate. It spans commodities, regions, and party lines. What matters now is that we come together with urgency and with purpose.

Our farmers are counting on us. It is time for Congress to meet the moment before it is too late.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### ISRAEL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, after more than 2 years of bloodshed, 20 living hostages and the remains of at least 7 deceased hostages were recently returned to their families in Israel by Hamas. Videos of the tearful reunions circulating on social media showed the immense joy and relief felt by the families, who have been suffering through the unthinkable and wondering if they will ever see their loved ones again.

Behind all this extraordinary story is the leadership of President Trump in negotiating an end to this war that has lasted 2 years. President Trump has rightly gained praise from some of the most unexpected critics, like Kamala Harris, Hillary Clinton, and minority leader CHUCK SCHUMER. All of these people are correctly acknowledging what supporters of President Trump have known for a long time: He is truly a master of the art of the deal. I can't think of a single President who, through a combination of carrots and sticks, could have accomplished something like this before, but President Trump has, and he deserves the credit.

But, of course, for this conflict to be truly over, each and every one of the conditions laid out in President Trump's 20-point peace deal must be implemented by both sides, and that is where the trouble really begins.

We cannot allow a terrorist organization like Hamas to pull the wool over our eyes or to act like this is any normal sort of negotiation between two parties acting in good faith. Hamas must keep up its end of the bargain on this and other terms for the deal to actually work.

We have already seen how Hamas has violated the peace agreement, as they have not yet returned the remaining bodies of 20 additional hostages who are presumed dead, including 2 American citizens, so that their families can properly grieve and bury their loved ones.

Yesterday, Hamas, despite this peace deal, violently sought to reassert its control over Gaza from rival Palestinian groups. This included Hamas dragging several men from their fami-

lies and executing them in broad daylight.

Hamas has been rightfully described as a death cult. Their blatant disregard for human life is the reason the Palestinian people have undergone so much suffering over the last 2 years in Gaza. I know some would like to blame Israel and the Israeli Defense Forces and Prime Minister Netanyahu, but the reason for the humanitarian disaster that has been Gaza for the last 2 years is because of Hamas. If they hadn't executed 1,200 or so Israeli citizens on October 7, 2 years ago, none of this would have occurred.

Of course, establishing an agreement that depends on the good will of Hamas is going to be an enormous challenge, and it can't be a matter of faith that they will act as any negotiating partner in good faith would be presumed to act.

Over the last 24 hours, the importance of establishing a multinational security force in Gaza to replace Hamas has become increasingly clear. Hamas cannot remain in control if we are to have peace. But the return of the 20 living hostages is no small feat, and it is something to be celebrated.

If President Trump is successful in ultimately bringing a lasting peace to the region, it will be one of the most significant diplomatic and foreign policy accomplishments in memory.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on another matter, it has now been 15 days since Senate Democrats have shut down the Federal Government. They did that by blocking a short-term spending provision that would have taken us up until November 21—in other words, roughly 9 weeks from the beginning of the continuing resolution.

Republicans have given Democrats multiple opportunities to end this mess by holding a number of votes on the House-passed continuing resolution.

As majority leader Senator THUNE has pointed out numerous times, we are not asking for any major policy changes. All we are asking is to keep the lights on and to keep Federal Government employees paid during this period of time while we work out longer term appropriations bills by the November 21 deadline. But every single time we have given Democrats the opportunity to do the right thing, only three of them have voted to reopen the government.

You know, talking to my constituents back home, it is hard to explain what is going on here. They understand the stupidity of a government shutdown. Experience has shown that the same problems that cause a shutdown in the first place are there staring you in the face when the government is reopened, so it accomplishes nothing except maybe as performance art. If you think about it, that is really what this is.

Our Democratic colleagues are afraid to act in a reasonable and logical manner and keep the government open

while we negotiate longer term appropriations bills and take up the issue of healthcare subsidies that expire at the end of this calendar year. In a normal world, that is what we would be doing now, but we can't do any of that during a government shutdown.

Federal employees are now beginning to miss their paychecks, which will have consequences that reverberate throughout the country. One in six Americans lives paycheck to paycheck. So it may not be a big deal to wealthy Senators on the Democratic side who don't have to worry about paying the bills paycheck to paycheck, but it does matter to many, many Americans because it means they may not be able to pay their rent or they may not be able to buy groceries for their family or pay their utility bills because they are not receiving a paycheck.

Some people may be thinking, well, it is only government employees that are going to be affected, and everybody knows the Federal Government is big and bloated and could stand a diet.

But it is not simply the case that these government employees will be the only ones affected. There are going to be a number of downstream effects of this Democrat-induced shutdown that have consequences for everybody.

First of all, I have to tell you, it is embarrassing. It is embarrassing that the greatest country in the world and the people who are elected to represent 330 million Americans can't get their act together and can't figure this out. It is beyond dumb. It makes no sense at all except as a matter of self-serving political gesturing and the sort of performance art that I mentioned a moment ago—trying to demonstrate to your political base: Yeah, we are fighting.

Well, this isn't fighting. Fighting is keeping the government open, having debates, having votes, trying to persuade people to your point of view. That is what political fighting is. It is not taking your ball and going home.

One issue affecting the whole country, Federal workers and private sector employees alike, is the way this shutdown is disturbing airplane flights. My flight coming back from Austin this past week was delayed by such a disruption. It wasn't that big a deal to me, obviously, but I am sure I am not the only one who has experienced this. More important than the fact that Senators are experiencing it, our constituents—the people we represent, the people we owe our jobs to—they are the ones that are suffering inconvenience.

Transportation security agents and air traffic controllers are among the Federal workers deemed essential during a government shutdown, which means they have to work, but they are not being paid. That is a pretty difficult situation for many of these folks to be in. As I said, some of them can't afford childcare, to buy groceries, to pay the rent, to pay utilities. This is the true hardship for many of these Americans. This has resulted in many

of these essential employees calling in sick in order to pick up shift work to make ends meet. Additionally, those who are showing up are having to work under increased stress, longer hours, and shortstaffed working environments.

On top of this, they are carrying the burden of not knowing when they are ever going to get paid. Now, we know that under the law, these employees will eventually be reimbursed for their missed salary, but that doesn't do a lot to put food on the table right now or pay the rent or to pay utility bills now.

As the president of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association put it, "It's completely unfair that an air traffic controller"—the one who makes sure our airline flights are safe—"is the one that holds the burden of 'see how long you can hang in there in order to allow this political process to [work] out.'"

The president of a local chapter of the American Federation of Government Employees at Dallas-Fort Worth said regarding the shutdown:

There's a lot of uncertainty,[a] lot of questions coming from the field. They don't know how long this is gonna last.

I don't know how long it is going to last, either, but the problem is that it only gets worse the longer the shutdown goes on.

Just in terms of airline flights, we have seen hundreds canceled since the shutdown began, and thousands more have been delayed, which means more and more Americans' daily routines are being upended as a result of this irrational and truly stupid government shutdown.

Three airports in Texas are seeing some of the worst delays. Last Tuesday, both the George Bush Intercontinental Airport and Hobby Airport in Houston were at risk of ground stops because of staffing shortages. Love Field in Dallas was also experiencing delays.

But this isn't just affecting the State of Texas; airports around the country are experiencing delays in order to avoid dangerous potential air flights and ground activity associated with shortstaffing. The Federal Aviation Administration is also reporting staffing problems in Boston, Nashville, Chicago, and Philadelphia, as well as Burbank, CA; Newark, NJ; and Denver, CO. Some analysts have speculated that the disruptions could continue to cause problems during the upcoming travel holiday—Thanksgiving and into Christmas.

For many of us here in the Senate, it has become an unwelcome tradition each year to have our Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations with our families upset in order to perform our responsibilities. That doesn't just affect Members of the Senate and the House but also the able staff that make our work possible.

Of course, what this tradition is, is really a sign of dysfunction. It is embarrassing. It should be embarrassing.

If we did our jobs properly and passed our appropriations bills on time, we would not have to impose the burdens of all this on other people—our constituents and our staff.

It is really not rational that the Senate Democrats should impose this burden on the entire country in order to try to appease the more radical elements of their political base, which is really what this is all about. They are afraid to agree to something reasonable and rational and short term because they know that they are likely to be criticized by their political base, the more radical elements in the Democratic base.

Well, don't take my word for it. Minority Leader SCHUMER has made it clear that he is willing to impose almost any cost on ordinary Americans in order to try to appease his radical progressive base. In one of the more telling quotes, he admitted to Punchbowl News, last week, that this was all about politics, when he said:

Every day gets better for us.

Really? Well, by "us," he doesn't mean the American people. He must mean people like him who are afraid to say no to the radical base in order to perform the most basic functions of government. Plus the fact that it is not true—is every day really getting better? Or is it more and more embarrassing? Is it having more and more of a ripple effect on people who are innocent of any wrongdoing? They just happen to be affected.

I think if the Democratic leader were to ask the Transportation Security Administration workers who are working overtime without pay or the air traffic controllers who are wondering when, if ever, they will receive their next paycheck, who are also working without pay, or the mothers and fathers of the Federal employees who are wondering if they are able to enjoy the holidays with their children and their extended families because of travel disruption, or maybe just because financially they won't be able to make ends meet—but the truth is that Senate Democrats care less about the Federal workers and the rest of the country than they do about appeasing their radical base.

Senator SCHUMER has made it clear that it was his plan, all along, to make the American people pay the price in order to achieve his political goals when he said:

We've thought about this long in advance.

So this wasn't an accident. This wasn't sort of a surprising occurrence. This was planned, all along, by Senator SCHUMER, the Democratic leader, which makes it all that much more egregious.

Well, I sincerely hope, for the sake of Texans and Americans all across the country, that Senate Democrats will have a change of heart. I hope that, someday soon, maybe today, Senate Democrats will set aside the demands of their radical base and simply vote to put an end to this ridiculous government shutdown that serves no one's in-

terest except perhaps their own narrow political interest.

We need to pass that short-term continuing resolution that will only take us to November 21, and then, I imagine, we are going to have this discussion all over again, which is just further evidence of the dysfunction here in the Senate and in the Congress these days—mainly, because our Senate Democrats and House Democrats are so opposed to President Trump and his policies, and they feel like they need to be shown to fight and to push back against President Trump.

But they are not hurting President Trump. He is doing just fine. He is making incredible peace deals in the Middle East and, hopefully, in other places around the world, like Ukraine. What they are doing is hurting their own constituents, and they are causing people to doubt whether their government can actually function the way it is supposed to.

So I hope, given the opportunity to vote here shortly on another short-term continuing resolution, the stopgap spending bill that will only take us to November 21, that we get five more Democrats joining the three who have already voted to reopen the government so that we can put an end to this foolishness, because every day does not get better for the American people, even if it gets better politically to save Senator SCHUMER's skin.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ISRAEL

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, at long last, our friends in Israel have won the war by defeating the depraved Hamas savages that launched the heinous, unprovoked attack from Gaza on October 7. After the most devastating assault on Jews since the Holocaust, which was followed by 2 years of fighting and suffering and death, the living hostages are home, and a new day has dawned in the Middle East.

Earlier this week, I joined my fellow Arkansans in rejoicing and thanking God for answering our prayers and bringing those hostages home to their families.

At the same time we celebrate their reunions, though, we also pledge that we will never forget the innocent deceased victims of Hamas's atrocities, many of whom have not yet been properly laid to rest. We will work to secure their remains and honor their memory through our commitment to a lasting and enduring peace in the Middle East.

When terrorists attacked, raped, maimed, and killed innocent Israelis

and Americans and citizens of other nations, on October 7, the Middle East was forever changed, but not in the way Hamas intended. Instead of pressuring Israel to surrender, President Trump rejected the Obama-Biden policy of appeasement and weakness, and we backed Israel to the hilt.

Because of President Trump's unrelenting pressure on Hamas and Prime Minister Netanyahu's decisive military action, Iran's terrorist ring of fire around Israel is now a ring of smoke—smoking ruins. We have crippled Iran's nuclear weapons program. We have weakened the Houthis. We have devastated Hezbollah, and we have destroyed Hamas's political and military leadership.

This graphic shows just some of the depraved savages who are now rotting in hell. If you have a chance to be Hamas's next leader, you might want to think twice. This is how we deliver "peace through strength."

Though good has once again triumphed over evil, we must keep the pressure on to compel Hamas to demilitarize once and for all. As President Trump said this week, "if they don't disarm, we will disarm them"—because let's be clear: There can be no lasting peace for Gaza with Hamas sitting at the table.

For those who say otherwise, consider that, as the rest of the world celebrates the return of the hostages and a cease-fire, Hamas terrorists have been publicly executing members of the opposition in Gaza in a last-ditch effort to hang on to their waning power. This is appalling, but not surprising, given Hamas's track record of using the people of Gaza as pawns to achieve its ultimate aim of eliminating Israel.

Time and again, we have seen Hamas use innocent people as human shields and weaponize humanitarian aid by withholding food and supplies from children. These are the sort of vile intimidation tactics that Hamas terrorists have used for decades to remain in power—no more.

Today, with our friends in Israel and the Arab world, we have the opportunity to chart a path toward peace and prosperity for the people of Gaza. And while today is a day for rejoicing, let it also serve as a reminder of one of history's timeless lessons: Bad things happen when you lose a war, especially when you started the war. These men can attest to that lesson.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, let me be clear: Shutdowns do not require Presidents to fire people en masse. They actually do not require Presidents to cancel projects and raise energy prices; nor do they give Presidents new magical powers to destroy programs they don't like or to target political opposition.

You don't have to take my word for it because this is not our first govern-

ment shutdown. It is just the first time that a President has blatantly and gleefully tried to use a shutdown against the American people.

So when President Trump fires hundreds of public health workers at CDC without thinking twice about if it would put lives in jeopardy, that is a choice he is making. When President Trump puts at risk special education programs through mass layoffs, that is a choice he is making to abandon students with disabilities and their families and weaken their access to rights under our special education laws. When Trump outright shutters a key community development fund, which has strong bipartisan support and finances housing and healthcare and other community projects in our country, that is a choice he is making.

President Trump is choosing to fire as many people as he thinks he can get away with to break as much of the government, as is possible, to hurt the American people as much as he can, because he thinks he can use regular people as leverage.

That is the cold, hard reality, and it is plain as day. That is why Trump is governing by a principle of maximum pain. It is not because he had to; it is because he wanted to. It is not because he is following any law; it is because he is ignoring countless laws. It is not because he held off on layoffs; it is because he is eager to continue to break our government, bend it to his will, and enrich himself in this process.

President Trump knows perfectly well—just as my Republican colleagues know—that shutdowns don't give him any new power, and they don't just let him fire people with reckless abandon. After all, Trump was President for the longest shutdown in American history. And guess what. Trump didn't have to fire thousands and thousands of workers when he caused that longest shutdown in history. He didn't get to run roughshod over our laws when he kept the government shut down for over a month. So don't let any Republican tell you he simply had to now.

And let me put another obvious falsehood to rest. Leader THUNE keeps saying Democrats are "enthralled to the radical left." But here is the thing: We actually are the ones talking to Republican voters, because the majority of Republicans—and the overwhelming majority of the American people—do not want to see their premiums double, triple, or even quadruple for millions of families.

And many Republicans are starting to realize that too. Look at MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE, who has made clear she thinks Republicans need to look at how to stop these premium hikes. Just look at the growing chorus of Republican Members begging Speaker JOHNSTON to bring them back so we can solve this issue.

Clearly, Republicans are feeling the heat. That is why we are suddenly hearing Republican leaders absurdly pretend they have always meant to

focus on healthcare, even if they would never talk about it before and even if the only thing they are saying right now is: No, no, no. We can't do anything on this right now. We can just think about it, possibly talk about it; potentially, maybe, do something someday. So House Republicans may not be here in DC to talk about this issue with Democrats, but here is the thing: They are still hearing about this back at home. Families are staring down massive premium hikes, and they want Republicans to return and finally work on solutions.

Look, the Republican leader can shut down the government if he is really that desperate to avoid addressing the healthcare crisis Republicans caused. He can shut down the debate, but he cannot shut down the voices of families who are speaking out about how their premiums are about to skyrocket.

I have been constantly hearing from folks back home in Washington State. Letters and calls are pouring into my office from families who are worried about how their premiums will double if Republicans refuse to act.

A woman called in to my office to share that her husband already received notices that their insurance is going to double in cost.

A mother whose son has a traumatic brain and spinal cord injury called. She is terrified that she has no idea how they are going to afford the care he needs if healthcare gets more expensive.

Last week, I spoke with a freelancer in Seattle who is worried that their monthly payments will increase—monthly—by \$1,300.

A video producer told me his premiums are going to more than double and be 60 percent of his mortgage payment.

The week before that, I spoke with some small business owners. They have no idea what they are going to do if these tax credits expire and their healthcare costs go up. Many of them are rethinking whether they can even afford to keep their small businesses or if they choose to just go for catastrophic coverage instead. One small business owner will see his premiums triple, his wife told me, and that is simply not affordable.

This is not just happening in Washington State; this healthcare crisis is about to hammer families across the country in red and blue States alike. In fact, the biggest rate increases are all in red States, and three-fourths of the people who rely on these tax credits are too.

Why don't Republicans go home and talk to their constituents? If the Republican leader doesn't want to sit down with Democrats to work on a solution, how about he sits down and listens to folk back home who are getting notices this month with massive price hikes for their health insurance?

If the Republican leader won't sit down with Democrats to save people from losing their healthcare coverage,

how about he sits down with small business owners since nearly half of the people on the marketplaces are small business owners, employees or self-employed.

If he won't sit down with Democrats to stop premiums from tripling for some families in his State, how about he sits down with farmers since over a quarter of farmers in this country are covered through the ACA changes?

Does Leader THUNE think farmers are now the radical left? Does he think small businesses are the radical left? Because that is who is about to get crushed by these higher premiums. That is who is watching this debate and hoping and praying for action.

It is unbelievable that the best the Republican leader can offer to families who are worried about their Affordable Care Act crisis is “wait.” “Later.” That is really out of touch with families and with reality. Rates are being set right now. Massive hikes are being announced right now. Open enrollment is in a few weeks.

In fact, by the way, Idaho's open enrollment starts today. Every single Senator needs to watch what is happening in Idaho today because folks in Idaho are in for a very rude awakening when they log in today and see the rates for the coming year. And that rude awakening is coming to the rest of the country on November 1 if Republicans keep refusing to act.

So every single Senator needs to listen to the families who speak out about these massive rate hikes that are becoming reality. I actually spoke to some Idahoans last week. One retiree told me about how her premiums are going to jump 173 percent. That is almost triple. If you think that is bad, another retiree I spoke with had learned that with the tax credits, his premium will be \$367 a month; without those tax credits, a whopping \$2,232 a month. That is astounding. Yet, if Republicans refuse to act, that is the reality that is going to come crashing down on families across our Nation.

This is not an end-of-the-year problem, like Speaker JOHNSON keeps saying; it is a right-now problem. There is a train coming. Families are tied to the tracks. Why on Earth would Republican leaders insist on standing by? Why are they twiddling their thumbs? Why do they want to wait until those rates are locked in? For all the talk of “later,” why on Earth wouldn't Republican leaders work with us earlier on this?

This is not some surprise. We have been raising the alarm on this issue for months. Republican leaders just didn't care earlier, and apparently they still don't care now. What a contrast to Republicans' billionaire tax breaks just a few months ago. Republicans were full speed ahead when it came to shoveling money at some of the richest people on the planet. Remember that? They moved heaven and earth. They used magic math. They slashed over a trillion in healthcare for patients and hos-

pitals. They used every trick in the book for billionaires. But now, nothing when it comes to working families; nothing when it comes to healthcare.

Republicans can either go back home and explain to their own constituents why they think their premiums should double or they can come to the table, where Democrats have been this whole time, and work with us to reach a serious deal that reopens the government in response to this healthcare crisis. Democrats are not going anywhere. We are staying at the table.

Right now, Republican leadership is refusing to take the shutdown or the healthcare crisis seriously. Speaker JOHNSON is still refusing to bring his Members back from vacation despite the growing mutiny among Republicans. Leader THUNE is still refusing to do anything other than vote on the same failed partisan CR over and over. And President Trump is still creating a government shutdown like his own personal jamboree, tweeting out sombreros and promising to cut “Democratic programs.”

Let's be clear. Republicans control the White House and both Chambers of Congress, and they are basically missing in action when it comes to finding a real solution to reopen the government and save millions of Americans from healthcare bills that will break the bank.

When will President Trump get serious about a solution? When will Speaker JOHNSON and Leader THUNE do their jobs and get to the negotiating table? When will House Republicans end this monthlong vacation? Today? Tomorrow? Next week? The American people are waiting.

But, of course, Republican leadership isn't the end all, be all because Republican voters have made clear they do not want to see their premiums skyrocket, and Republican Members of the House and Senate alike are hearing from those families back home who will not let them ignore this and starting to realize that we actually do need to address this healthcare issue now. But the clock is ticking. Rate hikes are going out in the mail. Open enrollment is starting today in Idaho. Time is running out, and that message is breaking through.

I think even Republican leaders are starting to realize there is no spinning their way out of premiums doubling in our country. If they want to get serious about stopping that and ending the shutdown, all they have to do is say so.

Mr. President, our doors are open.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to complete my remarks prior to the scheduled recess.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. ROSEN. I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to display three charts simultaneously.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HAMAS

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, on October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists shocked the human conscience when they carried out a brutal attack on Israel that murdered innocent men, women, children, babies; an attack during which terrorists raped innocent women; an assault during which Hamas took hundreds hostage, including Americans and Holocaust survivors.

For people everywhere and especially Jewish people, this brutal terrorist attack shook us all to our core. It shattered our hearts, and it led to our collective grief—a grief that has lasted for years as we awaited the day when these innocent hostages could be reunited with their families.

Since the aftermath of October 7, I have had these posters in the lobby of my office to remind every single person who walked through the doors that innocent people were still being brutally held by Hamas terrorists. These signs have been a reminder of who started this war and how it was kept going for so long.

For more than 2 years 739 agonizing days, families in Israel, in the United States, and around the world have lived every waking moment—every waking moment—in anguish, waiting, praying, advocating for the safe return of their loved ones taken hostage, again, by the terrorist organization that is Hamas. Those folks never stop; they never tire. They traveled across continents and oceans to make sure that the world would never forget their commitment to freeing their loved ones and that their voices would be heard and that their loved ones would be brought home. So their mission was not to stop speaking out until they were reunited with their loved ones.

I had the honor of meeting these families many times over the last couple of years both in Israel and here in the United States. I have had the honor of meeting mothers and fathers who showed me photos of their missing children, of meeting brothers and sisters who refused to give up hope, and even meeting survivors who escaped captivity and still found the courage to tell their stories when it wasn't pretty or easy, and they will spend the rest of their lives healing.

I have also met with families of innocent people who were taken hostage and murdered and whose bodies Hamas refused to return to their loved ones. I sat with them. I have listened to their gut-wrenching stories and cried with them and promised them that America and Congress would never turn away.

As a mother, as a wife, frankly, as a human being, I can understand their fight, their desire to be reunited with their loved ones and just how deep that pain is for them. That is why I worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle and across two different administrations to continue shining that light on the need to return hostages to their families, to their communities.

This week, that day finally came. After many long, painful months of negotiations, a cease-fire deal has been reached—one that has resulted in the return of all the living hostages. This is a testament to the resilience and relentless work of families, allies, advocates who never stopped speaking out and standing up.

I am deeply grateful to the Trump administration for reaching a deal to make this day possible for these families.

This is a testament to what we can do, what can happen when we put politics aside and care for each other as human beings, when we have empathy for each other.

While we have been overjoyed to see the images of hostages being reunited with their loved ones—it has brought us to tears—let us not forget those who haven't been so lucky, because Hamas continues to hold the bodies of dead hostages, including Americans Itay Chen and Omer Neutra.

I met their families. I felt their pain. And we cannot forget them. We cannot forget these families—families who will never get to see their loved ones, families who never got to say goodbye, that one last “I love you” before a loved one went off to a music festival to enjoy an evening concert.

We must remain clear-eyed that our work is not over. The agreement is still in its early stages, and now is not the time to sit idly by.

I hope the Trump administration and my colleagues in Congress on both sides of the aisle continue to provide support and enforce guardrails to see this through. We must remain committed to ensuring the quick return of the deceased hostages to give their families, well, maybe some sense of closure that they need and they deserve.

We must make sure that Israel's security remains ironclad; that Hamas, terrorists—Hamas are terrorists, let's be clear—they can never again threaten innocent lives and that no terrorist organization should be using civilians as shields or bargaining chips. We should demand this much. No terrorist organization should ever use civilians as shields or bargaining chips, as we have seen.

At the same time, we must also act to ease the immense suffering of innocent Palestinians in Gaza. They need access to humanitarian aid, to food, to medicine, and the chance to rebuild their communities free from Hamas terrorist control and oppression.

Most of all, we must not let this fragile moment pass by without redoubling our commitment to peace, a lasting peace that ensures safety, dignity, and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians.

So, this week, as we mark this moment of long-awaited relief, let us remember, our work is not done, for peace is not achieved in a single day. It is built with strength and courage of those who refuse to give up on it, for

the hostages who survived, and for those who tragically did not, for the families who waited, for the families who advocated for the return of their loved ones, and for the people who continue to pray for a peaceful future.

May this step be the first sign of change as we move toward an end to violence, toward a future where Israeli and Palestinian children alike can grow up knowing not war but embracing hope, a hope for a peaceful tomorrow. It is my hope as well.

I yield the floor.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:33 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BANKS).

#### CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

##### VOTE ON MOTION

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the motion to reconsider the cloture motion on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5371.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

##### MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5371.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

##### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

##### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Eric Schmitt, Jim Justice, James E. Risch, Tom Cotton, Steve Daines, Ted Budd, John R. Curtis, John Boozman, Mike Rounds, Kevin Cramer, Bernie Moreno, Ron Johnson, John Barrasso, Markwayne Mullin, James Lankford, Tim Sheehy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close, upon reconsideration?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted “yea” and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 572 Leg.]

##### YEAS—51

Banks	Fetterman	Moody
Barrasso	Fischer	Moran
Boozman	Graham	Moreno
Britt	Grassley	Mullin
Budd	Hawley	Murkowski
Capito	Hoeven	Ricketts
Cassidy	Husted	Risch
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cornyn	Johnson	Schmitt
Cortez Masto	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	King	Sheehy
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Curtis	Lummis	Tuberville
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	McCormick	Young

##### NAYS—44

Alsobrooks	Kaine	Sanders
Baldwin	Kelly	Schatz
Bennet	Kim	Schiff
Blumenthal	Klobuchar	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Lujan	Shaheen
Booker	Markey	Slotkin
Cantwell	Merkley	Smith
Coons	Murphy	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murray	Warner
Gallego	Ossoff	Warnock
Gillibrand	Padilla	Warren
Hassan	Paul	Welch
Heinrich	Peters	Whitehouse
Hickenlooper	Reed	Wyden
Hirono	Rosen	

##### NOT VOTING—5

Blackburn	Hagerty	Tillis
Duckworth	Marshall	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 44.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

##### CRYPTOCURRENCY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with me today is one of my colleagues from my office, Mr. Will Pietri, who has helped me immensely on this issue.

I want to talk, just for a few minutes, about digital assets. Some people refer to them as crypto or cryptocurrency.

The Senate Banking Committee is in the process, as we should be, of considering market structure legislation for digital assets, for Bitcoin, for crypto. And it is important because there is an enormous amount of confusion out there.

I remember when blockchain technology started—many of us do. Today, one in five Americans is on cryptocurrency. Its growth has been nothing short of breathtaking.

But as oftentimes happens when you have an innovation, it creates enormous confusion on the way that the subject of that innovation integrates with the Federal Government, and that is the case here. Those who are in the cryptocurrency business and in the blockchain technology business don't know whom to talk to in the Federal Government.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has announced, under President Biden, that it has jurisdiction over digital assets, and so did the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the CFTC. There has been a lot of litigation, and there have been a lot of court cases, and it has been enormously confusing.

And those in the crypto business, understandably, have the reaction: Look, we don't mind being regulated. We have nothing to hide. But we would like to know whom to talk to. Is it the CFTC? Is it the SEC? What do we do?

And that is why we need legislation. That is why we need market structure legislation, not because the government needs to stick its nose in everything, but because there has to be some certainty here. Clearly, there is a turf war between the CFTC and the SEC, and it is Congress's role to delineate who has jurisdiction over what.

Now, we did pass one piece of what you might call crypto legislation. We passed the GENIUS Act, as the Presiding Officer knows. That was an important piece of legislation, but it was really just a baby step. It regulates stablecoins, which is only one part of the digital assets business.

I am certainly not denigrating the act. I voted for the bill. I sat on the Banking Committee. The Congress passed the bill. It was a good bill. It was necessary. I congratulate everybody who worked so hard on it. But it is only a small portion of the digital assets market.

Now, we need to turn to the rest. The House has already acted. The House has passed a bill called the CLARITY Act, which does just what I have been talking about, providing some market structural legislation for the crypto industry, the digital assets industry.

But the Senate—this is above my pay grade. But the Senate has decided not to take up the CLARITY Act. I don't know that it has been decided definitively, because obviously if enough Senators want to, we can take up anything we want to take up. But the thinking seems to be that the Senate needs to start over and draft our own digital assets market structure bill that complements the CLARITY Act, which is already passed by the House.

The Banking Committee, chaired by a very able chairman, TIM SCOTT, is going to be taking up this legislation soon. It has got to be written first. It is

still being written. We need to hold hearings.

This is a complicated piece of legislation. I have spent a lot of time on it, and it is one of the most complicated pieces of legislation I have ever seen.

This is just one person's opinion. As a member of Banking, I think it is going to take at least two hearings for us to be able to understand the pros and the cons of this legislation and understand the legislation itself.

We have to be sure, in this legislation, given that one in five Americans owns cryptocurrency—we have to make sure, in this legislation, that we are striking the right balance in jurisdiction between the CFTC and the SEC.

We have to make sure, in this legislation, that we are coordinating closely with another Senate committee, the Senate Agriculture Committee, because it has jurisdiction of the CFTC and will play just as important, if not a more important, role in this legislation as the Banking Committee.

We are going to have to address in this legislation some concerns of the banking community. The banking community, after we passed the GENIUS Act—remember the GENIUS Act was just about stablecoins. The Banking Committee is arguing—rather, the banking community, our banks, are arguing, very persuasively, that there were some mistakes made in the GENIUS Act, which, as I just said, regulates stablecoins.

Frankly, I don't know if that is accurate or not. That is what we need a hearing for. But I think the banks—the banking community—need to be heard on this issue. If we did make some mistakes in the GENIUS Act with respect to American banks, I want us to correct it. I am not saying we did or we didn't; I have heard both sides of the argument. But my point is that we are going to have to take up that issue as well in the hearing because the banking community would like us to amend the larger digital asset market structure legislation to accommodate their concerns about the mistakes, if any, that we made in the GENIUS Act.

We are going to have to spend a lot of time in these hearings and in drafting the legislation making sure that we are addressing things like tokenized securities. This is complicated stuff. It is a way, basically, to trade a stock using blockchain technology without owning stock. We have got to make sure that we get that right.

An issue will be raised, I am sure, about deposit insurance. Cryptocurrency is—well, it is currency in the eyes of many people. And I can see the day when the American people will ask us to address the issues: Should deposit insurance cover cryptocurrency and digital assets?

I am not suggesting to you that it should; I am not suggesting to you that it shouldn't. I am suggesting to you that, likely, will be a topic we would want to consider in one of these hearings that we need to have about this topic.

I also think it would be appropriate in a hearing on this topic before we draft or vote on legislation to talk about the Clarity Act. That is the digital market structure and legislation that I just referred to that was passed by the House.

No one is suggesting this, but I certainly would disagree if they suggested we just ignore that legislation. A lot of work went into it. I spent a lot of time reading it, and I am going to have to spend more time reading it—it is very interesting—but there is some good work there. And I want to be able to compare the Clarity Act passed by the House with the Senate's market structure legislation. So perhaps we can pick the best of each, and that would be an appropriate topic of a hearing as well.

And these issues I am addressing are illustrative; they are not exhaustive.

But we also need to address the issue of what, if any, fiduciary responsibility those who participate in the digital assets markets have. I am talking about commodity brokers, digital commodity brokers. I am talking about digital commodity dealers. Should they have a fiduciary obligation to their customers, to their clients? I am talking about the digital commodity exchanges. What should their duty to their clients be? Should it be a fiduciary obligation? Should it be something less?

These are weighty issues. These are important issues. These are not issues that you raise and solve over a weekend.

But I wanted to start talking about this bill because it is one of the most important pieces of legislation that this body will consider. It may not be the sexiest. It may not be the most interesting to some. But when one in five Americans own cryptocurrency, it is certainly important. So I will probably be talking about this issue several more times on the floor as the Senate moves forward with our digital assets market structure legislation.

I hope we will move it quickly, but I hope we will move deliberately. I hope we will take the time to hold the hearings. And, again, I think it is going to take more than one hearing to address these weighty topics and then an additional time, once we get a bill, to mark it up, as we say, to amend it and make sure that we do the job for the American people.

And with that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KIM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. KIM. Mr. President, I rise today as Federal servants, civil servants, will check their mail or check their bank

accounts and not see the money that they have earned, the money that they have earned for doing the work of the American people because hundreds of thousands of civil servants—including roughly three quarters of a million furloughed government workers—will sit down at the kitchen table tonight and ask some hard questions: Which bills do we pay? What do we do to cut back? How long can we go without a paycheck?

These are tough questions, but they are only being asked because President Trump and Speaker JOHNSON and others have decided that they would rather plunge our government into a shutdown rather than address the healthcare costs crisis for millions of Americans that are facing, right now, these incredibly challenging debates.

Now, there are a lot of stories of our public servants struggling in this moment, and I understand that some of my colleagues haven't had a chance to hear them. So I wanted to come to the floor today to share my own story.

I started my career as a public servant, as a State Department officer. I worked for the Federal Government. It was the honor of my lifetime. I emphasize that I was career, not a political, appointee. I swore an oath to the Constitution, and I remember how proud I was to be able to raise my hand and recite that oath.

I remember very clearly and vividly, in 2013, I was working on counterterrorism trying to keep our Nation safe. And while I was doing that work of national security, political leaders on the Hill, at that time, hit an impasse, and our government went into a shutdown.

I remember how distant that felt for me with the work that I was doing. I am just trying to show up and do work every day to be able to keep our country safe, to be able to watch out for terrorist groups that try to do us and our allies and our partners harm.

Why was it that now I was being asked to show up to work every single day and not receive a paycheck? And, particularly, I was very early in my career, not making very much money, turned down high-paying jobs so I could serve my country. I did it because I was proud to be a public servant, proud to be amongst the many others that are willing to put our country before our own families; that we are part of something bigger than all of us.

But through that period, when we were going through that shutdown—and to remind people, that one lasted 16 days. At the time, that was the second longest shutdown in American history. Hundreds of thousands of Federal employees did not receive their full paychecks during that shutdown. And at the time, we didn't have a guarantee and promise that we would actually get backpay for the work that we were doing.

It was challenging. I remember having to call my own family and ask them what I should be doing, try to

think through what I can be doing to make sure that I can pay the bills when it comes up. I had no idea how long the shutdown would go for and felt so distant. I had no way, as a civil servant, to influence the discussions on the Hill and the leaders that were making this decision.

I remember reading afterward, the Office of Management and Budget would put together a report following the shutdown, and in that report they quoted an EPA employee who spoke with the Washington Post. That employee said:

We love public service. We're very committed to our jobs and the mission of our agency. But it's just too unstable.

And I remember that instability. My story is not unique. And that is why, when I was actually sworn into Congress in January 2019—now, again, I was sworn into Congress in the middle of a government shutdown, a shutdown that is still, to this day, recognized as the longest shutdown.

And I remember I was sworn into the government shutdown, and I found out something that just shocked me, which is that the President and Members of Congress continue to get paid during a shutdown. I just could not believe it; that after what I had gone through as a career public servant, doing the work of the country, continuing to show up to work each and every day, not receiving the paycheck, then realizing that 435 people in the House, 100 people in the Senate, and the President of the United States continue to get a paycheck. They are the only ones in the entire government that continue to get paid.

I remember, at that point, I decided I was going to refuse my pay until the shutdown was over, and I am continuing to do that with this shutdown because I still believe in those old sayings that officers eat last, that leaders eat last, and that by taking our pay during this crisis, especially on this day when so many others are not, we are showing that we are fine having a full plate while others go without. That is not leadership. That is not acceptable.

If leaders are being paid while others are not, you can see why so many Americans believe that politicians are playing with other people's chips; that they don't feel the impact of their actions. And that is dangerous because it is easy to then think about all of this as a game and to lose sight of the actual impacts on American families.

It is something I talked about with two public servants in New Jersey during the first week of the shutdown. These are Federal workers who have so much on the line in this fight. But it is important to remember that, for them, this fight didn't begin with the shutdown. The stresses that Federal workers are facing didn't start on October 1; it started on January 20. It started with Russell Vought, the scribe of Project 2025 and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, saying

that he wants Federal workers to be “in trauma,” saying that he wants our public servants—the people that help educate our kids, pave our roads, keep you safe—to “not want to go to work because they are increasingly viewed as villains.” That is what the current OMB Director, the mastermind of this shutdown, has said; that he wants our public servants to be “viewed as villains.”

And let me tell you something, that is something I heard from those Federal workers that I sat down with.

So congratulations, Russell Vought. Your dream has come true. These Federal public servants I talked to said that they wake up every day feeling like they have been made to be like the enemy, be viewed in that way by the American people. They talked about the shooting at the Centers for Disease Control, the attacks upon public servants.

That word “enemy” is something we have seen from President Trump himself. He has repeatedly used the phrase “enemy from within” when talking about people whom he perceives as his enemies, fellow Americans who he thinks are engaged in a war from within.

I want to be clear. The people I sat down with earlier this month—they are not the enemy. They are not showing up to work every day to go to war against Donald Trump. They are showing up to work every day because they believe in service. They are showing up to work every day because they believe they have an obligation as Americans to work for something bigger than themselves. We owe them better than what they are seeing right now and how they are being treated. We owe them better than a politics that demonizes them and their work.

What we see right now, though, is that we don't even have—while our public servants are not getting paid through this shutdown even though so many of them are showing up for work, I can tell you, they are furious that we have a House of Representatives that doesn't even show up, that we have Speaker JOHNSON continuing to give House Republicans a paid vacation even though they are not even showing up to work and do their job.

We also see the President and his mob boss-like cronies, like Russell Vought and Stephen Miller, continuing to step up and use our government, weaponizing it as a tool for political retribution and political extortion.

We owe our public servants better. We owe them not just an end to the shutdown but an end to the politics that makes our public servants an enemy or a tool.

Next year is the 250th anniversary of our Nation's independence. It is a chance to reaffirm who we are as Americans and what we believe in. I believe in service. I believe in public servants. I believe that the way out of this tailspin we are in as a country is to try to reignite a new era of public service

in this country, have a new “ask not what this country can do for you” kind of moment.

I believe that we must do everything we can right now to support our public servants. First of all, have the House of Representatives get back to work so we can have the negotiations, so we can have the discussions needed to address the healthcare crisis impacting American families and reopen our government so that every public servant can have the peace of mind and dignity of knowing that their service has been recognized.

It is time to support our public servants. It is time that we work to end this shutdown.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2983

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues—the ranking member of the Homeland Security Committee, Senator PETERS; along with Senators KING, GALLEGO, and SLOTKIN—in support of the immediate passage of a clean and bipartisan reauthorization of the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015, which has been introduced by Ranking Member PETERS, along with Senator ROUNDS, this session.

This law is critical for public-private information sharing and cyber threat mitigation. But due to the objections of a couple of Republican Senators, this essential tool has now expired, leaving our private sector partners in a lurch.

I want to come to this debate with a very, very specific focus. I also serve as ranking member of the Senate Rules Committee, with oversight of Federal elections administration issues. I am also California’s former secretary of state. So I have seen firsthand how this cyber security law and the resulting public-private partnership provide State and local elections officials with the crucial support they need to mitigate threats to election administration, including the combating of misinformation and disinformation.

It is timely because voting is already under way in this country in several important State elections, as we speak, including in my home State of California; and voting will soon begin in several other key elections in 10 days.

Private sector partners will be more hesitant to report cyber security threats to our elections if they are left exposed or feel like they are left exposed during this lapse in the authority provided by the law.

It is especially dangerous that this law has expired, as President Trump and many members of his administration, for that matter, continue to try to sow doubt about the integrity of our elections, including undermining the cyber security of our election systems.

Now, following the original passage of this law in 2015, Congress actually went a step further to provide better Federal coordination by establishing

the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, better known as CISA. This was coupled with the Department of Homeland Security’s designation at the time of election infrastructure as critical infrastructure, which has helped ensure that elections offices received security assistance. And I should specifically point out that these elections offices are not just State offices; they are local elections offices throughout the country.

Now, CISA has been the leading Agency to fight against cyber threats that can impact key industries and infrastructure, and I know that State and local election officials appreciate and use the resources and support that CISA provides in fending off bad actors. But instead of prioritizing the reauthorization of the law and supporting CISA’s important election security work, the administration has actually been undermining it.

Secretary Noem, DOGE, and Elon Musk have permanently cut over 1,300 staff at CISA—not added capacity; they have cut staff at CISA—while halting all election security activity and terminating funding for the election infrastructure center at CISA.

Colleagues, that is not government efficiency; that is government negligence.

For those who are still, by the way, on CISA’s payroll—still employed, still staff at CISA—who joined the Federal Government with the aim of helping to protect the homeland from cyber threats, many of them are now being reassigned to support the President’s mass deportation efforts. And those who don’t agree to that assignment—what happens to them? They are being terminated from their jobs as we speak during President Trump’s government shutdown.

Now, I know that since day one, this administration has not even tried to hide their contempt for CISA, and it is using any opportunity it can to gut the pivotal Agency and, in doing so, leaving our cyber defenses exposed.

As with many other areas where the Trump administration is pursuing dangerous and unpopular policies, they are ignoring our legitimate oversight requests. Since we first heard about the first round of job cuts back in March, several of us have requested a briefing on CISA’s election-related activity, without any real answers or substantive response from CISA. Meanwhile, the Director of National Intelligence, Director Tulsi Gabbard, has spread baseless claims of election systems vulnerability and vote manipulation, including at a White House Cabinet meeting.

The vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Senator MARK WARNER, and I have requested that Director Gabbard provide Senators with an intelligence briefing to clarify her remarks on voting systems security—so far, to no avail.

This reckless spread of election conspiracy theories—from the head of the

intelligence community, no less—demonstrates that this administration is not serious about election security and instead embraces and spreads misinformation to undermine public confidence in elections and in election results.

So why has this law been allowed to lapse? Because a few Senate Republicans agree with Trump and want to ban CISA from doing its important election security work on disinformation and misinformation. It is a position I personally find very, very hard to believe, and I hope they will reconsider and move off of that dangerous position.

No, colleagues, we should not codify the Trump administration’s approach to election security, and we certainly should not codify it permanently. We have a responsibility, an obligation, to support election officials and provide all the resources we can to keep U.S. elections secure and allow Americans to vote both freely and securely, including the disbursement of election security grants, as Congress has approved on a bipartisan basis, and including the clean reauthorization of this critical cyber security law.

Mr. President, it is for these reasons that I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 182, S. 2983; that the Peters substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, disappointing but not surprising. And I hope, as the days go on, and not just next year’s midterm elections and not just next year’s midterm primary elections but elections in numerous States this November—literally, just a few weeks away—will be a reminder of the urgency to revisit this topic, address it, reauthorize the law, and provide CISA with the funding and proper guidance, as we have over the last decade. The work is simply too important.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, millions of Americans are starting to get notices that their monthly health insurance premiums will be going up by \$100 or much more because President Trump and congressional Republicans are letting critical health insurance tax credits expire.

Donald Trump likes to put his signature on things, and to be fair, he should be putting his name on each of these premium increases because—there is no other way to describe it—this is a

Trump health tax on working families. It is part of the Trump plan.

Think about it. Trump demanded \$4.5 trillion—and just to be clear, that is trillion with a “t”—in tax giveaways in his deeply unpopular budget, but in all those tax cuts for billionaires, for gun manufacturers, for wealthy oil and gas companies, Trump and congressional Republicans couldn’t find any room to extend the tax credits that help 22 million Americans keep their health insurance.

In fact, to add insult to injury, they also cut \$990 billion from Medicaid for the 70 million Americans who rely on it. Let’s take a second to put Trump and Republican priorities in perspective.

They passed a massive tax giveaway for approximately 902 billionaires. They slashed \$990 billion from Medicaid, which covers 70 million Americans. And they decided to let health insurance help for 22 million working Americans just go away.

Trump and GOP leaders are so committed to blocking anything good for Americans’ healthcare that they are shutting down the government to prevent us from fixing the problem. That is where we are today.

We all know that shutdowns are costly, wasteful, and needlessly disruptive. But not having health coverage because Republicans ended it, that is devastating.

I want to be very clear: This is about the healthcare of 22 million Americans, not undocumented immigrants, as some Republicans have misleadingly claimed. Those in the U.S. illegally are not eligible for these tax credits or for Medicaid or Medicare, for that matter.

This is about the healthcare of American families. There is a simple path forward: fund the government and help Americans keep their healthcare. While my colleagues on the other side of the aisle say that we can wait to address this issue, the American people can’t wait.

Open enrollment for people who purchase health insurance for themselves or their families through the State marketplaces starts on November 1. That is less than a month away, and notices are already going out the door.

In Rhode Island, these notices start to go out on October 17. If the Republicans keep us from acting now, premiums will more than double—a 114-percent increase. The new premiums will be so high that many people will forgo coverage.

Indeed, it is likely that younger and healthier people will forgo coverage, leaving those under coverage with more complicated and more expensive healthcare needs, also driving up the costs of healthcare.

In Rhode Island alone, roughly 13,000 people will likely lose their healthcare coverage for next year because of these price increases. We need to act.

Last Friday, I met with small business owners in Warren, RI. They stressed the need for this tax credit.

Even with this credit, it is difficult for them to afford health coverage and keep their businesses open.

One of these businesspeople made a profound point. I call it the Uriah Principle after the first name of its proponent. What is the Uriah Principle? Simply, the most serious side effect or one of the most serious side effects of the lack of healthcare insurance is poverty.

Yes. When you have no healthcare coverage and you get ill, you can’t work. When you have no healthcare insurance you are in a very difficult position, and you are scrambling just to get by.

That is not conducive to the initiative it takes for small businesses to thrive in this country. And my colleagues are always proclaiming their devotion and dedication to small businesses everywhere. This is a blow to small businesses everywhere.

Now, it is unfortunate but Donald Trump and his handlers don’t want to solve this problem, and congressional Republicans seem only to be interested in what Trump wants.

Since August, right after congressional Republicans rammed through their \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and other healthcare programs, the Democratic leaders of the House and Senate have been asking to sit down and negotiate to resolve this problem. But at President Trump’s direction, Republican leaders ignored the request.

Trump said:

Don’t even bother dealing with [Democrats].

And Republican leaders have listened.

At one point, the President agreed to meet but reversed course, apparently, at the direction of Speaker JOHNSON, who has kept the House in recess for the last month.

Finally, the day before the shutdown—the day before the shutdown—the President finally agreed to meet, not negotiate, just meet. Since then, nothing. Apparently, he has plenty of time to host the President of Argentina and has no problem sending him home with 20 billion of U.S. taxpayer dollars, but he has no time to talk about helping the American people with their skyrocketing healthcare costs.

While President Trump is ignoring this issue, he is demanding a blank check so he can run the government exactly how he wants to. Unfortunately, GOP leaders are willing to hand it to him and not for the first time.

Late last year, shortly before President Trump took office, Democrats and Republicans reached a bipartisan agreement on a full-year funding bill for fiscal year 2025. It would have funded the government for the entire year, and it would have provided critical disaster relief, funding for national defense, childcare, the healthcare system, transportation infrastructure, and much more.

But Donald Trump insisted that Republicans walk away from the agree-

ment until he came into office so he could call all the shots. They delivered, and he took advantage.

I didn’t vote for the year-long CR that Trump eventually backed last March because even then, his excesses were already on full display. His wanton claims of Executive powers, his firing of thousands, cancellation of grants, misuse of law enforcement, politicalization of the military, and general lawlessness were apparent.

And true to his nature, under the fiscal year 2025 continuing resolution he signed into law in March, Trump has illegally—illegally—delayed or withheld Federal funds for medical research, including for childhood cancer; for Head Start; for Job Corps; for disaster recovery and mitigation; for foreign assistance, including lifesaving therapeutic nutrition for starving children in the world; for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, which provides food and shelter throughout the country under the auspices of Catholic Charities, the Jewish Federation, and the United Way.

He has used the so-called pocket rescission to illegally cancel \$4.9 billion foreign aid, and he has even tried to close entire Departments and Agencies without congressional approval.

To have the President sign a bill into law and simply flout its requirements like this is irksome, to say the least, particularly for members of the Appropriations Committee on both sides of the aisle.

Indeed, as a member of the committee, I know how hard we work to prepare bipartisan bills every year. Some of my Republican colleagues have been privately outraged by the President’s actions. A few of them have had the courage to speak up publicly. But President Trump’s campaign of petty vindictiveness and hard partisan ideology continues.

Trump and his Budget Director Russ Vought say the shutdown will force them to fire Federal workers.

That is nonsense.

From day one, President Trump, Mr. Vought, along with Elon Musk and his minions, have tried to fire Federal workers by the thousands without cause and without thought. They have terminated experts in national security and intelligence, and in some cases, they have had to beg them to return to their jobs because they were, in fact, irreplaceable.

Just this past Friday, the administration fired hundreds of workers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But before the weekend was over, they were scrambling to reinstate an estimated 700 employees who work on critical issues like measles response and containing the spread of Ebola.

The administration has also fired many other Federal workers precisely because they have done their jobs with professionalism, honesty, and integrity, replacing them with loyalists with little background or expertise to

do the jobs they have been appointed to do.

Trump has allowed his political appointees to rifle through the personal data of nearly every American. I asked the FBI Director, after DOGE had gone through all this data, can he assure us that that data is not in the hands of anyone unauthorized to have it. He mumbled a response that was really nonresponsive.

If you stop and step back, DOGE has pilfered the data in every major Federal Agency, and no one can tell you where it is; who has it. That could be the greatest crime committed against the American people in the history of this country.

Trump's tariff taxes are driving up costs for food, electricity, clothing, and nearly every basic necessity for American families. Small businesses are facing these same cost increases too. As I said, when talking to small businesspeople in Warren, RI, they are looking at a very difficult challenge, and it is not being helped by Trump.

This list goes on and on as does the list of lawsuits against the administration. And for 9 months, congressional Republicans have had the chance to show some true independence—to say no to Trump on his price-rising tariffs, to say no to Trump's misuse of Federal funds, to stand up to the administration's abuse of the personal data of Americans, to reject some of the least qualified and most dangerous Cabinet members in history, to conduct even the most basic taxpayer oversight of the numerous conflicts of interest and money-making ventures of the President, his family, and his allies.

But when their votes have mattered, they have gone along with every bad decision this President has made.

If this capitulation to the executive branch continues, the Senate will be rendered a hollow, powerless body, with Senators powerless to represent their constituents and States.

And I would remind everyone that the iron law of the Senate is: What goes around, comes around. And my colleagues should ask themselves: Do they want their States and constituents treated this way, the way that Trump is treating his perceived political enemies, cutting off valuable public assistance to blue cities, putting U.S. forces into blue cities, the military, in violation of the Posse Comitatus Act?

I think the answer would be no. And what is good for one side has to be good for the other side.

The President is not popular. What he is doing on every issue now is not popular. Costs matter to Americans in every State of this country, and this healthcare debate is all about costs.

One of the ironies is that some of the biggest impacts of these healthcare changes will be on the red States. Everyone suffers across the country, but there is significant suffering in places that are prominently Republican. So why are my colleagues on the other

side of the aisle saying, "Oh, we don't care"?

They should think long and hard about that and remember why they wanted to be Senators in the first place: to improve the lives of their constituents, to help, to serve. And that requires compromise here.

We saw that last week when we passed the National Defense Authorization bill with overwhelming bipartisan support in very efficient and rapid procedures.

When you get compromise—bipartisan compromise—you get results. When you get a body that seeks only to carry out the will of one person, you get what we have now: stalemate, suffering by poor people who can't get healthcare, but great benefits to the wealthy.

For the last several months, appropriators have been working on bills to protect and invest in the American people. Together, we passed eight appropriations bills out of the committee, most on overwhelmingly bipartisan votes. Three of those bills have been passed by the full Senate. Throughout this process, Democrats have shown our commitment to doing the hard work of government.

We have been flexible and willing to compromise. And, frankly, if it was in the Senate's power, both Republicans and Democrats, we would have legislation—appropriations legislation—before the President today, but we have been unable to because of the roadblocks he has established using his leverage over my Republican colleagues.

In fact, I think it is fair to say that President Trump and Speaker JOHNSON don't really want compromise and don't really want Congress to pass appropriations bills. They want Democrats to go away and give them another blank check, another CR.

But forget whether it is a CR or an appropriations bill. If the President doesn't like the program, he just takes the money away, which is contrary to the Constitution, but that is just a detail.

It takes 60 votes to pass a law here in the Senate. So Democrats are here, ready to reach a principled agreement on spending and protect the healthcare of 22 million Americans.

We are ready. We just need the President and the Speaker and the majority leader to sit down and talk, not about their partisan interests but the welfare of their constituents.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank my colleague from Rhode Island, and I join him in his advocacy for healthcare.

We are going into day 15 of the shutdown. No one likes shutdowns. And people ask me, PETER, why are you shut down? And my answer to them is that I don't like shutdowns, but things are worth fighting for. Some things we must fight for. And one of the things

that are most essential to the well-being of the people we represent, whether it is a Republican State or a Democratic State, is access to affordable healthcare.

We have a date that is looming—November 1—where people are going to be getting, across this country, notifications about how much of an increase they will have to pay if they are getting tax support, tax credits, for them to buy their own insurance in the private marketplace. That is the urgency of the moment and why we must resolve this now. We must resolve this now.

On November 1, everyone will be getting the notice, but in many States, including Vermont, those notices are going out now, in October, and I want to show you what is going to happen to a Vermont family.

Keep in mind, this is a family of four where you have two parents that earn \$130,000. They purchase healthcare through the private marketplace. Right now, that Vermont family pays \$1,195, about \$1,200 a month for their healthcare premium. That doesn't include copays and deductibles.

That is a big expense for that family, who has utility bills, who has rent or a mortgage, who is facing the inflation we see in the cost of food, groceries. They have kids in school, and always, some unexpected expense comes up when you have kids in school—a broken wrist, braces, a school trip.

That premium of \$1,195 is going to increase to \$3,035—\$3,035—in 2026. That family can't afford it. Where does the money come from to pay for that healthcare?

You know, the poignancy of this was exemplified when a Vermonter was with me to talk about this. She has a family of four, two kids, and she asked herself: If there is this huge spike in premiums, as a mother, where I am responsible for the well-being of my two children, and it would be "irresponsible"—her word—not to have healthcare for my kids, what do I do if I get a \$2,000-a-month increase and I simply don't have the money to pay for it?

That is not a decision we should be imposing on the people in Missouri or the people in Vermont.

All of us who have the authority of being in the U.S. Senate and representing the people who sent us here should not allow that rate premium shock to crush that family.

By the way, this is not just this family in Vermont; this is families all across our country.

You know, if these tax premiums, these tax credits expire—and that is what they do—then we are going to see nearly 5 million people across this country, in the Presiding Officer's State and mine, lose their coverage. Twenty-four million Americans will face higher costs.

By the way, that includes about 17 million people in States that voted for President Trump. Families in red

States are going to see significant premium increases.

But, you know, this is not about red State-blue State for me; this is about American families, American small businesses, and whether they can have access to affordable healthcare. These tax credits are across the board for people who are eligible and qualify for them, who are working, who are struggling to pay their bills, and there is no way they are going to be able to afford these rate shocks.

I will give you another example. Alex from Essex, VT, works in a small, independent physical therapy practice. He makes \$65,000 a year. With the tax credits, his premium costs \$5,500 bucks a year—about 8.5 percent of his annual income. Without the tax credit, Alex's plan is going to increase by \$15,500 next year to \$24,000 a year—two grand a month. It is not possible.

So we have this real-world situation.

You know, the question is, Why are you in a shutdown? It is because we are fighting for healthcare. The question is, Why can't we do that after we vote for a continuing resolution? It is because that date of November 1 is going to be the date where everybody across this country gets the shocking news about how much their healthcare premiums have gone up.

So, you know, the question I have is, Why don't we, all of us, Republicans and Democrats, who care deeply about the people we represent, really come to their rescue by acting and acting now? There is absolutely no excuse for us to delay. This is the urgency of now.

I stand before the Presiding Officer knowing that right now in my State of Vermont, from Bennington to Derby Line, from Brattleboro to Swanton, people are going to their mailboxes and fainting as they get the news of these rate shocks.

It is not right, but most importantly for us, it is not necessary because we, the U.S. Senate, have the power to act and to be fair to the folks that are working hard in all of our States and are entitled to have some confidence that the healthcare they have this year, they will continue to be able to afford next year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, the month we are in, the month of October, is Domestic Violence Awareness Month—the time that we should recognize the devastating impact domestic violence continues to have on individuals, families, and communities across our States and the Nation.

The issue of domestic violence often remains hidden behind closed doors. It is a reality that affects millions of Americans every year, both in communities large and small, urban and rural, and unfortunately across my own home State of Kansas.

While national headlines may briefly focus attention on this issue when a

tragedy occurs or a public figure is involved, our commitment to ending abuse must remain constant after the news cycle.

The statistics regarding domestic violence are staggering. Domestic violence that occurs between partners—girlfriends and boyfriends, husbands and wives—affects more than 12 million—12 million—people every year. On a typical day, every 9 seconds, a woman is assaulted in the United States. In Kansas, law enforcement reports nearly 22,000 incidents of domestic violence annually. These aren't statistics from faraway places; they reflect our friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family members.

We have a responsibility to bring hope to those who feel afraid to speak out. I want to recognize the Kansans who dedicate their lives to that mission, those who work and volunteer in shelters, crisis centers, advocacy organizations, and law enforcement across the country. Their compassion and courage make a difference every single day.

In Iola, KS, Hope Unlimited provides a lifeline for victims seeking safety and support. Working hand in hand with local law enforcement and first responders, Hope Unlimited's advocates and trained volunteers deliver services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Their coordinated response models ensure survivors are met with care the moment they reach out.

We know that when victims are turned away or forced to travel long distances for help, 90 percent return to their abuser—a reminder why access to local support is critical.

Across Kansas, similar organizations, like Safehome in Johnson County, StepStone in Wichita, and the Crisis Center, Inc., in Manhattan, are helping survivors rebuild their lives with dignity and safety.

What happens in Washington, DC, matters, but we change the world one person—in fact, one soul—at a time. In communities across Kansas and across America, that is exactly what is happening.

The Federal Government plays a meaningful role in supporting these efforts. Through programs like the legal assistance for victims grant, Kansans have access to legal representation that helps survivors navigate the justice system and reclaim their sense of safety and stability.

The work is far from over. Domestic violence is more than a law enforcement or a policy issue; each of us can and must play a role in ending it. This month and every month, let us recommit ourselves to breaking the cycle of abuse. Let's do our part to speak out against violence in all its forms and to stand with those who have been silenced for too long. Let's raise awareness of this silent and devastating issue and bring hope to those who need it most.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 218

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about Oswaldo Paya and, as I have done before, to urge this body to honor his legacy.

Paya was a Cuban dissident who fought against the communist regime and who stood up and fought for free speech, for democracy, and for human rights. He was a thorn in the side of the Cuban communist regime his entire life.

Oswaldo Paya was the only person at his school who refused to join the Communist Youth. Later, at the age of 35, he founded the Christian Liberation Movement, which called for nonviolent disobedience against the rule of the Cuban Communist Party. He then founded the Varela Project, which sought a referendum on Cuba's communist system. Throughout, he fought for democratic governance, religious liberty, freedom of suppression, and the freedom to start businesses.

For over three decades, Paya put pressure on the communist regime to free its political prisoners, to allow for genuine elections, and to uphold basic human rights. In retaliation, the regime harassed him. They arrested him repeatedly and, ultimately, in 2012, they killed him. But in life and in death, they never succeeded in silencing his message.

Growing up, I heard countless stories from my father about life in Cuba, and they instilled in me, from a very young age, the desire to fight for change, to fight for truth, to fight for freedom. The yearning for liberty and the courage to fight for it is universal and deeply felt in every Cuban heart.

Since 2015, in every Congress, I have introduced legislation to rename the street outside the Cuban Embassy the "Oswaldo Paya Way." This body has passed it before, rightly and unanimously. Oswaldo's legacy matters deeply to Cuba and to the United States. And it matters to his family, with whom I have worked closely on this resolution.

Over the years, I met many times with his daughter Rosa Maria Paya. Rosa Maria is herself a formidable and courageous dissident and warrior for human rights. Renaming the street in front of the Cuban Embassy would help preserve that legacy.

During the Cold War, President Reagan renamed the street in front of the Soviet Embassy "Sakharov Plaza" after the famed human rights dissident in the Soviet Union. It was part of a broader strategy to shine a light on the abuses of the evil empire.

My strategy here is the same. Some might think a street name is not that big a deal. Well, it is. Anyone who wants to write to the Cuban Embassy will have to write Oswaldo Paya's name. Anyone who wants to go there has to look up the address and see his name. The operatives of the Cuban regime will have to say or write his name.

Saying his name has power.

In just a moment, I would propound a unanimous consent request to take up and pass the Oswaldo Paya Way resolution.

I want to point out this is bipartisan legislation. Indeed, I am joined by Senator DURBIN, the Democrat whip, in this legislation. In a previous Senate, this passed the Senate 100 to nothing. That means every Republican voted for it, and every Democrat voted for it. I am hopeful this Congress can demonstrate the same unity and the same resolve to stand up in support of democracy and in support of human rights. Right now, we will find out if that is the case.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 218 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I stand in agreement with my colleague. Mr. Oswaldo Paya is an extraordinary hero, not just to the Cuban people but to millions of Americans, including millions of New Jerseyans and especially to the Cuban American community in my State. He is a freedom fighter who stands for our most treasured and sacrosanct ideals.

I want to work with my colleague to find a way to honor him. I would be willing to partner with him in doing something to elevate this cause and this principle and the noble ideals that my colleague speaks to.

The challenge right now is that we are in different times. This bill would permit Congress to rename a DC-owned intersection, but the District of Columbia has the right to self-governance.

When I was mayor of the city of Newark, if my State came in against my objections to rename streets in my city, I would have objected. The people of the District of Columbia have the right to control their own local affairs. Their rights are enshrined in home rule. It is critical that we reject attempts that infringe upon those rights.

The locally elected DC Council alone has the right to rename DC streets. And there is no dispute that the intersection in question is DC owned. Since the beginning of home rule, the council has opposed congressional efforts to rename its streets. Recently, Representative HOLMES NORTON strongly has made her views known that she opposes this bill on those grounds.

Washington, DC, has no representation in this body. We must respect the wishes of the locally and democratically elected council and DC representatives in Congress. Indeed, these democratic ideals are what we are talking about right now.

This objection is not about recognizing the courageous work of Oswaldo Paya. I will tell you, I have a deep reverence and respect and I will offer again that I will do anything I can to support the elevation of this hero, of this democratic light. Mr. Paya bravely fought for freedom and democracy in Cuba. He was killed due to his heroic work.

I hope, perhaps, our Congress can appropriate resources to do something to honor this noble man and his ideals. I hope we can think constructively about what else we can do. His work should be recognized more by our Nation. And I would support the DC Council, their elected representatives, if it decided, through their democratic process, to work with the Senator and the Democratic sponsor to rename the street.

My objection is simply right now about Washington, DC's right to control their own local affairs. This objection is about home rule and self-governance. It is true, as my colleague said, this has passed through this Chamber multiple times. But you would understand, DC is pushing for us not to do it this time because the current administration in the White House has stepped up their efforts to undermine home rule. It is looking to DC as a testing ground for extreme policies.

The fact that DC has been deprived of statehood makes the people of the District feel even more vulnerable under this President to the policies of the administration. They are asserting an even stronger way with me and others who feel a fidelity to the home rule ideals, that we should take a stand now. We cannot make DC and its residents more vulnerable still by further eroding and encroaching upon the District of Columbia's right to self-governance. That is a sacrosanct ideal that our country has stood for.

“No taxation without representation,” the ability to elect your governing officials and entrust upon them to make decisions for your community.

It is under these principles and ideals, Mr. President, that I object. And it is with a sincere heart that I offer my colleague the willingness to work with him on other ways we might be able to bestow an honor on this extraordinary hero.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. I must say, the objection from my friend from New Jersey is deeply unfortunate. The remarks that he gave were unfortunately seriously in error.

The Senator from New Jersey suggested that it is only the DC City Council that has the power to do this. This is objectively false. DC is a city unlike any city in America because DC—the Constitution explicitly gives the authority to govern DC to the Congress of the United States. That is written into the Constitution.

My friend from New Jersey said he would object if this were done in New-

ark, NJ. Well, Newark, NJ, is not in the Federal District of Columbia, which the Constitution gives to Congress to govern.

It is also objectively disproven by the example I gave. We have done this before. When Ronald Reagan was President, he signed into law legislation renaming the street in front of the Soviet Union “Sakharov Plaza.” The author of that legislation is someone you and I still serve with. He is the senior most serving Member of this body. Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, then a brandnew Senator, introduced the legislation to rename the street in front of the Soviet Embassy. It was part of shining a light on communist oppression.

The legislation that the Senator from New Jersey just objected to is Cruz-Durbin. Its lead Democrat author is Senator DICK DURBIN, the whip for the Democrat party. This is not partisan legislation.

Indeed, this exact legislation—Senator BOOKER, who just objected, voted for it just 2 years ago in this Congress. It passed 100 to nothing, and 1 of those 100 was my friend Senator BOOKER. He voted yes.

By the way, one of the most vocal advocates of this legislation was Senator BOOKER's former colleague Senator Bob Menendez, another Cuban-American. And there is a rich irony because, after Florida, the State of New Jersey has a massive Cuban-American population.

To see a Senator from New Jersey objecting—I know this is not his intent, but the communist Government of Cuba is cheering right now because they do not want to acknowledge Oswaldo Paya. They murdered him, and they don't want to have to say his name. They don't want anyone to say his name.

I know there are Cuban-American residents of New Jersey whose hearts are heavy right now. They are hurting to see their elected Senator object over not just honoring Oswaldo Paya but calling out the regime.

Senator BOOKER suggests, oh, some other general statement; Paya is a nice guy; we should do that. That is not the purpose here. I am happy to support any resolution praising Oswaldo Paya. I have done so many times. The purpose here is to put pressure on the Cuban communist regime, and naming the street does that.

As I pointed out, Senator BOOKER voted for this identical legislation just 2 years ago, this bipartisan legislation. That leads to the obvious question: What has changed?

One thing has changed: the resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. When Senator BOOKER voted for this bipartisan legislation, Joe Biden was the President. Today, Donald J. Trump is the President. Unfortunately, our Democrat colleagues have decided that bipartisan cooperation is no longer something they are interested in. Their party is instead unified behind one principle, which is that they hate Donald J. Trump.

We are on day 15 of a government shutdown because the Democrats are unwilling to fund the Federal Government, unwilling to pass a clean continuing resolution.

By the way, every one of them, including the Senator from New Jersey, has given speeches about how it is reckless and irresponsible to shut the government down, not to pass a clean continuing resolution. Yet, earlier today, almost every single Democrat voted, for the ninth time in the last 2 weeks, to shut the government down, whereas Republicans are unified to reopen it.

This weekend, there will be a rally in DC of leftwing radicals, the so-called No Kings rally. Many, if not most, of us on the Republican side of the Chamber believe that the reason the government is still shut down is because Democrat Senators are terrified for that rally to occur and those leftwing radicals to see that the government is open because they have to demonstrate that they hate President Trump.

Just this week, President Trump announced a historic Middle East peace deal. Yet virtually zero Democrats could bring themselves even to say his name.

Bill Clinton praised President Trump for the Middle East peace deal. Hillary Clinton praised President Trump for the Middle East peace deal. I commend Bill and Hillary Clinton. I will say that in my time in the Senate, that is the first time that sentence has ever come out of my mouth: I commend Bill and Hillary Clinton. But why is it—indeed, Senator BOOKER put out a statement about the Middle East peace deal, but nowhere in it was President Trump's name to be found.

I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks that there is power in saying his name. Just as the Democrats are terrified of saying the name "Donald J. Trump" in any way connected to anything positive, so, too, are the Cuban communists terrified of saying the name "Oswaldo Paya."

I am hopeful that my friend the Senator from New Jersey will put aside the partisan rancor that characterizes the Democrats in this body and will say: Let's come together and stand for the Cuban people. Let's stand for Cuban-Americans in this country. Let's stand for freedom. Let's stand for democracy. Let's stand for human rights.

That ought to be bipartisan. Time will tell whether it continues to be at the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### PENTAGON AUDITS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak about the Pentagon's unending audit failures and to once again call for corrective action.

People who have been in the Senate a while know that I have been continually talking about this issue, many times—so many; I don't know how many—but I think it is something I need to keep beating the drum about.

The fact is that the Pentagon is the only Government Agency that can't get what is called a certified audit or sometimes referred to as a clean audit—the only Agency of the Federal Government.

I have been conducting oversight on this issue since the audit began in 1993 and have spoken about it many times. Today, I provide my colleagues with a new update.

Recent Government Accountability Office testimony may have pinpointed the root cause audit problem. It is called the universe of transactions. It is a special bucket of transactions manually transferred from several hundred systems. It should play a pivotal role in the audit process.

In theory, the universe of transactions is an accurate record of every transaction in financial statement balances. Auditors should be able to follow audit trails to verify samples taken from those balances.

In practice, it doesn't work. The data is inaccurate and incomplete. Transactions can't be matched. Audit trails don't exist, so audits fail.

I found essentially the same disconnect in the inspector general's first audits 30 years ago. Those audits contain these telling words: "No audit trail found." It is the same old problem—no controls over transactions then; none today.

The Marine Corps recently developed a workaround for the no-audit-trail. It is a predicament that needed attention, and they gave it some attention. As a result of giving it some attention, the Marine Corps earned two clean opinions, but they did it the hard way.

The marines had to create missing audit trails with labor-intensive, pick-and-shovel work. They dug up, ran down, matched, and verified each transaction. Obviously, the marines deserve credit for a job done well.

But manual audit trail reconstruction is not a very cost-efficient alternative to modern accounting systems. Fully integrated systems are the solution. They are called for in the Chief Financial Officers Act that mandated the audits that I am talking about.

Instead of investing in modern systems, Pentagon bureaucrats keep pouring millions year after year into ancient systems that belong in the junk heap.

Thirty-five years and billions of dollars down the rat hole, and the DOD is still scratching their heads, wondering how to control transactions. Surely, they know traders solved that problem thousands of years ago when records were first kept on clay tablets.

So why is the Pentagon still in the stone age? It is due to incompetence or deliberate bureaucratic foot-dragging or whatever.

Getting a handle on every transaction is the key to success, and therein lies the rub. Integrated systems are needed, but there is relentless resistance to acquiring them.

I call on Secretary of War Hegseth to create a team of independent system

experts to examine and resolve this problem. Controlling transactions is the heart and soul of every accounting system—except, as you see, at the Pentagon. Until that truth is accepted, clean opinions will remain nothing but a pipe dream.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). The majority leader.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### REMEMBERING COLONEL JOHNNY BROOKS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to COL Johnny Brooks—a distinguished officer, a devoted servant of our Nation, and a remarkable friend and family man.

Johnny served the Army and our country with great distinction. The son of an Army officer, Johnny grew up moving from post to post and decided early on to commit his life to service. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and soon earned an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, a testament to his skill and determination.

Commissioned as an infantry officer, Johnny advanced through the ranks with remarkable success. During his career, he commanded the 4th Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment and deployed to Panama as part of Operation Just Cause, served as an exchange officer with the British 1st Parachute Regiment, led the infantry training brigade at Fort Benning, and later became chief of staff of the 82nd Airborne Division. He was, through and through, a soldier and a leader.

Throughout his distinguished service, Johnny inspired those around him with his professionalism, his courage, and his deep loyalty to his soldiers. His character, skill, and sense of duty made him a model officer and an example to all who served with him.

I was privileged to know Johnny personally. As West Point classmates, we shared the formative lessons of "Duty, Honor, and Country" that shaped his life and career. Johnny's steady presence, humility, and good humor were constants to those of us who knew him well.

After retiring from the Army, Johnny and his wife Christine made their home in Alabama, where they spent the past 25 years. His love for his country was surpassed only by his love for his family: his wife Christine; his children Heather and Matthew; his grandchildren; great-grandchildren; and sisters. To them, I offer my deepest condolences and my gratitude for sharing Johnny with our Nation for so many years.

Johnny Brooks was a selfless and inspiring person. He dedicated his life to leading and serving others, and his was a life well-lived. He will be missed by all who had the privilege to know him and to serve alongside him.

I am proud to honor the legacy of COL Johnny Brooks, and I know the Members of the Senate will join me in recognizing the remarkable contributions he made to our Army and our Nation.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### RECOGNIZING LT FARMS

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to honor LT Farms of Ringgold County, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In the summer of 2022, 12-year-old Lane and 8-year-old Tyce Parish founded LT Farms with the encouragement of their parents Lincoln and Shawna. Growing up on their family farm caring for cattle, chickens, ducks, and show pigs, Lane and Tyce learned the value of hard work early on. Their first business venture was selling eggs from their family's farm at the local farmers market. Then, they saw an opportunity to build something bigger. After years of watching their mother make her Spicy Snack Mix and pack it for their dad's hunting trips or gift it to friends and family, Lane and Tyce decided it was the perfect product to add to the market. After selling out of the mix within a couple of hours at the farmers market, LT Farms was born.

Encouraged by community feedback, the boys began experimenting with their own flavors. Lane introduced his signature mix, followed by Tyce's Sweet and Salty Mix later that fall. To celebrate their dad's birthday the next year, the family created a new flavor in his honor, Dad's BBQ Cheddar Mix, which became an instant hit. Today, LT Farms remains a true family enterprise. Lane and Tyce handle product development, marketing, and everything in between with help from their parents. Their grandma, also known as the "Mix Machine," helps ensure production is running smoothly. Together, the family has expanded their presence online and sell wholesale in 23 stores throughout Iowa and Nebraska.

Lane and Tyce's favorite part of LT Farms is meeting new people, which they continue to do through deep involvement in their community. In February 2024, LT Farms was invited to the Iowa State Capitol for Iowa State University Day where they showcased their products and discussed how the Small Business Development Center supported their growth. Recently, LT Farms donated 100 mini snack mix bags for the Mount Ayr School District's

Hall of Fame banquet. Each month, they host themed giveaways celebrating local educators, fairgoers, as well as 4-H and FFA members. This month, they will recognize farmers. LT Farms has helped supply care packages for troops, provided free snack mix to golfers at the Annual Dallas Clark Foundation Golf Tournament, and sponsored the South Central Iowa Showdown and the Best of the Southwest Shootout. They are also exclusively partnered with Champion Steaks to offer "Sticks and Mix" for local fundraisers.

Over the past 3 years, LT Farms has earned a reputation for quality products and exceptional customer service. What began as two young boys selling eggs has grown into a thriving family business in Iowa and beyond. It is my honor to recognize Lane and Tyce Parish along with the entire LT Farms team for their outstanding work and dedication to their community. I look forward to their continued success and wish them the very best in the years ahead. •

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Hanley, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MEASURES DISCHARGED PETITION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, hereby direct that the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 69, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by United States Fish and Wildlife Service relating to "Record of Decision for the Barred Owl Management Strategy; Washington, Oregon, and California" and, further, that the joint resolution be immediately placed upon the Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

John Kennedy, Katie Britt, Rick Scott, Ron Johnson, Tommy Tuberville, Mike Rounds, Jon Husted, John R. Curtis, Kevin Cramer, Markwayne Mullin, Pete Ricketts, Eric Schmitt, John Cornyn, Ted Budd, Chuck Grassley, Mike Lee, James E. Risch, Tom Cotton, David McCormick, Jim Banks, Lindsey Graham, Roger F. Wicker, John Hoeven, Ted Cruz, Thom Tillis, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Jerry Moran, James Lankford, Rand Paul, Tim Scott.

#### MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following joint resolution was discharged from the Committee on Environment and Public Works by petition, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 802(c), and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 69. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service relating to "Record of Decision for the Barred Owl Management Strategy; Washington, Oregon, and California".

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2065. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Administration, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to action on a nomination, change in previously submitted reported information, and discontinuation of service in an acting role for a position covered by the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998 for the position of Under Secretary for Intellectual Property, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 9, 2025; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2066. A communication from the Agency Representative, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "International Trademark Classification Changes" (RIN0651-AD87) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 9, 2025; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-20. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to call a convention of states for the purpose of proposing amendments to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States House of Representatives and to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States Senate; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2

*Resolved*, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby proffer and endorse all of the following:

Section 1. The Legislature of Louisiana hereby makes an application to Congress, as provided by Article V of the Constitution of the United States of America, to call a convention limited to proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States House of Representatives and to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States Senate.

Section 2. The secretary of state is hereby directed to transmit copies of this application to the president and secretary of the Senate of the United States and to the

speaker, clerk, and judiciary committee chairman of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, and copies to the members of the said Senate and House of Representatives from this state; also to transmit copies hereof to the presiding officers of each of the legislative houses in the several states, requesting their cooperation.

Section 3. This application shall be considered as covering the same subject matter as the applications from other states to Congress to call a convention to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected to the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States and the Senate of the United States; and this application shall be aggregated with same for the purpose of attaining the two-thirds of states necessary to require Congress to call a limited convention on this subject, but shall not be aggregated with any other applications on any other subject.

Section 4. This application constitutes a continuing application in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States of America until the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several states have made applications on the same subject; and be it further

*Resolved*, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the state.

POM-21. A petition from a citizen of the State of Texas relative to requesting enactment of federal legislation to require that formal documents to be signed by the President must be witnessed by, and be attested to by, a notary public and include an official notarial seal; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. TUBERVILLE (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 3008. A bill to prohibit the application of Shari'a in the United States where such application would violate constitutional rights, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TUBERVILLE:

S. 3009. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to include advocacy for Sharia law to be a ground for inadmissibility and deportability, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, and Mr. REED):

S. 3010. A bill to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to improve provisions relating to dyslexia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 3011. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to exclude coverage of gender-transition procedures for minors and abortion under health plans offered through the American Health Benefits Exchange, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. BUDD, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 3012. A bill to appropriate funds for pay and allowances of excepted Federal employees for periods of work performed during a lapse in appropriations, and for other purposes; read the first time.

#### SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. Res. 451. A resolution condemning attacks on Federal law enforcement in the State of Illinois; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. Res. 452. A resolution designating the week beginning October 19, 2025, as "National Character Counts Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. Res. 453. A resolution designating the week beginning September 7, 2025, as "National Direct Support Professionals Week"; considered and agreed to.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 88

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mrs. MOODY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 88, a bill to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills.

S. 184

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 184, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to define the term natural cheese.

S. 339

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 339, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of multi-cancer early detection screening tests.

S. 1245

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1245, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

S. 1532

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1532, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 2392

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2392, a bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2025, the rates of com-

pensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2511

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2511, a bill to establish a postsecondary student data system.

S. 2546

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2546, a bill to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.

S. 2967

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2967, a bill to address the management by certain Federal land management agencies over Federal land along the southern border and northern border, and for other purposes.

S. 2981

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2981, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of prosthetic and rehabilitative items and services by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2997

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2997, a bill to protect the independent judgment of health care professionals acting in the scope of their practice in overriding AI/CDSS outputs, and for other purposes.

S. 3001

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3001, a bill to appropriate funds for pay and allowances of excepted Federal employees, and for other purposes.

S. 3002

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3002, a bill making continuing appropriations for military pay in the event of a Government shutdown.

S. RES. 442

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 442, a resolution condemning Russian incursions into NATO territory and reaffirming Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

## SENATE RESOLUTION 451—CONDEMNING ATTACKS ON FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 451

Whereas the Constitution of the United States establishes and assigns to the Federal Government the exclusive authority to regulate immigration and naturalization;

Whereas Immigration and Customs Enforcement (referred to in this preamble as “ICE”) is authorized under Federal law to execute the lawful deportation and removal of criminal aliens who have violated the immigration laws of the United States;

Whereas State and local policies that seek to nullify or obstruct Federal immigration enforcement violate the Constitution and the principles of federalism;

Whereas the situation in the State of Illinois, particularly in and around the city of Chicago, has deteriorated to a point where Federal facilities and personnel can no longer operate without significant protection and public safety has collapsed;

Whereas the city of Chicago has experienced catastrophic levels of violent crime, with 5,220 homicides between 2017 and 2024, an average of 652 per year, exceeding the annual combat deaths of United States forces in Iraq (435 per year from 2003 through 2010) and Afghanistan (141 per year from 2001 through 2014);

Whereas Chicago has become what can only be described as a combat zone, with certain police districts experiencing homicide rates exceeding 70 per 100,000 residents;

Whereas the Cook County State Attorney’s office implemented pro-criminal policies from 2017 through 2022 that have caused a dramatic increase in violent crime, including an increase in average annual homicides from 510 homicides from 2011 through 2016 to 652 homicides from 2017 through 2024, and an increase in reported rapes from an average of 1,486 per year from 2014 through 2016 to 1,804 per year from 2017 through 2022;

Whereas these prosecutorial policies included releasing violent criminals without appropriate bail and consequences, as well as undermining Illinois felony retail theft statutes by unilaterally raising the prosecution threshold from \$300 to \$1,000 in 2017, resulting in a dramatic increase in retail theft across the city;

Whereas such negligent criminal justice policies have created an environment in which violent criminals, including criminal aliens subject to deportation, operate with impunity;

Whereas Federal facilities in Illinois, including those directly supporting ICE, have come under coordinated assault by violent groups intent on obstructing Federal law enforcement activities;

Whereas these groups have sought to impede the deportation and removal of criminal aliens through violent demonstrations, intimidation, and sabotage of Federal operations;

Whereas these violent activities are increasing in frequency and intensity, threatening the safety of Federal law enforcement and personnel and compromising the integrity of Federal operations;

Whereas, while peaceful protest and political activism are protected rights under the

Constitution, such rights do not extend to violent assaults on Federal facilities, intimidation of Federal law enforcement, or sabotage of lawful operations;

Whereas acts of lawlessness and anarchy cannot be disguised as activism and political violence cannot be legitimized;

Whereas certain far-left State and local governments operate under a distorted understanding of federalism that runs only 1 way, demanding and expecting Federal funding and assistance while rejecting any reciprocal obligation to cooperate with Federal law enforcement agencies to ensure public safety and protect the lives of their residents;

Whereas the success of Federal law enforcement operations in Washington, D.C., which resulted in a nearly 60 percent reduction in homicides and a 17 percent decrease in violent crime following enhanced Federal enforcement beginning August 7, 2025, demonstrates that dramatic crime reduction is possible when there is political will to enforce the law;

Whereas the Mayor of Chicago has signed an executive order preventing city cooperation with Federal immigration authorities and has repeatedly affirmed the city’s intent to resist lawful ICE operations;

Whereas the National Fraternal Order of Police, the largest police union in the country, has condemned orders that prevent Chicago officers from assisting ICE when agents face violent resistance, endangering both Federal officers and the public;

Whereas the Governor of Illinois has demonized brave Federal law enforcement agents, including by publicly calling them “jackbooted thugs”;

Whereas ICE is facing a 500 percent increase in assaults while carrying out enforcement operations;

Whereas these activities are not occurring in isolation but are similar to ongoing efforts in multiple other States and cities around the country to disrupt the faithful enforcement of Federal law;

Whereas such obstruction threatens public safety, particularly in disadvantaged communities that bear the brunt of violent crime; and

Whereas the Federal Government has both the authority and the obligation to ensure that Federal law enforcement personnel can execute their lawfully assigned duties without violent interference and that the residents of Illinois, particularly those in the most vulnerable communities, are protected from rampant violent crime: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) condemns all attacks on Federal law enforcement in the State of Illinois;

(2) recognizes that the State government of Illinois and the city government of Chicago have failed in their fundamental obligation to protect their residents from violent crime;

(3) commends the brave men and women of Federal law enforcement and all support personnel for their heroic work during this public safety crisis in Illinois;

(4) condemns any and all efforts by State or local governments, or by organized groups to obstruct, impede, or interfere with the lawful execution of Federal immigration law enforcement operations;

(5) condemns the implementation of pro-criminal prosecutorial policies that have contributed to the dramatic increase in violent crime in Chicago;

(6) condemns the prioritization of politics over the safety and well-being of Illinois residents, particularly those in vulnerable communities;

(7) reaffirms the exclusive authority of the Federal Government to regulate immigration and to enforce immigration laws;

(8) recognizes that the Federal Government has a responsibility to protect all people of the United States from violent crime, particularly when State and local governments have abdicated this fundamental obligation through the implementation of failed criminal justice policies;

(9) supports all necessary measures to protect Federal law enforcement personnel and Federal facilities in Illinois from violent assault, intimidation, and obstruction;

(10) supports the prosecution, to the fullest extent of Federal law, of all individuals and groups who engage in violence, intimidation, or sabotage against Federal law enforcement; and

(11) encourages all State and local governments to support and protect our brave Federal law enforcement officers and support staff.

## SENATE RESOLUTION 452—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING OCTOBER 19, 2025, AS “NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK”

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. LUJÁN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 452

Whereas the well-being of the United States requires that the young people of the United States become an involved, caring citizenry of good character;

Whereas the character education of children has become more urgent, as violence by and against youth increasingly threatens the physical and psychological well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas, more than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including from schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, and civic groups;

Whereas the character of a nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens;

Whereas the public good is advanced when young individuals are taught the importance of good character and the positive effects that good character can have in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace;

Whereas scholars and educators agree that individuals do not automatically develop good character and that, therefore, institutions and individuals that influence youth must make conscientious efforts to help young individuals develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character;

Whereas, although character development is, first and foremost, an obligation of families, the efforts of faith communities, schools, and youth, civic, and human service organizations also play an important role in fostering and promoting good character;

Whereas Congress encourages students, teachers, parents, youth, and community leaders to recognize the importance of character education in preparing young individuals to play a role in determining the future of the United States;

Whereas effective character education is based on core ethical values, which form the foundation of a democratic society;

Whereas examples of character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, and honesty;

Whereas elements of character transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences;

Whereas the character and conduct of youth reflect the character and conduct of society, and, therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character;

Whereas Congress encourages individuals and organizations, especially those that have an interest in the education and training of the young individuals in the United States, to adopt the elements of character, which are intrinsic to the well-being of individuals, communities, and society;

Whereas many schools in the United States recognize the need, and have taken steps, to integrate the values of their communities into teaching activities; and

Whereas the establishment of “National Character Counts Week”, during which individuals, families, schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, civic groups, and other organizations focus on character education, is of great benefit to the United States; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning October 19, 2025, as “National Character Counts Week”; and

(2) calls upon the people of the United States and interested groups—

(A) to embrace the elements of character identified by local schools and communities, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship; and

(B) to observe National Character Counts Week with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

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**SENATE RESOLUTION 453—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 7, 2025, AS “NATIONAL DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS WEEK”**

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 453

Whereas direct care workers, including direct support professionals, personal assistants, personal attendants, in-home support workers, and paraprofessionals, are key to providing publicly funded, long-term support and services for millions of individuals with disabilities;

Whereas direct support professionals provide essential services that ensure that all individuals with disabilities are—

(1) included as a valued part of the communities in which those individuals live;

(2) supported at home, at work, and in the communities of the United States; and

(3) empowered to live with the dignity that all people of the United States deserve;

Whereas, by fostering connections between individuals with disabilities and their families, friends, and communities, direct support professionals ensure that individuals with disabilities thrive and provide an alternative to institutional care;

Whereas direct support professionals build close, respectful, and trusting relationships with individuals with disabilities and provide a broad range of personalized support to those individuals, including—

(1) helping individuals make person-centered choices;

(2) assisting with personal care, meal preparation, medication management, and other aspects of daily living;

(3) assisting individuals in accessing the community and securing competitive, integrated employment;

(4) providing transportation to school, work, religious, and recreational activities;

(5) helping with general daily affairs, such as assisting with financial matters, medical appointments, and personal interests; and

(6) assisting individuals in the transition to living in the communities of their choice;

Whereas there is a critical shortage of direct support professionals throughout the United States, a crisis that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing uncertainty and risk to individuals with disabilities;

Whereas direct support professionals do not have their own Standard Occupational Classification for the purposes of Federal data collection, including data produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor;

Whereas the Director of the Office of Management and Budget should, as part of the current revision of the Standard Occupational Classification system, consider establishing a separate code for direct support professionals as a healthcare support occupation;

Whereas the direct care workforce, including direct support professionals, is expected to be among the fastest growing occupations in the United States;

Whereas many direct support professionals—

(1) may be the primary financial providers for their families;

(2) are hardworking, taxpaying citizens who provide a critical service in the United States; and

(3) continue to earn low wages, receive inadequate benefits, and have limited opportunities for advancement, resulting in high turnover and vacancy rates that adversely affect the quality of support, safety, and health of individuals with disabilities; and

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999)—

(1) recognized the importance of the deinstitutionalization of, and community-based services for, individuals with disabilities; and

(2) held that, under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), a State must provide person-centered, community-based service options to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning September 7, 2025, as “National Direct Support Professionals Week”;

(2) recognizes the dedication and vital role of direct support professionals in enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities;

(3) appreciates the contribution of direct support professionals in supporting individuals with disabilities in the United States and the families of those individuals;

(4) commends direct support professionals for being integral to the provision of long-term support and services for individuals with disabilities; and

(5) finds that the successful implementation of public policies affecting individuals with disabilities in the United States can depend on the dedication of direct support professionals.

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**MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 3012**

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3012) to appropriate funds for pay and allowances of excepted Federal employees for periods of work performed during a lapse in appropriations, and for other purposes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The bill will be read the second time on the next legislative day.

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**NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK**

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 449.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 449) designating the week beginning on October 12, 2025, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 449) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of October 9, 2025, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

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**RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY**

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following resolutions, which are at the desk: S. Res. 452 and S. Res. 453.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

## ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2025

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, October 16; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; further, notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture motions, with respect to the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, and Executive Calendar No. 460, ripen at 11 a.m., and if cloture is invoked on the Moaty nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, no earlier than Monday, October 20; and, finally, that the cloture motion, with respect to the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 136, H.R. 4016, ripen at 1:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. For the information of my colleagues, Senators should expect two rollcall votes at 11 a.m. and a further vote at 1:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.  
TOMORROW

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the

Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:47 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 10 a.m.

## NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

## IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

## To be major general

BRIG. GEN. LISA K. SNYDER

## IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

## To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JASON B. NICHOLSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

## To be major general

BRIG. GEN. CLINTON K. MURRAY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

## To be brigadier general

COL. JOHN F. POPIAK

## IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

## To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) ANTHONY E. ROSSI

## IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

## To be major

MIRI C. KIM

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

## To be major

BORIS ELISON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

## To be lieutenant colonel

COURTNEY A. ANDERSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS A PERMANENT PROFESSOR AT THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY IN THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 9433(B) AND 9436(A):

## To be colonel

THOMAS D. WHITE

## IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

## To be colonel

PHILLIP W. GINGRICH

COREY B. LINDSEY

ANDREW J. RICHARDSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

## To be colonel

OWEN S. ADAMS

CLIFFORD A. BASSHAM

MICHAEL J. BORDALLO

NATALIE G. BROWN

MARIO S. COAXUM

MARK D. GILE

AMY R. HENRY

BRADLEY C. JOHNSON

CHAD D. LUBAS

CHRISTOPHER R. MC LAUD

GERMAN MUNIZ

JARRETT L. RHODES

JEREMY A. SMITH

JAMES A. TRIPPLETT

MICHAEL S. WIDNER

## IN THE SPACE FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE SPACE FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 716:

## To be major

ALEXIS C. BECK