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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

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2025

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, from whom all holy desires come, rise mercifully upon our hearts and sustain us in the trench warfare of this government shutdown. Wipe out all our selfish desires so that we may be true instruments for Your glory.

Lord, remind our lawmakers that You are their strength and that those who abandon You cannot ultimately prevail.

Be near to this Nation, O Lord, as we find protection in the shadow of Your grace. Surround us with the shield of Your glory and might.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MULLIN). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

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.

The Senator from Iowa.

RURAL EMERGENCY HOSPITAL PROGRAM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, keeping quantity and quality of healthcare in rural America is a constant responsibility of most Senators, because every Senator, even if you come from a high population State, you still have a lot of rural areas.

So one of the things that I have been interested in is keeping hospital services available in rural areas, even if they have a hard time keeping their beds as part of their hospital.

So, in December 2020, I was proud to sponsor and to pass into law the voluntary rural emergency hospital program under Medicare. CMS implemented this program 3 years later, in 2023.

The rural emergency hospital program allows rural hospitals to voluntarily right-size their healthcare infrastructure, while maintaining essential medical services for their rural communities. It gives these hospitals the flexibility to operate without hospital inpatient services, while still retaining a 24/7 emergency department, ambulance services, outpatient services, and more.

Today, 42 rural hospitals in 17 States have transitioned to a rural emergency

hospital model and, hence, are still operating. Some States are still working to establish the necessary hospital licensing flexibility so that they can participate in this program.

Rural emergency hospitals have been beneficial for many rural communities, and I want to give you three examples.

In Friend, NE, going to the rural emergency hospital model has "meant a lifeline" for that community.

In Union Springs, AL, the rural emergency hospital model has allowed their hospital "to remain open instead of leaving a void in the community."

In Scotland, SD, their rural emergency hospital will "enhance local health services."

I will submit a longer list of examples of how rural emergency hospitals have benefited rural communities to date.

I look forward to more rural hospitals converting in the near future.

Given it has been 5 years since the program became law, I would like to better understand the challenges rural hospitals and communities face when considering rural emergency hospital programs. So I am pursuing getting that information because I am committed to ensuring the rural emergency hospital remains a viable tool for rural hospitals and their communities.

I recently sent letters to existing rural emergency hospital CEOs and other rural healthcare leaders to get this information. I look forward to their feedback and continuing to strengthen rural healthcare, and I will keep my constituents in Iowa and my Senate colleagues so informed.

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



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I yield the floor.

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.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 3012

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The leader is correct. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second 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, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar under rule XIV.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this morning, we will offer my Democrat colleagues yet another opportunity to vote to reopen the government—to vote to reopen the government with a clean, nonpartisan CR.

That is right. We are not asking Democrats to swallow any new Republican policies. We are not asking them to swallow any partisan policy riders. We are simply asking them to extend current funding levels for a few weeks, while we work on full-year appropriations.

And you don't have to take my word for it. Everyone from the President of the Teamsters Union to mainstream media outlets has confirmed that the CR Republicans have put forward is a clean CR. But Senate Democrats chose to shut down the government anyway.

Now, Democrats' ostensible reason for their 16-day shutdown is because

they want Republicans to agree to bail out the healthcare mess that Democrats created—first with Obamacare and then passing and sunsetting enhanced Obamacare tax credits that were put in place for the COVID emergency, which I think, as we all know, is long behind us.

Despite the fact that we are only in this position because of Democrats' poor policy choices, Republicans are ready for that discussion. I am ready. My colleagues are ready. The Speaker and the President are ready—but only once we have reopened the government.

We are not conducting negotiations in a hostage situation, and we are not going to pay a \$1.5 trillion ransom to get Democrats to reopen government operations.

That is right—\$1.5 trillion. That is what Democrats are demanding. Between their Obamacare bailout and the other partisan policies that they have included, they want a \$1.5 trillion ransom to reopen the government for a handful of weeks.

Now, to put that number in perspective, that is equivalent to almost one quarter of the entire 2024 Federal budget—again, just to reopen the Federal Government for a handful of weeks.

Now, think about that. Their proposal: \$1.5 trillion of new spending, free healthcare benefits for noncitizens to open the government until October 31. That is what their proposal is.

So, literally, the American taxpayer is supposed to pay \$1.5 trillion so that the Democrats can open the government until Halloween, 2 weeks from now—\$1.5 trillion for 2 weeks. That is what we are talking about here.

Now, just imagine this for a minute, what might happen if we pay that ransom and agree to the Democrats' \$1.5 trillion demand. Well, what is going to happen the next time we need a continuing resolution? How much are Democrats going to demand then? Will we have to add another \$1.5 trillion every time we want to fund the government?

And they want to do it for 2 weeks—\$1.5 trillion for 2 weeks. I mean, where does this end?

When taxpayers and our economy have been totally destroyed by Democrats' profligate spending, is that where it ends?

No. While I am more than happy to discuss ways to alleviate Democrats' healthcare mess, we are not paying \$1.5 trillion or a \$1.5 trillion ransom to reopen the Federal Government.

As frustrated as I am with their continued refusal to reopen the government, I do have to say that I have some sympathy for Senate Democrats. While they may claim healthcare is the driver of what they are doing, we all know that the primary reason we are in this mess is because Democrats' far-left base demanded a showdown with President Trump.

Just 7 months ago, the Democrat leader voted with Republicans to keep the government open because he said,

while he didn't like the CR, a government shutdown would be much worse—“far worse.” But he caught a whole lot of flak for that decision from the far left, and so now, he is leading the shutdown charge.

He is not the only Democrat who voted to fund the government in March who is now a member of the shutdown brigade. But no matter how much pressure their far-left base is exerting, we still need some Democrats to do the right thing.

It would take just a handful of Democrats to reopen the government—just a handful of Democrats to enable us to resume paying air traffic controllers, law enforcement officers, and all of the other Federal workers; just a handful of Democrats to get the Federal Government working again for the American people.

Later today, Democrats are going to have another opportunity to make the right decision—two opportunities, in fact. They are going to have a chance to vote on the clean, nonpartisan CR which, as I said in the past, sits right there at the desk, which has passed the House of Representatives. We can pick this up, with five more Democrat votes, pass it today and send it to the President. The President signs it into law, and the government reopens.

So they are going to have a chance to vote on that yet again, and they are going to have a chance to vote to advance full-year Defense appropriations legislation, so that if we can't reopen the entire government, we can at least make some progress toward securing paychecks for our troops and for defending our country.

Just last week, the Senate passed the National Defense Authorization Act, which is essential legislation, something that we do every year to authorize defense spending and to authorize a pay raise for our troops. So this is the Democrats' chance to make good on that promise by funding the raise. The authorization bill authorized it. The Defense appropriations bill that we will vote on here later today will actually fund that raise so our troops can get paid.

Now, again, I realize that Democrats' far-left base is rallying in DC this weekend, which puts extra pressure on Democrats, but I hope that they will do the right thing anyway and vote to reopen the government. All we need is five. The bill is right there. It goes to the President, he signs it into law, and the government reopens.

The American people are depending on some—I am hoping—Democrats who are willing to put the interests of the American people ahead of the interests of their far-left base.

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, another week has passed, and the Trump shutdown drags on because Republicans refuse to work with or even negotiate with Democrats in a serious way to fix the healthcare crisis in America.

Let's be clear. Republicans are demanding something that hasn't happened in previous negotiations. They are saying: Our way or the highway. No negotiation. No Democratic input.

This is a highly partisan bill, and they want us to pass this partisan CR that has zero bipartisan input, zero conversation, and, frankly, zero relief for so many Americans who are afflicted by the healthcare crisis, which grows deeper and deeper, that crisis, each day.

For the last month, the Republican leader's favorite number has been 13. He keeps citing 13 CRs that we passed when I was majority leader. Of course we did. What he fails to mention—I am not sure if he forgets or he is deliberately trying to ignore it—is that those 13 CRs were the product of bipartisan negotiation, of serious conversation. We had to make changes in those bills when our Republican colleagues suggested it. They were in the minority, but they had a right to be heard—a right that has been completely shut out for Democrats under this new Republican majority. It is a new way of doing things, and it has led to the Trump shutdown, aided and abetted by Senate Republicans.

Leader THUNE talks about hostages. Yeah. The truth is that the hostages are the American people that the Republican majority and Trump are holding hostage because they won't help them with healthcare.

Americans are demanding that we do something, that we address this healthcare crisis. In terms of extending the ACA tax credits, 90 percent of Americans want them extended, 58 percent of Trump voters want them extended, and that is who is being held hostage by the Republican majority. Those are the unfortunate hostages—the American people and the crisis they face with healthcare.

The ACA crisis is looming over everyone's head. Yet Republicans seem ready to let people's premiums spike by tens of thousands. That is who the hostages are—the American people who need healthcare relief, who are demanding healthcare relief.

I will remind my Republican colleagues that open enrollment is in 2 weeks. That means that in 2 weeks, tens of millions of Americans are going to have to make life-changing decisions. Imagine getting a notice that your insurance is going to go up \$15,000 each year, as so many of my constituents and people across America are getting, and having to make the awful,

awful decision whether to have healthcare or not and then think: What if my kid gets sick, and I won't have healthcare? Well, what do I do? I can't afford \$5- or \$10,000 more a year.

That is the position Republicans are putting the American people in. That is the position Donald Trump is putting the American people in. And I don't know if Republicans don't comprehend it. I think they do.

Even when we went to the Oval Office, it seemed, when Leader JEFFRIES and I told President Trump about it, he was just beginning to understand the depth of the crisis.

But they either don't understand it or they are brutally callous—so interested in tax cuts for the very wealthy that they are willing to just savage healthcare for the American people.

Then a few Republicans, if they want to act on healthcare at all—many of them don't want to do anything, particularly in the House, where they seem to hold Speaker JOHNSON in a frightened situation. He is so afraid to do anything about healthcare because his rightwing will attack him. But for those who want to act on healthcare, they think we can wait until the very, very last minute, but the reality is, it will be far too late for the American people, and many of them will be stuck paying outrageous amounts of money.

The vast majority of Americans who have healthcare, who have ACA healthcare and other healthcare, are going to have to make their decisions by November 1, not January 1. Yet, despite this crisis, despite the enormity of the increase in costs that Americans will have to pay for their healthcare, Republicans continue to dig in. They continue to say: We don't want to help on healthcare. We don't want to negotiate with Democrats on healthcare.

They say there is nothing to negotiate.

That has to change soon. It has to for the sake of the American people. Democrats want to reopen the government as soon as possible so people can get back to work, so government services are not interrupted, but we need to fix the ACA premiums right now.

If Republicans fail to act now to lower premiums, the American people will, correctly—wish it didn't have to happen, wish we could solve this—the American people will have to hold the Republicans responsible when they face financial ruin.

NO KINGS RALLIES

Mr. President, now on the No Kings rallies, in a few days, millions of Americans in cities and towns, villages, rural areas across the country will exercise one of the most fundamental rights under the Constitution, one of the greatest things about America: exercising the right to peacefully protest, exercising the right to free speech.

This weekend's No Kings rallies will be an affirmation about what America is all about. We are a democracy in America. We have no Kings despite the fact that Trump has even said he wants

to become one and is acting in ways that are a threat to our democracy. In America, we do not have dictators, and we cannot allow Presidents to transform the Presidency into some form of dictatorship.

Now more than ever, for that reason, it is vital Americans from one end of the country to the other stand up for our basic freedoms because Donald Trump is eroding our democracy day by day by day.

So this weekend, I encourage Americans everywhere—Americans who love this country, who care about a democracy—I don't care if you are a Democrat or a Republican or Independent, a liberal or a moderate or a conservative—the vast majority of Americans want to preserve this democracy, and the No Kings rally says that in a very strong way, where millions of Americans—millions—will come together to say just that—that we don't want Kings in America.

I will join the marchers to celebrate what makes this country so great.

I say to my fellow citizens: Do not let Donald Trump or Republicans intimidate you into silence. That is what they want to do. They are afraid of the truth.

Republicans are going apoplectic because Americans are exercising their right to free speech even though some of them—too many of them—know that Donald Trump is threatening our democracy, and the American people are seeing just that.

That is the theme—the very appropriate theme—of this weekend's rallies: No Kings. No Kings.

So I urge Americans: Speak out. Use your voice. Exercise your rights to free speech.

And, of course, there should be no violence from either side.

I say to Americans: Show the world how much we love this country, how much we love our values, how much we love our democracy and want to preserve it, and don't be afraid. Trump and the Republicans want you to be afraid. They don't like free speech when it is free speech they don't want to hear. But we are not going to let them intimidate us.

For weeks, Republicans have tried to vilify these rallies. They call them the most ridiculous of terms—"Hate America" rallies. These are love-America rallies. They call them "terrorist" rallies. That is just despicable. They are trying to scare people away from their basic right to free speech, but we will not be intimidated. These are not hate rallies, as some of the right wingers try to say; these are save-America rallies, love-America rallies, care-about-America rallies.

Not only is this a right to protest—which we all treasure or have treasured until recently, with this new administration seeming to not want rights to protest or even free speech when they don't agree with it—this is the right thing to do, a necessity when Donald Trump weaponizes the Justice Department to become his attack dog and go

after his political enemies; when he attacks the courts; when he intimidates the free press and tries to tell networks they are going to lose their licenses if they say things he doesn't agree with; when people are arrested and put in jail—American citizens—with no real cause and not even identification of who is making the arrest.

I am so proud of Americans who will stand up peacefully. There is nothing—nothing—more American than exercising the right to free speech, especially the right to dissent, especially when our democracy is at risk because of what Trump and his Republican cronies are trying to do.

Remember the last No Kings rally. We saw millions of people—all backgrounds, all corners of the country—gathering peacefully. We saw American flags as far as the eye can see, and that is natural. The American flag stands for free speech. The American flag stands for the right to peacefully protest even if Trump and his cronies don't even understand that or don't want to understand that.

At these rallies, we saw people who love this country; we saw people who want to stand up for American values; we saw people who want to preserve our precious democracy. That, sadly, is what many Republicans want to silence. We will not be silenced.

Donald Trump and many Republicans in Congress are using intimidation, lies, and bully tactics to prevent people from standing up, speaking out, exercising our precious constitutional rights. But I say again to every American out there who wants to participate in these weekend rallies: Do not let Donald Trump or Republicans intimidate you into silence. That is what they want.

That is how dictators evolve—when good people of all different beliefs and backgrounds stay silent. No Kings day says: We will not stay silent.

I say to the American people: Do not be afraid to exercise your right to free speech. Be proud that you are doing it. Do not be afraid to peacefully protest against Donald Trump's eroding of our democracy, and do not be afraid to show how much you love this beautiful democracy—as the Founding Fathers called it, "God's noble experiment." We have to keep this precious democracy.

YOUNG REPUBLICANS

Mr. President, now on the Young Republicans—another sad chapter in how the Republican Party has devolved over the last few years. It has been 2 days since POLITICO published a horrifying story revealing thousands—thousands—of private messages containing racist, sexist, and violent comments from prominent members of the Young Republicans organization. Yet President Trump and the Republican leadership have remained silent. There is nothing but radio silence from Republican leaders who seem to claim they worry about combating politically violent rhetoric.

The silence from Republican leaders in the face of Hitler jokes and gas chamber jokes is deafening. Where are they? When they don't like somebody who says something on the left, they are the first to criticize. Well, this is one of the nastiest, most vicious things that we have ever seen written—by Young Republicans, no less—and the Republican leadership, including President Trump, is silent.

As I said, Republicans never miss a chance to preach about violent rhetoric when it comes from the other side, and, of course, that should be condemned, but now that it is coming from their own ranks, they are silent.

Some Republicans seem to even excuse this vile behavior. This is amazing. The Vice President of the United States, no less, JD Vance, dismissed the messages as just a college group chat. Can you imagine if it was a group of people on the left saying some things, if he would say the same thing? A college group chat? Does JD Vance really think glorifying Hitler and gas chambers is just a silly joke? Imagine—imagine—if it came from the other side. We all know that Vance would be losing his mind right now. He would be all over FOX News decrying it. But now, since it is coming from his own ranks, he is just excusing. Despicable. Disgraceful. Shameful.

No matter if you are a Republican or Democrat or in the middle, we all must condemn this nasty behavior and make it clear that this type of vicious rhetoric is unacceptable in America.

GATEWAY

Mr. President, on Gateway, yesterday, President Trump and his administration "terminated" funding for Gateway. Gateway is the most important infrastructure project in America, period. It will keep our economy moving, our region connected, tens of thousands of union workers on the job. Donald Trump is trying to kill it again in pure spite and with sheer stupidity. It is petty revenge politics.

Who gets hurt? It is going to screw over hundreds of thousands of New York and New Jersey commuters, choke off our economy, and kill good-paying jobs.

It affects New Jersey. More people use it to commute from New Jersey than from New York. What Trump has done on Gateway is vindictive, reckless, and foolish. And if Donald Trump thinks he can use New Yorkers, use New Jerseyans, commuters, small businesses, union construction workers, and the first responders as political pawns, it will backfire on him spectacularly.

We will fight the President on this in every way to preserve this crucial, vital infrastructure project—crucial and vital to New York, New Jersey, the northeast economy, and the whole American economy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

WAIVING QUORUM CALLS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum calls with respect to the following cloture motions: Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371; Executive Calendar No. 460.

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today is day 16 of the Schumer shutdown. Democrats have an opportunity to end the charade today. We will be voting in the next few moments.

I expect they won't. Why? Well, for starters, the minority leader believes "every day gets better for us." I am not sure who the "us" is, but that is what he believes. He must be talking about Democrat leadership, Democrat politicians. He can't be talking about people all across the country—not the people who work every day to keep our country safe, not the Federal workers who aren't getting paid. Oh, no, he can't be talking about them when he refers to "every day gets better for us."

What Senator SCHUMER and Democrats in this body are really saying is this: Every day of this Schumer shutdown strengthens their alliances with the far-left activist groups. These radicals hold the reins on today's Democratic Party. They are driving the stage coach. SCHUMER is not leading this. JEFFRIES isn't leading this. The people that are driving the stage coach are the leftwing activists, and they are driving it over the cliff.

Let me give you another reason why I suspect Democrats will, once again, refuse to reopen the government. It is because the far-left activist groups are pressuring the Democrats to keep the government closed until after their radical anti-America rally, which is going to be held this weekend.

The rally, which some have labeled the "I Hate America" rally, is going to take place Saturday, and there will be rallies in DC and across the country. We just heard from the minority leader on the floor, inviting people to attend these rallies, to participate in what I have referred to and others have as the "I Hate America" rally. He is a cheerleader for these far-left activist groups and their causes. All these rallies are going to be led by the far-left activists and all will be calling on the Democrats to keep the government closed.

The Democrats in this body are beholden to every single one of these far-left activist groups, groups like #ResistTrump and American Atheists.

Here is a headline from POLITICO:

CHUCK SCHUMER's critics are satisfied—for now.

The article goes on to quote the head of the far-left activist group called Indivisible. This group is organizing Saturday's radical rally. The leader of the far-left group says of the minority leader:

He hasn't surrendered yet. I call that progress, and we're cheering him on now.

Well, 7 months ago, that same person had a very different message for the minority leader. That same person said:

Senator SCHUMER should step aside as leader. Every Democrat in the Senate should call for him to do so.

So what changed? Well, Senator SCHUMER started toeing the line of the far-left group. He shut down the government in spite of the fact that 13 times, when Joe Biden was President, he voted for a clean resolution to keep the government open.

What changed? Well, the minority leader is now the puppet of the radical, extremely dangerous, scary wing of his party. He huddled with the far-left activist group for months before this shutdown. For months, they orchestrated, organized this shutdown in Senator SCHUMER's office. They organized a war room for the shutdown. They are calling the tune. Senator SCHUMER even gloated to Punchbowl News:

We thought about this long in advance.

This isn't something that just happened. They had been planning this. This is premeditated. This is a political game for Senator SCHUMER and the Democrats, and it is a dangerous game for every other American.

People aren't receiving paychecks because Senate Democrats want to prove their allegiance to the far left. Democrats want a standing ovation this Saturday when they address the radical wing of their party; the wing that is holding the reins and holding them tightly; the wing that is extreme, dangerous, and scary; the wing that is pro-crime and anti-America. That is what we are facing.

Senate Democrats want to be cheered on for holding hostage the paychecks of the TSA agents and air traffic controllers.

Meanwhile, Americans are sick and tired of Democrats' dangerous political game. They just want to get back to work. Today, Democrats are going to have an opportunity to prove they aren't beholden to the far left of the party. We are going to have a vote. We are going to vote on a bipartisan appropriations bill to fund the Department of Defense, to fund the warfighters, the troops, the people who keep our Nation and our allies safe. This bill has already come through a bipartisan Appropriations Committee. The vote was 26 to 3. Twenty-six voted for it, only 3 voted against it. We are bringing that same bill to the floor today, and we are going to see if the Democrats are going to work with us on a bipartisan appropriations bill. They claim they want regular order. They claim they want things to work together. And it is a bill that they have said themselves is necessary.

Remember, Senator SCHUMER, last year, didn't bring a single appropriations bill to this floor of the Senate, in spite of the fact the 12 bipartisan bills passed out of the committee. He refused to bring any of them to this floor to fund the government when he was majority leader.

I wonder whom he is going to side with today. Senate Republicans this year already approved three appropriations bills to fund the government. This would be the fourth. Democrats are holding the government hostage. They are holding the American people hostage. Republicans are committed to reopening the government.

We are going to vote against that today. We are holding votes on our bipartisan, clean continuing resolution, one that Democrats have voted on 13 times in favor of when Joe Biden was in the White House.

I believe that Democrats have an opportunity, as well as an obligation, to end the Schumer shutdown. We should end it today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

MARIA CORINA MACHADO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week we learned that Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado had won this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

This is a photograph of her. She did so for her steadfast and courageous fight for democracy in the once-proud Nation of Venezuela that, unfortunately, now under a man named Maduro, has descended into chaos and dictatorship.

I had the chance to visit Venezuela in 2018, just before the country's strongman Nicolas Maduro staged a sham election. The years that followed were a predictable disaster, bringing further suffering on the Venezuelan people.

In late 2023, under severe repression, the Venezuelan opposition organized a primary election that selected Ms. Machado as its candidate for the July 2024 Presidential election. Using a tired old playbook, the Maduro regime refused to allow her on the final ballot. Undeterred, her colleague Edmundo Gonzalez was able to run in her stead. Not surprisingly, given the country's near-failed state status, he won over Maduro with two-thirds of the vote in a process meticulously documented by domestic election observers.

What did the Maduro regime do? It, shamefully, refused to swear him, as his successor, into office and forced him to flee the country. But Maria Corina Machado refused to leave. She stayed while the regime arrested key opposition supporters and threatened her as well.

While she remains in hiding for her own safety, she has continued to fight for those election results to be respected and a return to democracy in Venezuela. That steadfast courage in the face of such cruelty is incredible and certainly worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN and I were on the telephone yesterday with this brave young lady. She was determined as ever to see a better future for the people of Venezuela. She has my continued admiration and support in that effort.

MIDDLE EAST

Mr. President, I want to say a few words about events in the Middle East and Ukraine. Over the long weekend, the world saw what is, hopefully, the beginning of the end of the war in Gaza.

I want to congratulate President Trump for the historic agreement that made this possible. There are still critical elements to be negotiated and settled. But the first phase, which included the release of Israeli hostages and a cease-fire, is a good-faith start to a more inclusive agreement. It won't be easy. The remaining steps will be difficult and require sustained attention from President Trump and our allies that helped make the beginning of this agreement a reality.

As New York Times columnist Tom Friedman wisely wrote this week, "You don't have a second to rest. As someone who wants you to succeed, I have to remind you: As hard as the first state was, you have not . . . seen hard yet."

I agree. There has been so much pain and suffering sparked 2 years ago from Hamas's brutal October 7 attack and the ensuing war, and it will take a long time, if ever, to heal. But this is the best chance in a long time toward a more hopeful future where both people, Palestinians and Israelis, can live in peace.

Similarly, I hope President Trump will now focus momentum from these events and equal attention on seeking an end to the war in Ukraine. I have said before, I don't begrudge President Trump for trying to engage Russian President Putin to negotiate an end to this terrible conflict. But it should be clear to everyone, and I hope it is clear to President Trump, that Putin isn't interested nor serious. In fact, Putin has only increased his deadly attacks on Ukraine since such good-faith outreach by the United States.

Similarly, it is long overdue that the Senate pass bipartisan Russian sanctions, a bill that now has 80 bipartisan sponsors, a bill I am happy to support.

Putin only responds to force—military and economic—and it is time for the President and Congress to stand behind the people of Ukraine and to increase his pressure on President Putin.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, I would like to respond to the comments made by my colleague and friend Senator BARRASSO from Wyoming on the floor this morning.

Why is this government shut down? Why? What is the reason for it? The President's party is in control in the White House, in the House, and in the Senate and yet we stopped and the government shut down. Why? Because there is a fundamental issue we are trying to resolve for the good of the American people.

Well, let me give you an illustration.

What if I told you, if you live in Illinois, that, on October 27, your health insurance company is going to send

you a notice at your home; that it is going to announce what is going to happen to your health insurance premiums on your insurance, on January 1 of this coming year; and that it is also going to tell you, for many people, that there is going to be a dramatic increase—dramatic—of 114 percent; that your premium is going to more than double?

Some people will say: That is all right. I have got plenty of money in the bank. I am not worried about it a bit.

But most people will say: Doubled? It is already too high. What am I going to do? How am I going to afford this? What is it going to do to my family's budget if I have to pay twice as much on January 1 for my health insurance? How did this happen? Who did this?

It is called the "Big, Beautiful Budget Bill" of President Trump. That is what did it.

There is a tax credit that is available for millions of American families to help them pay for their health insurance premiums. The Republicans eliminate it, and when they eliminate it, people are on their own to come up with money to pay for their health insurance.

Is it important? I think it is critical.

It is one of the most basic questions you are going to ask when you ask: How is your family doing? Are you doing OK when it comes to health insurance? If you have an unexpected, large medical bill, do you have insurance to cover it?

Well, for thousands—maybe millions—of Americans, the new health insurance plan is going to be too expensive for them to pay the premiums.

So what do you do?

Well, you look for a plan that has a lot of money in out-of-pocket expenditures for the people who are covered. It is the skinny policy, only in catastrophes and calamities. That, unfortunately, is all you have.

In the meantime, you are in a situation where your family, tomorrow, may face a medical bill which will break the bank. That is what it comes down to.

That is what this shutdown is about. We believe the Republicans should help us in helping the families across America.

As I said, October 27 is the day of reckoning in Illinois for people who are policyholders there. It is going to happen across the United States. It is a policy they created on the Republican side, and we should work with them to change it—the sooner, the better.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). 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. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

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?

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 Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) 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 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 573 Leg.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—4

Cassidy	Tillis
Duckworth	Tuberville

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 45.

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.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

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 bill 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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 460, Harold D. Mooty III, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

John Thune, Bernie Moreno, Katie Boyd Britt, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, Pete Ricketts, Markwayne Mullin, Tim Sheehy, Jon Husted, Eric Schmitt, Jim Justice, James E. Risch, Tom Cotton, Steve Daines, Ted Budd, John R. Curtis, John Boozman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Harold D. Mooty III, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "yea."

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 62, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 574 Leg.]

YEAS—62

Banks	Hagerty	Moreno
Barrasso	Hassan	Mullin
Blackburn	Hawley	Murkowski
Boozman	Hoeven	Paul
Britt	Husted	Reed
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Ricketts
Capito	Johnson	Risch
Collins	Justice	Rounds
Coons	Kaine	Schiff
Cornyn	Kelly	Schmitt
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cramer	King	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Klobuchar	Sheehy
Cruz	Lankford	Shaheen
Curtis	Lee	Sullivan
Daines	Lummis	Thune
Durbin	Marshall	Welch
Ernst	McConnell	Whitehouse
Fischer	McCormick	Wicker
Graham	Moody	Young
Grassley	Moran	

Banks	Hagerty	Moreno
Barrasso	Hassan	Mullin
Blackburn	Hawley	Murkowski
Boozman	Hoeven	Paul
Britt	Husted	Reed
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Ricketts
Capito	Johnson	Risch
Collins	Justice	Rounds
Coons	Kaine	Schiff
Cornyn	Kelly	Schmitt
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cramer	King	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Klobuchar	Sheehy
Cruz	Lankford	Shaheen
Curtis	Lee	Sullivan
Daines	Lummis	Thune
Durbin	Marshall	Welch
Ernst	McConnell	Whitehouse
Fischer	McCormick	Wicker
Graham	Moody	Young
Grassley	Moran	

NAYS—34

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Kim	Schumer
Blumenthal	Luján	Slotkin
Blunt Rochester	Markey	Smith
Booker	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cantwell	Murphy	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murray	Warnock
Fetterman	Ossoff	Warren
Gallego	Padilla	
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—4

Cassidy	Tillis
Duckworth	Tuberville

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). On this vote, the yeas are 62, the nays are 34. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Harold D. Mooty III, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, while Republican leaders continue trying to ignore this healthcare crisis and insisting on shutting down the government rather than even considering talking to us about how we prevent these premiums from doubling across the country, I have been listening to folks back home who are painfully aware healthcare premiums are about to skyrocket and who are deeply concerned about what it is going to mean for their families and for their communities.

So last week, when the Republican leader sent us home, yet again, instead of working with us to end this shutdown and address the healthcare crisis, I made a visit to Sea Mar Community Health Centers' Oak Harbor Clinic. Why? To hear from doctors and healthcare providers about what is just beyond the horizon if Republicans insist on inaction. I heard about how healthcare cuts Republicans passed are going to devastate our hospitals, devastate our clinics and health centers, and I heard about how these massive premium hikes that are being announced right now—the ones Republicans are trying very hard to ignore—are going to push millions of people off their healthcare plans.

One person I spoke with serves on the board of an insurer on the Washington Health Benefit Exchange. He warned me that, if we do not save these ACA tax credits, they are anticipating so many customers will be priced out that the number of individuals they cover through the marketplace will drop 35 to 50 percent.

You know, there is already a loud chorus of people speaking out con-

cerned about this in my State and across the country. I have spoken with small business owners who are going to see their premiums double, even triple, and some quadruple, who are having to rethink whether they try to keep their small business doors open and maybe go without coverage or, alternatively, just pack it in and try to find a job with an employer-sponsored plan.

I have spoken with retirees that are not yet old enough for Medicare who have gotten notices that their monthly premiums are about to go through the roof. In some cases, we are talking about thousands of dollars a month.

And here is the thing, not only do I know there are more stories like this across the country, I also know there are going to be many more stories pouring in very shortly because the reality is, there are rate hikes in the mail right now going out to people who had no idea about the Republican healthcare crisis and that it was going to hit them in the end. Rates are being set now. People are window shopping in many States and panicking from the sticker shock.

In Idaho, open enrollment is now underway. It has started. That means right now families are seeing the cold, hard numbers and the sharp increase it will cost them to stay covered.

And in 2 weeks, that same nightmare is coming to every State in the country.

Who do Republicans think they are fooling when they try to just ignore this? What in the world are they talking about when they say “deal with it later”? These price hikes are going to get locked in. There is no later. We need to act now.

There was “an earlier,” though. Perhaps we should talk about that for a minute because Democrats have been calling for action on this for months. And where were Republicans? Why wouldn’t Republicans sit down with us to talk about healthcare in September? Why wouldn’t they talk about healthcare in August? Why couldn’t they find a single minute to work with us on healthcare in July or June or even May? After all, they had plenty of time this summer to shovel tax breaks at billionaires and put over a trillion dollars in healthcare funding on the chopping block.

They spent months on billionaires, but they can’t be bothered when it comes to healthcare. They can’t be bothered to help our working families. They would rather shut down the government than sit down and talk about preventing these premiums from doubling.

But Democrats are going to talk about healthcare, whether Republicans want to or not.

House Republicans have been hiding from this issue for a month. I am not kidding. They have literally been on vacation for nearly a month now. Hiding from this problem will not make it go away. Those rate hikes in the mail—they are going out to our constituents.

Window shopping is going live. Folks can now go online in many States and see the exact cost of Republican inaction.

And open enrollment is still marching ahead. It is underway now in Idaho. And in a few weeks, it is going to be across the Nation.

If you are a Republican who thinks that somehow families will not notice their premiums doubling, somehow they won’t mind that their healthcare costs jump a couple hundred dollars a month—or, in some cases, by the way, a couple thousand dollars a month—here is your advice: Stop taking your marching orders from billionaires like President Trump and start listening to those people back home. Talk to the farmers. Actually, a quarter of them are covered on these exchanges. Talk to small business owners like I have; talk to employees, many of whom are covered through the exchange, because they are the ones who will feel the pain from this and they know it and they are begging Congress to act.

And do you know what? Three fourths of the people who rely on the ACA tax credits live in red States. And the 10 States where folks who lose these tax credits will see the largest premium increases? They are all red States. So shutdown or not, Republicans can only ignore this issue if they ignore their own constituents.

So to our Republican leaders: Don’t hide from your constituents. Don’t hide from this healthcare crisis you are causing. Quit hiding from the negotiating table. The clock is not just ticking; the alarm is going off. We need to act now before these premium hikes become unavoidable.

Democrats are at the table. We always have been at the table. We are ready to work out a deal that reopens the government and addresses the healthcare crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, it is day 16 of the Schumer shutdown. During this time, President Trump has been working to guarantee that our troops get paid, ensure women and children continue receiving food assistance, and end the conflict in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the Democrats continue holding the government hostage. As a result, air traffic controller shortages are causing flight delays, and some rural airports in Iowa may soon be forced to suspend operations. Seniors have lost access to some health services. The FDA is unable to process new drug and medical device applications, delaying the availability of new medical products.

And Senator SCHUMER is taking pride in his shutdown, claiming that “every day gets better for us.”

Who is this “us” that it is getting better for? Because I know my folks back home really don’t appreciate that attitude. Only a Washington politician would delight in causing such dysfunction.

And while Congress will be paid for failing to do its job, many essential government employees who have continued to work through this shutdown will likely miss their next paycheck.

The President is ensuring our troops get paid this week, a move that is being protested by some Democrats.

Now, my daughter serves on Active Duty. She is a young Army officer, and she had to sit down and counsel her troops last week on where they could go to get loans so they could make their obligated payments.

So, thank you, President Trump, for taking care of my daughter and her soldiers.

Meanwhile, 750,000 nonessential government employees—who haven't worked at all in these past weeks—will be paid for doing nothing. It costs \$400 million every workday to provide back-pay to those that are furloughed during Schumer's shutdown. As of today, the pricetag to pay nonessential bureaucrats not to work is \$4.8 billion—\$4.8 billion.

Taxpayers should all be asking: Why is Washington spending money on anyone or anything that is nonessential?

President Trump is permanently eliminating many of these nonessential positions as part of a reduction in force, or RIF.

So here are some of my suggestions for getting rid of the riffraff with a RIF.

First up, eliminate the positions of Federal employees and contractors who weren't even working before the government shutdown. While millions of Americans have two or more jobs to make ends meet, these Federal employees aren't working at all. There are dozens of National Laboratory employees with nothing to do who spend the workday catnapping or playing cards and games.

To pass time, one of them started journaling. One of his entries reads:

Did nothing all day today over 10 hours in here.

The following day he wrote:

I do hope to play another good game of chess.

They are not the only ones with nothing to do. A Department of Energy contractor actually filed a complaint that he was getting paid for work he wasn't doing. So good on him—at least he is honest. For years, he and his co-workers have been spending their time looking for things to do, watching Netflix and taking naps. He says he is “begging for work,” adding, “I can't believe I am getting paid to do nothing.”

If Federal employees can't even justify their own salary, how can anyone else?

I have also uncovered bureaucrats who are holding several different government jobs simultaneously but aren't doing any of them. For example, a full-time HUD employee was being paid for two other full-time—got this, folks? She was being paid for two other full-time government contractor jobs.

That is three full-time jobs in total. She frequently billed taxpayers for working more than 24 hours in a single day.

Gosh, if I could find more than 24 hours in a day, that would be pretty extraordinary.

But this woman was paid \$225,000 for hours she never worked in nearly 3 years. Three full-time jobs, people—not working any of them.

This isn't an isolated case, either.

I have introduced my Double Dippers Act to crosscheck paychecks and payrolls to identify and stop bureaucrats from double billing taxpayers for work they are not even doing.

OK, don't laugh. This is true here.

There are plenty of other non-essential jobs that can be nominated immediately, beginning with the multitude of gimmicky government mascots. I am not talking about Smokey the Bear—OK?—not talking about Smokey the Bear, but rather other costume characters you probably have never even heard of, like the National Parks Service's Lupe the Ringtail, who is so frightening that Lupe makes children cry. Owlie Skywarn—I am sure you have all heard of Owlie Skywarn, with the National Weather Service.

Another Parks Service mascot is Riley the Roadrunner; Puddles the Blue Goose, with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and everybody's favorite, Franklin the Fair Market Fox, from HUD.

I say, let's “fur-lough” these furballs forever.

Tax dollars should never be spent paying for any of these do-nothing jobs, especially when there are severe staffing shortages for critical jobs, like air traffic controllers and VA healthcare providers. The folks who are working these important jobs are too often overworked, understaffed, and underappreciated. So these folks can go.

I commend all of those essential workers who are doing the jobs that we need done on a daily basis. They continue to answer the call of duty during the Schumer shutdown without knowing when they may receive their next paycheck. Thank you for putting your country first. And on behalf of my fellow Iowans, I would also like to extend to them a very hardy thank-you.

To those who have been collecting paychecks without even working, even before the shutdown began, all I can really say is thanks for nothing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to address the moment that we are in here in the U.S. Senate. We are about to proceed to a vote on a motion that the majority leader has laid on the floor.

I am the senior Democrat on the subcommittee of Appropriations that writes the bill that funds our national

defense. I have worked well and closely with Senator McCONNELL in this undertaking this year. I am about to vote no on proceeding to take up the House Defense bill, which may surprise some of my colleagues from both parties or my constituents or folks who are wondering: What the heck is going on here? So I wanted to take a few minutes and speak to this moment, my vote, and hopefully our path forward.

Americans care deeply about security—about the security that comes from knowing that you and your family won't suddenly be bankrupted by unexpected healthcare costs, the loss of health insurance, and the security that comes from knowing that millions of highly skilled, trained, and dedicated American men and women are on the line around the world, shoulder to shoulder with our allies, defending America's security and that of the world, and we need a path towards addressing both.

The Federal Government is currently shut down. It is shut down because we can't come to an agreement here in the Senate, with the President, and with the House to deal with the expiring Affordable Care Act tax credits that make it affordable.

Letters are about to go out in my home State of Delaware that will tell folks who get their health insurance through the Affordable Care Act that their rates are going to go up dramatically—in many cases, more than 100 percent—because of expiring tax credits.

Well, what has that got to do with national defense? Bluntly, the process here in this Senate, the process with our President, and the process of spending or not spending appropriated funds has destroyed a lot of the trust that is essential for the Senate as a body to work, for the Congress to legislate, and for our Federal Government to reopen.

In the last Congress, I was the chair of the subcommittee that wrote the appropriations bill. Roughly, \$32 billion went to USAID—an Agency that no longer exists. Some of you may remember DOGE—an Elon Musk-led effort to get into and tear up and, in the case of USAID, to tear apart our longstanding, decades-old, U.S. foreign assistance program. It did a lot more damage than just that.

In many ways, the actions that began in January and picked up speed in the spring caused alarm and concern by many of us in the Senate that we have an OMB Director and an administration willing to violate bipartisan agreements from the last Congress, commitments to spend money, and contracts and agreements with partners and allies around the world and across many different areas.

In fact, just yesterday, a Federal district court judge in California ruled that the reductions in force—the layoffs, the RIFs—announced by the administration during this current shutdown were illegal because they were targeted and partisan.

So many things have happened this year that it is tough to keep track, but the combination of them has led to a reduction in trust between our two caucuses—trust that is essential to having an understanding and an agreement to move forward.

Let me be clear about this year's appropriations process. It was positive from when we started in March-April to when we concluded on the committee in July and voted out eight strong, bipartisan bills. The Senate appropriations process for at least eight of the bills—the biggest bills—was constructive and bipartisan. In fact, the bill that I worked on closely with Senator McCANN was voted out of the committee by 26 to 3. So, too, were other key bills that deal with housing, that deal with education, and that deal with healthcare. They came out of the committee 26 to 3 and are ready for action on the floor of the Senate. Yet we are not proceeding to them today.

There are four bills remaining in committee that are unaddressed, and the committee should focus on them, take them up, and work them through. There are three bills that have already passed the Senate and are all but done being confereed with the House.

What I have heard from my Republican colleagues is that Leader THUNE is trying to move ahead with a process that would put the Defense bill, the Health and Education bill, the Housing and Transportation bill, which we call Labor-HHS, and T-HUD—very compelling names, I know—he wants to put together a package of many of these bills. Well, if that is the intention, we need communication between our leaders and our caucuses.

We have had a positive and productive process in Senate appropriations this year, but the leader's motion to go to the House Defense bill was not expected, was not discussed, and was not clear to my caucus as to what happens next. So it is with some real regret that I will vote no today but will continue to talk with my colleagues about how we move forward.

I want to take a moment and just speak to the Defense bill that we have worked so hard on and that came out of the committee with such strong bipartisan support. It would provide a better quality of life to the men and women of the American military and their families. It would invest, in total, \$852 billion in our national defense—expanding shipyards, expanding munition production, creating stockpiles of critical weapons that we know we need for the future, investing in cutting-edge technologies—and would reject some of the Trump budget cuts in aid to Ukraine, to Taiwan, and to our Baltic allies, who are making positive progress in key areas.

Our work together on this bill has generally been a positive experience between Senators and our staffs. Our challenge was the Department, and it was the Secretary and his budgeteers, who often appeared at hearings and

meetings without their homework done, without the details ready, without a budget ready to go.

Some of you may have forgotten this, but a principal focus of the administration and the majority here during this same time was the so-called Big Beautiful Bill and trying to put \$160 billion onto the Defense Department not through regular order and not through the usual budget processes but through this one-time infusion of cash.

Senator McCANN and I historically haven't agreed on much, but we certainly have agreed on this in hearings and in speeches: If we are trying to invest in the future of our Armed Forces, whether it be new planes, new ships, new systems, or new technology, doing it with 1-year money is unwise and unsound.

We need to get back to regular order. We need to get back to a reliable and predictable appropriations process. In order to do that, we need bipartisan agreement that rejects severe cuts; that restores funding for programs like the NIH and the CDC, which is done in the bipartisan Labor-H bill; and that rejects cuts to WIC and rural housing, which is done in the Ag bill. We need to move these bills forward.

The way we move these bills forward is by linking arms and making it clear: We reject rescissions. We want to appropriate beyond just defense. We want a broader package and to have clarity from our President, the House, and the Senate about how we address the imminent health security crisis that confronts millions of Americans and, for today and tomorrow, keeps our government shut down.

Americans care about security. We care about security for our families from healthcare costs, and we care about security for our Nation from the threats that are greater than at any time in my adult life.

Let's find a path toward working together to address them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I came in at the tail end of the comments from my colleague and my friend from Delaware. He has underscored some points that I think are important to remind us here in the Senate but also people who are watching as we are in day 16 of the government shutdown.

There is no great secret as to how we get the government fully functioning again. It is going to come about through cooperation. It is going to come about through good-faith efforts by good folks who are intentioned to address the matters in front of us.

We deal with politics. This is a political world. But I can tell you that so many of the people who I am talking to don't really care about the politics of our situation. They don't care if the Democrats are winning or the Republicans are winning. They feel like, as Americans, they are the ones who are

being caught in this backwash. They don't understand why their flight was delayed or canceled this morning. They don't understand why the individual that they are trying to get through to at an Agency is not picking up the phone or they get a message saying that this office is going to be closed until the government is reopened. What they care about is that we figure it out—that we figure it out. That requires communication. It requires talking with one another.

That is why I appreciate much of what my colleague has shared today, because as we are positioning as two sides that are seemingly dug in on this 16th day of a shutdown, real people are wondering: Is their government going to be there for them?

ALASKA FLOODS

Mr. President, I didn't come to the floor this afternoon with a focus, necessarily, on the shutdown. I came to speak about a situation in my State that has literally—literally—closed off, shut down, collapsed whole communities.

We had a storm—actually, a series of storms—hit the west coast of Alaska, just over the weekend. In this smaller inset here, you have got the State of Alaska, but this square panel is where the extent of the damage is.

This was a thousand-mile storm going from the north up in Kotzebue all the way down into the Bristol Bay region, with the bulk of the damage on these small Native communities that are focused on the coast and up, going into the Kuskokwim River. It has been a disaster of major proportions.

As we speak, we have communities that are being evacuated. And we understand, when we talk about evacuation with them, what I mean. But people in these villages—in the villages of Kipnuk and Kwigillingok—are being told that everyone from your village is being evacuated. And it doesn't mean that you go to a town that is a few miles down the road to get to safety. It means that you are airlifted 500 miles to Anchorage or possibly closer, to Bethel.

Before I detail some of that, I think it is important to recognize that what we had happening over the weekend, while this massive storm—a storm that was bringing winds in excess of 100 miles an hour, flood surges that were pummeling the coast with inundation levels like we have never seen before—we heard, saw, and read the stories of people who were trapped in their homes at night when the home was literally lifted off of its foundation and carried away in the current with families inside.

One detail was of a father and four children, who woke his children up to say: We all need to go to one corner of the house in case the house tips—but to hear the fear, really the terror, of being trapped into your own home as it is moving out into the ocean current.

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Alaska National Guard were on deck, as they

always are, saving lives. The U.S. Coast Guard rescued and saved 34 people. The Alaska Air Guard saved eight. The Alaska National Guard saved nine. Unfortunately, we did have one individual who is confirmed dead and two others who are believed and feared deceased, as well, with one yet unaccounted for. But sharing pictures of the extent of the damage, it is amazing that more did not lose their lives.

This is a picture of the village of Kipnuk, with the inundation. Here is the airport here, the airstrip, and the community literally entirely beneath the water.

In this, you can see a little more clearly how the floodwaters have come forth throughout the entire village. Again, you see boats that are upended, the roofs that are ripped off of homes. The destruction is just violent—a home that is drifting in the river water.

This is in Kipnuk. This is a picture also in Kipnuk. Kipnuk is a community—most of these communities, many of the communities are what we call boardwalk communities—boardwalk communities because we don't have roads. So you move about on small four-wheelers. That is how you get to where you need to get, whether it is to school or otherwise.

But, literally, everything in the community was upended. Power poles snapped in half. So you can imagine the condition: There is no power. There is no water. There is no safe place.

These individuals have been initially rescued to the schools where they were kept safe, but now what we are in the midst of is this massive, massive evacuation project. More than 1,000 people—again, from 11 communities—have now been displaced.

You had a situation where, in Kipnuk, this village, you have about 680 people who were evacuated into this small school. In Kwigillingok, about 400 people took shelter at the local schools for a couple of days. And keep in mind, they don't have running water, and restroom facilities aren't functioning.

So the efforts that we saw from our search-and-rescue efforts, from our Coast Guard, from the Guard, from those who have come to the aid now—everyone from the World Kitchen to Samaritan's Purse, to the Red Cross—those efforts have been considerable, and we are getting people to shelter and to safety now.

This is a picture that was taken late yesterday evening. This is the inside of a C-130. There are about 300 people from Kipnuk who have been put inside the C-130. They are all sitting on the floor there, and they are being evacuated to Anchorage, AK. Again, this is 400 miles away.

The efforts in Anchorage are considerable to make sure that they are going to be safe. It is a mass shelter. Basically, it is in our sports arena, the Alaska Airlines Center, in an auxiliary gym. They are able to put 350 to 500 people in there. We are putting a con-

vention center facility together to house another 800.

This is all very, very temporary. But the reality is that for so many of these people, they will not have homes to go back to. About 120 of the homes in Kipnuk are not repairable. They are completely, completely destroyed. About 40 are possible to be repaired.

Again, this is the 16th of October, and the conditions in this part of the State of Alaska right now are that we are moving into winter. We are moving into winter. So the idea that you can do construction in the wintertime, it doesn't happen. The last fuel barge to this region until next spring, until probably late May or June—the last fuel barge—has come and gone. That means the ability to move supplies in and out, to do any kind of construction—that is not happening.

So for so many, these are going to be people who will be without a home. But I would remind you, they are not homeless. They are not homeless. They are evacuees. And all they want—all they want—is the ability to be safe somewhere for the moment. But looking forward, it is going to be hard. It is going to be very, very challenging to address the issues that they face in their community with the threats that they have.

The storm that they had—we get storms every year. We get storms every year, but what we are seeing is an increasing frequency of lethal storms.

Several years ago, we had Typhoon Merbok, again, coming across from Japan, that just pummeled the coast. Again, it was a thousand-mile storm.

We were still recovering from Hurricane Merbok—or Typhoon Merbok; and then just last year, again, another series of disasters along this same coast; and then, this weekend, Typhoon Halong, once again, coming across from Japan.

So the reality is that we are seeing more and more of these. The reality is that these storms come in October, but it used to be that we would already have ice that was coming into these northern waters by then, and the ice was enough to slow things down, to cool the waters down. When you don't have the ice in the water, the water is warming. This was perhaps an unusual weather pattern that came, and combined with that warmer water, it just churns this typhoon.

So our reality is that we are seeing in real time the impacts when you have a warmer ocean and less ice, which leads you to how you deal with these issues and these matters of resilience.

This is hard. This is extraordinarily hard right now. Our hearts are with those who have lost their loved ones, who have lost so much, who have lost their homes, but who are so anxious about what this means going forward and how we can be there for them.

So I have a great deal of respect and thanks and admiration for all who are pulling together to provide relief efforts and thinking more long term

about how we ensure that the people of Kwig and the people of Kipnuk and the people of Nighthmute and Napakiak and Stebbins and Toksook and all up and down the coast are safe in their homes, where they have lived for thousands of years.

Right now, we have the largest gathering of Alaska Natives that are convening in Anchorage for their annual convention, and so much of the convention this year is going to be focused on the matter of resilience and support for our communities.

I share these observations with colleagues not because Alaska's storm is more powerful or more lethal or more devastating than the storms the Presiding Officer may have in his State. Tennessee has seen some awful, horrible flooding. We are seeing this now. But it is a reminder to us here in Congress of the role we do play, because all of our communities don't have the ability to provide that protection for themselves.

So how do we build out more resilient communities? And then, to further that point, when the disaster happens, how can we be there to support them in ways that make it real and meaningful for them, particularly in cultures where traditions may just be different than what we know and understand here in Washington, DC?

I am going to end with a couple of comments that were made just the other day when the Governor held a briefing, a press conference, about the ongoing impacts of this disaster.

One comment was made by U.S. Coast Guard Captain Christopher Culpepper, who said:

If you think about previous instances of major inundations, such as Hurricane Katrina, that will start to paint the picture for what you might imagine what has happened along Western Alaska.

Our Adjutant general, General Saxe, said:

This may end up being the largest off-the-road-system response for the National Guard in about 45 years.

So our reality is hard right now. It is challenging. But one thing that I know about the people not only in this region but the people in my State is there is a level of resilience, there is a level of determination. They are connected to their place. They are connected to their lands. And we want to make sure they are able to have that cultural connection, that identity, to the place they have called home for thousands of years.

My final point is that those who were literally engaged in rescue efforts to ensure that people were taken out of homes that were floating in the ocean, those that were doing the overflights in miserable storms, those that are there on the ground now, they were all out there doing their job at a time when it was not certain they were going to be paid. Now that tension point has been resolved because the President announced that our military

would be paid through this next pay period—the Coast Guard as well—which is critically, critically important.

But I think our job, our responsibility, is to make sure that they don't have to worry about that; that when they are flying a rescue mission, they are not thinking about whether or not their spouse at home is concerned about whether they are buying groceries or paying the rent. So we have work to do here.

But to those back home in Alaska who are working so closely on the ground to care for those who are truly afraid right now, truly afraid about their future, know that we are all working with you, and our hearts are with you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2983

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about something that threatens nearly every American: cyber attacks.

I call on my colleagues to pass the Protecting America from Cyber Threats Act—a no-brainer step to defend our citizens from cyber threats.

This is a very wonky law, but it has a very, very simple objective: to encourage companies, private sector companies, to report hacks to the government so that together we can prevent it from happening again. This bill extends protections defined back in 2015 that encouraged companies to report cyber attacks to the Federal Government. It minimizes the risks companies once faced in reporting these hacks, and in doing so, it makes us all safer.

Extending these protections has never been more important. Today, cyber attacks are top of mind for Americans across the country and certainly across the political spectrum.

Two months ago, I traveled to Benton Harbor, MI, and Troy, MI—two communities—to talk about national security threats and what is keeping Michiganders up at night. Nearly every single person, regardless of profession or party, had a story about cyber crime: identity theft, robocalls, and scams robbing people of their life savings; hacks on hospitals for patient data; and shutdown access to electronic records.

As a former CIA officer and Pentagon official, I have responded to countless threats to American security, but never before have we seen American citizens so exposed to security threats here at home. In the age of cyber warfare, everyday Americans are quite literally on the frontlines. And Americans know the stakes. That is why they are scared. One Michigander said to me: Warfare is still on the ground—still things like rockets—but it has also changed; cyber warfare can be just as brutal.

But more than scared, Michiganders are frustrated. They don't believe that their government is taking the threat

of cyber crime seriously, and if we don't renew this law, we will prove them right.

On October 1, the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015 expired—this last October 1. That means that companies are no longer incentivized to report hacks to the Federal Government.

When a company self-reports a cyber attack, there is no longer a law to prevent the Justice Department from using that admission against them, and companies once again are incentivized to hide hacks from the government, which makes us all less safe.

Companies have to see the government as an ally, not as a threat, and our safety depends on it because, unlike other threats like tanks and nukes and subs, the weapons used in cyber crimes are not created, owned, and controlled by a government; they are from the private sector. So we have to work together to prevent these attacks.

This law has already been consequential. The Department of Homeland Security used it to respond to China's relentless Salt Typhoon campaign, which targeted every single American's unencrypted phone calls and text messages.

As long as the law remains expired, America is less safe. As long as we refuse to renew it, we are moving backwards in keeping the country secure.

Today, very simply, I am calling on my colleagues to renew these protections for another 10 years—they are renewed for 10 years at a time—so we can restore our cyber security defenses and better protect our Nation. There is no good reason not to renew it. Businesses support it. The Trump administration supports it. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle support it.

I know there is a proposal out there to extend the law—instead of 10 years—for just 5 weeks, in the House's version of the temporary funding bill, but it is such a pivotal time for something that is actually a bipartisan consensus idea, half measures shouldn't do. We have known that this was going to expire for 10 years. Americans deserve to have us not kick the can down the road for another 5 weeks. There is too much at stake, particularly given the losses among the American public.

Some things are bigger than party politics, and national security should always be one of them. This law is essential to keeping the country safe, to keeping Americans safe, so I urge my colleagues to renew it.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the 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 the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, further, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to cloture on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 136, H.R. 4016.

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today the Senate has the opportunity to begin consideration of an appropriations bill that is vital to our national defense and to the well-being of the brave men and women who serve in our Armed Forces.

The fiscal year 2026 Defense appropriations bill would provide U.S. military services with the funding needed to deter China and Russia, to support our servicemembers and their families, and to strengthen the defense industrial base.

The bill would remove the uncertainty that our American troops face about when they will be paid because of the needless and reckless government shutdown that Leader SCHUMER has directed.

I would point out that passing a continuing resolution, as we have tried to do 10 times now, would also remove the cloud of uncertainty hanging over military paychecks.

In July, as the Presiding Officer is well aware, the Appropriations Committee advanced the Senate version of the Defense appropriations bill by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 26 to 3.

The Senate version addresses major funding gaps across the board. It would invest in shipbuilding, including providing a critical downpayment toward an additional DDG 51, the workhorse of the U.S. service fleet, along with investments in additional Columbia- and Virginia-class submarines.

It would expand critical munitions production, including air and missile defense interceptors, long-range missiles, and next-generation hypersonic weapons developed by our most innovative firms.

It would fund drone and counterdrone technologies, which are increasingly changing the nature of the battlefield, as we have seen in both Ukraine and Israel. And it would sustain security cooperation with close allies and partners whose growing defense capabilities are force multipliers for the United States and contribute to the deterrence of shared adversaries.

Finally, this bill would invest in our most precious asset: the courageous,

dedicated, patriotic men and women of our Armed Forces. It shows our continuing commitment to their readiness, well-being, and mission success.

Let me commend the leadership—the outstanding leadership—of subcommittee chairman MITCH MCCONNELL and ranking member CHRIS COONS for their hard work on this bill. I also want to thank majority leader JOHN THUNE for his commitment to bringing fiscal year 2026 appropriations bills to the Senate floor.

This is such a welcomed change compared to last year when then-majority leader Senator SCHUMER refused to bring a single one of the 12 annual appropriations bills to the Senate floor for consideration.

I want to note for my colleagues that the Senate version of the Defense bill was put together with input from 94 of our Senate colleagues who submitted more than 5,800 requests to the committee for our careful consideration.

For all of these reasons, I urge my colleagues to allow us to proceed to the consideration of the fiscal year 2026 Defense funding bill. We want this to be an open process, with an opportunity to add additional bipartisan bills that address vital domestic priorities, including biomedical and scientific research and infrastructure, and we want Members to have a voice in the funding decisions that affect all of our States and constituents back home. That is the approach that we took in committee. That is the approach that we want to take on the Senate floor.

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 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. 136, H.R. 4016, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Jon Husted, Roger F. Wicker, Joni Ernst, Susan M. Collins, Rick Scott of Florida, Mike Crapo, Tim Sheehy, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tommy Tuberville, Marsha Blackburn, Tom Cotton, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, John Boozman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 4016, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASIDY), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

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

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 575 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—6

Budd	Cornyn	Tillis
Cassidy	Duckworth	Tuberville

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 44. Three-fifths of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have a motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the Democrat party is the party that will not take yes for an answer. We offer Democrats a clean, nonpartisan CR, no Republican policies for them to swallow, nothing for them to object to; they said no. We offer to accommodate their healthcare demands by guaranteeing them a vote on their proposal if they vote to reopen the government; the answer is no.

OK. Fine. So we thought if they don't want to fund the government via con-

tinuing resolution, we will give them the chance to fund the government a different way, by attempting to move forward with regular-order appropriations bills. And, once again, the answer was no.

Democrats just voted to block the fiscal year 2026 Defense appropriations bill, a bill, I would add, that passed the Senate Appropriations Committee by a robust bipartisan margin—26 to 3 I think it was.

That is right. After voting last week for an authorization bill to increase troop pay, Democrats just voted against the bill that would actually pay the troops.

We have to ask the question, Why?

Because to quote a recent news story—this is a direct quote—“voting to proceed with the defense bill relinquishes some of the party’s leverage.” Relinquishes some of the party’s leverage? I mean, who really cares, right, if the troops are paid as long as the Democrats are able to get what they want.

Now, I offered up—and I had conversations with Democrats here on the floor—that if we could get on the Defense appropriations bill, the interest they have in adding other bills I would certainly accommodate. And I suggested that that was the business model that we adopted when we passed the first three-bill package. We got on the MILCON-VA appropriations bill, and then we worked collectively, both sides, to try and clear, adding the Ag appropriations bill, the leg branch appropriations bill, and we tried to add the CJS appropriations bill—which was objected to by one Member on the Democrat side—but that is how we fashioned getting these appropriations bills on the floor and getting them voted on.

Now, if anything should be clear by now—if anything should be clear by now—it is that I am interested in doing a normal appropriations process, unlike what happened when they had the majority, which was the Appropriations Committee will report bills out—11 of the 12 last year. Not a single one was brought to the floor of the Senate.

We have done three bills. We are trying to go to conference on them. They are blocking that.

So now we bring up the Defense appropriations bill, something that should get 80 votes on the floor of the Senate, that I said came out of the committee 26 to 3, and they are blocking it.

Now, there is a path forward here to do appropriations: Get on the bill. Then we will try to add other appropriations bills as we work both sides to clear up objections, concerns that people have.

The fact of the matter is, they didn't have to block us even moving to the bill because there are multiple opportunities—60-vote threshold opportunities—for them to block it later on if they don't like what happens.

This is politics. If anything was needed to demonstrate just how fundamentally uninterested Democrats are in

supporting our troops and defending our country, just take a look at this vote. Mere months ago—I say mere months ago—Democrats were complaining about all the damage shutdowns do to hard-working Americans. I literally could fill the rest of this hour with Democrat quotes from the past few years about the devastating impacts of shutdowns.

Now, Democrats couldn't care less. They are happy to sacrifice any American—evidently, any principle—to their political goals. Democrats like to position themselves as the party of the little guy and the defender of hard-working Americans. But, as this vote makes clear, whom do Democrats really care about? Democrats.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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, John R. Curtis, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Bernie Moreno, Marsha Blackburn, Mike Rounds, Eric Schmitt, Tommy Tuberville, Todd Young, James Lankford, Roger F. Wicker, Rick Scott of Florida, Jim Justice, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 294.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Anne-Leigh Gaylord Moe, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 294, Anne-Leigh Gaylord Moe, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, Markwayne Mullin, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Ted Budd, Bill Hagerty, Bernie Moreno, John R. Curtis, Jon A. Husted, Jim Justice, Ashley B. Moody, Roger Marshall, Joni Ernst, Roger F. Wicker, Ron Johnson, John Boozman.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 372.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of William W. Mercer, of Montana, to be United States District Judge for the District of Montana.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 372, William W. Mercer, of Montana, to be United States District Judge for the District of Montana.

John Thune, Bernie Moreno, Katie Boyd Britt, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, Pete Ricketts, Markwayne Mullin, Tim Sheehy, Jon A. Husted, Eric Schmitt, Jim Justice, James E. Risch, Tom Cotton, Steve Daines, Ted Budd, John R. Curtis, John Boozman.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 373.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Stephen Chad Meredith, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 373, Stephen Chad Meredith, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Pete Ricketts, Ted Budd, Bill Hagerty, Bernie Moreno, John R. Curtis, Jon A. Husted, Jim Justice, Ashley B. Moody, Roger Marshall, Joni Ernst, Ron Johnson, John Boozman, John Kennedy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, first of all, I would like to compliment the majority leader, the Senator from South Dakota, for his continued efforts to have the Senate return to the days in which we were the greatest deliberative legislative body, assuming that was ever true. It is hard to find evidence that it is true today. And, certainly, a basic function of the Congress is to do appropriations bills.

I have heard a number of my colleagues, particularly Democratic colleagues, complain about the appropriations efforts by the White House, by the administration. They remind us that the Constitution puts in the prerogative, it is the Congress that appropriates. Here we are trying to appropriate, to do our constitutional duties, and the vast majority of Democrats stand in the way on one of the most important appropriations bills that we could consider, the Defense appropriations bills.

Our adversaries, our allies, again, wait and watch for signals that the United States of America is the country it needs to be to defend freedom and liberty around the world. As of today, we are incapable of funding our Department of Defense.

I highlighted yesterday in remarks that those who had come to the floor and worried and complained about the

military men and women during the shutdown who are not receiving compensation for their service to our Nation, the most straightforward way to make certain that those who serve are compensated is to pass the Defense appropriations bills authorizing and appropriating the money to make those payments. Yet, today, there are those who stood in the path to prevent that from happening.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, a related topic I want to address today is that as President Trump, today, spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin and tomorrow he will meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, I want to highlight how important it is—how critical it is—to securing a resolution to Russia's unjust war in Ukraine.

I had intended to give remarks today on this topic. I opened the Wall Street Journal this morning, and as I was reading it, its top editorial on the editorial page deals with this topic. I would commend it to my colleagues. It expresses the views as I wish that I could express them so clearly. I am going to try to do so today, right now.

Last week, we witnessed the long-awaited peace agreement between Israel and Hamas. It did come to fruition. Thanks to the efforts of President Trump and his administration, a cease-fire is holding. Iran has been dealt a crippling blow that has weakened its hold on the region, and Hamas has released all living hostages who have been held captive for more than 2 years.

While we recognize there are significant challenges that remain in the Middle East, this marks a critical step toward a just and lasting peace in the region. This agreement would not have been possible without the strength of the U.S. military, our steadfast alliance with Israel, and making it unequivocally clear to Hamas that the United States is willing and able to assist our ally in war.

Through strength, the United States brokered a peace deal that serves the security of Israel and the humanitarian needs of Gazans alike.

Now, as the conflict in Ukraine has surpassed its 3-year mark, Putin remains undeterred in his mission to carry out his unjust war on the Ukrainian people. Each day this war continues, lives are lost, and the safety, economic stability, and global leadership of the United States are threatened. This war must end.

To bring an end to this war, the United States and our allies must maintain pressure on Moscow. As was just seen, we must maintain pressure on Hamas. One recent and important development in this effort is the potential transfer of U.S. Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine. This weaponry will strengthen Ukraine's ability to defend its territory, deter further Russian aggression, and help level the battlefield as negotiations, hopefully, move forward.

By providing advanced provision strike systems, America demonstrates our commitment to Ukraine sovereignty is backed not only by words but by legitimate support that can alter the course of the war.

I commend the administration for its efforts to facilitate this transfer and for leading discussions between Ukraine and Russia that, hopefully, will secure a durable and just peace.

The United States cannot act alone. Our NATO allies must also shoulder the burden. President Trump recently secured an agreement with our NATO allies to increase defense spending from 2 percent to 5 percent by 2035. This commitment is critical to maintaining the continued defense of Europe. Russia's economy is already under strain, but their capacity to fund conflict will continue without enforcement of steady and severe global sanctions.

Before Congress, there is legislation that has widespread support of more than 80 Senators from both sides of the aisle. This legislation would deliver a severe blow to Russia's economy and trade by cutting off the resources that allow Putin to fund this war. We can hasten the path to success in finding peace.

Last week, we advanced the Defense Authorization Act, but today we failed to advance the appropriations bill to fund our military. We all should recognize that the world is watching. They are watching us. Our adversaries pay attention, and our allies pay attention. We have to, every day, make clear the case that it is true the United States is a stable and friendly supporter of our allies and a full-fledged adversary to those who wish to cause us harm. Our adversaries—Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran—are always looking for the opportunity to disrupt our alliances, weaken our resolve, and disturb the free world.

It is imperative that the United States stands firm in its support for Ukraine and, in doing so, places significant pressure on Putin to show our adversaries that democracy—democracy—will not go undefended.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and 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.

TRIBUTE TO DR. MARTIN KELLER

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the career of Dr. Martin Keller as he prepares to depart Colorado's National Renewable Energy Laboratory, NREL, at the end of October.

Dr. Keller has devoted his career to the growth and success of our National Laboratories, his work culminating in nearly a decade spent as the Laboratory Director at NREL. Under his leadership, NREL built the Research and Innovation Laboratory, planned and began construction of the Energy Materials and Processing at Scale, EMAPS, facility; launched the Department of Energy's Advanced Research on Integrated Energy Systems, ARIES; and extended NREL's footprint beyond Colorado to its new Alaska Campus in Fairbanks.

Beyond new facilities and capabilities, Dr. Keller has developed an engaged, talented, and highly accomplished NREL workforce, earning him widespread acclaim from his peers. He was named one of the Denver Business Journal's "Most Admired CEOs" in 2022 and recognized as Laboratory Director of the Year in 2024 by the Federal Laboratory Consortium for Technology Transfer.

While Dr. Keller's return to his native Germany is a loss for both NREL and Colorado, the Helmholtz Association, a preeminent national research institution, is lucky to have him as its new president. His skillful, kind, and thoughtful service to NREL and American energy research will be felt for generations. I wish him the very best in this next chapter.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO REV. DR. WILLIAM E. FLIPPIN, SR. AND FIRST LADY SYLVIA FLIPPIN

• Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate and honor Rev. Dr. William E. Flippin, Sr., and First Lady Sylvia Taylor Flippin for their 35 years of ministry, service, and leadership at the Greater Piney Grove Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA.

Throughout their nearly four decades of service at "The Grove," Rev. Dr. Flippin, Sr., and First Lady Flippin have showcased distinguished leadership and a steadfast commitment to uplifting members of the Greater Piney Grove congregation and Georgians at large.

After leading Springfield Baptist Church in Greensboro and Shoal Creek Baptist Church in Locust Grove, both of which were founded by former slaves, Rev. Dr. Flippin, Sr., took the reigns as senior pastor of the Greater Piney Grove Baptist Church in Atlanta in 1990 and quickly became a catalyst

of upward change for the church, its congregants, and the community.

Since being named senior pastor of “The Grove,” Rev. Dr. Flippin, Sr., and First Lady Flippin have led transformational work inside the church. Under their leadership, the church has inaugurated a family life center, a 1500-seat worship center, a community resource center, and established the Grove’s Gardens at East Lake Senior Living Community.

Beyond his devoted work at the pulpit, Rev. Dr. Flippin, Sr., has served as a mentor to many and as a leading advocate for education. During his time as assistant director of Black church relations for the Georgia Baptist Convention, he was responsible for the organization of Baptist Student Unions at colleges and universities across Georgia and the management of ministerial scholarships. In 2024, the State of Georgia honored him by naming the bridge on Glenwood Avenue crossing Interstate 20 in Atlanta as “The Reverend Dr. William E. Flippin, Sr. Bridge.”

Originally from Nashville, TN, Rev. Dr. Flippin, Sr., holds a bachelor of arts degree in mathematics and business administration from Fisk University. He graduated cum laude from Candler School of Theology at Emory University with a master of divinity degree, honored as a Benjamin E. Mays Fellow and recipient of the Fund for Theological Education scholarship. He furthered his education with a doctor of ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL, and is certified as a Life Transformational Coach and Leadership Coach Trainer.

First Lady Sylvia Flippin, a graduate of Vanderbilt University and holder of a master’s degree in education from Georgia State University, served as a mathematics instructional coach for the DeKalb County Board of Education. The couple have four children: Rev. Dr. William Edward Flippin, Jr., and his wife Kedra Flippin; Rev. Dr. Richard Curtis Flippin; Rev. Joseph Charles Taylor Flippin; and Miss Sylvia Joi Flippin. They are also grandparents to Shamel Emani and Khloe Kristina Taylor.

Rev. Dr. Flippin, Sr., and First Lady Flippin’s 35 years of ministry and service to our communities have been of thoughtful leadership both inside and outside of the church, and they have touched the lives of many Georgians along his journey.

As Georgia’s U.S. Senator, I congratulate and commend Rev. Dr. William E. Flippin, Sr., and First Lady Sylvia T. Flippin for this esteemed milestone and for their continued service to the State of Georgia.●

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 3012. A bill to appropriate funds for pay and allowances of excepted Federal employ-

ees for periods of work performed during a lapse in appropriations, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

(October 15, 2025)

The following bill was read the first time:

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.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CRUZ, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1872. A bill to direct the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a study on the feasibility of manufacturing in the United States products for critical infrastructure sectors, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 119-81).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Thomas Albus, of Missouri, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri for the term of four years.

Adam Mildred, of Indiana, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana for the term of four years.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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. COTTON (for himself, Mr. HAGERTY, and Mr. TUBERVILLE):

S. 3013. A bill to require all testing relating to the issuance or renewal of a commercial driver’s license to be conducted only in English, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 3014. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to citizen petitions; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Mr. KELLY, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 3015. A bill to amend the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 to reauthorize the water resources research and technology institutes program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 3016. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to study new technologies and opportunities for recycling spent nuclear fuel; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. Kaine (for himself, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. SCHIFF):

S.J. Res. 90. A joint resolution to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against Venezuela that have not been authorized by Congress; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. WELCH:

S. Res. 454. A resolution expressing support for the designation of the week of October 24, 2025, to October 31, 2025, as “Bat Week”; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. Res. 455. A resolution commending and congratulating the Summerlin South Little League baseball team on winning the 2025 Little League World Series United States Championship; considered and agreed to.

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

S. Res. 456. A resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of the inaugural flight of Space Shuttle Atlantis and recognizing Kennedy Space Center for its economic, educational, and cultural contributions to the State of Florida and the United States; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 398

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSO BROOKS), the Senator from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 398, a bill to transfer and limit Executive Branch authority to suspend or restrict the entry of a class of aliens.

S. 791

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 791, a bill to establish the Justice Thurgood Marshall National Historic Site in the State of Maryland as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

S. 844

At the request of Mr. HAWLEY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) was added as a cosponsor of S. 844, a bill to accelerate workplace time-to-contract under the National Labor Relations Act.

S. 1000

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1000, a bill to establish an Ambassador-at-Large for Arctic Affairs.

S. 1098

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1098, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to enhance the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Grant Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1283

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1283, a bill to modernize Federal firearms laws to account for advancements in technology and less-than-lethal weapons, and for other purposes.

S. 1442

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1442, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to allow for eligibility for projects for the installation of human trafficking awareness signs at rest stops, and for other purposes.

S. 1532

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1532, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 1748

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. HUSTED) were added as cosponsors of S. 1748, a bill to protect the safety of children on the internet.

S. 1847

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1847, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to clarify the treatment of certain association health plans as employers, and for other purposes.

S. 2205

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mrs. MOODY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2205, a bill to require a citizenship question on the decennial census, to require reporting on certain census statistics, and to modify apportionment of Representatives to be based on United States citizens instead of all individuals.

S. 2211

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2211, a bill to reauthorize the Special Diabetes Program for Type 1 Diabetes and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.

S. 2368

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2368, a bill to take measures with respect to certain property that is nationalized or expropriated by foreign governments, to amend section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 to include expropriation of the assets of United States Persons in acts, policies, and practices of foreign countries that are unreasonable or discriminatory, and for other purposes.

S. 2426

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma

(Mr. MULLIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2426, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide pharmacy payment of certain services.

S. 2506

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2506, a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to establish and carry out a program to enable the rapid development, testing, and scalable manufacture of small unmanned aircraft systems, and for other purposes.

S. 2621

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2621, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize support for State-based maternal mortality review committees, to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to disseminate best practices on maternal mortality prevention to hospitals, State-based professional societies, and perinatal quality collaboratives, and for other purposes.

S. 2690

At the request of Mrs. MOODY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2690, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require that commercial driver's licenses be restricted to United States citizens, lawful permanent residents, and individuals authorized by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to engage in employment in the United States that includes driving a commercial motor vehicle, and for other purposes.

S. 2960

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2960, a bill to develop economic tools to deter aggression by the People's Republic of China against Taiwan.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 454—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 24, 2025, TO OCTOBER 31, 2025, AS “BAT WEEK”

Mr. WELCH submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works:

S. RES. 454

Whereas bats are vital to the sustainability of natural ecosystems, national economies, and human health by controlling damaging insect pests, pollinating plants that produce fruits and vegetables, dispersing seeds to ensure healthy functioning forests and fields, and saving farmers in the United States more than \$3,700,000,000 in pest control every year;

Whereas bats have captured the human imagination through backyard sightings, folklore, art, myths, and legends, making

outreach and education about the importance of bats instrumental;

Whereas bats are present throughout the world, except in extremely cold regions, and are the second-largest order of mammals with over 1,400 species;

Whereas white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that has killed millions of bats in North America, has now spread to 40 States and 12 species of hibernating bats;

Whereas the disease has caused significant declines in populations of the tricolored bat, the little brown bat, and the northern long-eared bat, which is listed as endangered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

Whereas the Department of the Interior, through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the United States Geological Survey, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, is leading the international response to the disease in partnership with the United States Forest Service and more than 150 Federal and State agencies, Tribes, nongovernmental organizations, and universities;

Whereas the United States Geological Survey and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service co-lead the multinational, multi-agency North American Bat Monitoring Program, which, since 2015, has consolidated nearly 94,000,000 records from partners in 49 States, 9 Canadian Provinces, and 20 Tribal organizations, demonstrating the power of collaborative conservation science to monitor changes in North American bat populations;

Whereas the United States Geological Survey conducts scientific research on bats that helps resource managers and policymakers make informed decisions regarding the conservation of bats across North America; and

Whereas, in the past decade, the international partnership of States, Tribes, Federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other institutions has made extraordinary progress to understand white-nose syndrome, slow the spread of the disease, and develop treatments that hold promise for ending this epidemic: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses support for the designation of the week of October 24, 2025, to October 31, 2025, as “Bat Week”;

(2) encourages the observance of Bat Week with appropriate events and activities;

(3) acknowledges the important role bats play as pollinators and pest control for agriculture; and

(4) intends to—

(A) continue working to conserve bat species and their habitat; and

(B) work to defeat the disease known as white-nose syndrome.

SENATE RESOLUTION 455—COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE SUMMERLIN SOUTH LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL TEAM ON WINNING THE 2025 LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES UNITED STATES CHAMPIONSHIP

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Ms. ROSEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 455

Whereas, on August 23, 2025, the Summerlin South Little League baseball team (referred to in this resolution as the “Summerlin South”) won the 2025 Little League World Series United States Championship;

Whereas the Summerlin South Little League defeated Fairfield National Little League, winning the United States Championship 8-2;

Whereas this is the first team from Summerlin South to advance to the Little League World Series Tournament in Williamsport, Pennsylvania;

Whereas Summerlin South became the second team from Nevada to win the Little League World Series United States Championship since the State began competing in 1957;

Whereas Summerlin South is the fourth team from Nevada to advance to the Little League World Series Tournament in Williamsport, Pennsylvania;

Whereas Summerlin South won all 3 games in the Mountain Region Tournament, outscoring opponents 45-15 and winning the region finals by a score of 6-3;

Whereas Summerlin South players should be congratulated for their dedication, teamwork, and display of impressive athletic talent; and

Whereas behind the Summerlin South players is a team of parents, coaches, and league support staff without whom those players could not have been successful: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends and congratulates Summerlin South Little League on winning the 2025 Little League World Series United States Championship and completing a successful 2025 season;

(2) recognizes the achievements of all players, coaches, parents, and league staff who contributed to the success of Summerlin South Little League during the 2025 season; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) Summerlin South president Chris Malloy; and

(B) Summerlin South manager TJ Fechser.

SENATE RESOLUTION 456—COMMEMORATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INAUGURAL FLIGHT OF SPACE SHUTTLE ATLANTIS AND RECOGNIZING KENNEDY SPACE CENTER FOR ITS ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL, AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND THE UNITED STATES

Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mrs. MOODY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 456

Whereas the Space Shuttle Program, operated by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (referred to in this preamble as “NASA”) from 1981 to 2011, completed 135 missions over 30 years, enabling construction

of the International Space Station, deployment of iconic satellites like the Hubble Space Telescope, and breakthroughs in space science and technology;

Whereas Space Shuttle Atlantis embarked on its inaugural mission (STS-51-J) on October 3, 1985, from NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida, inaugurating a storied career of 33 missions that advanced the leadership of the United States in space;

Whereas the Space Shuttle Program represented a transformative workforce effort, employing tens of thousands of engineers, technicians, and contractors on Florida’s Space Coast and across the United States, serving as a cornerstone of Brevard County, Florida’s economy for 3 decades;

Whereas NASA’s Kennedy Space Center served as the exclusive launch site for every space shuttle mission, including the 33 launches of Atlantis, making Florida the epicenter of human spaceflight during the shuttle era;

Whereas NASA continues to leverage the shuttle-era infrastructure, workforce expertise, and public inspiration to power the Artemis program, which will return astronauts to the Moon and prepare for human missions to Mars;

Whereas the Space Shuttle Program pioneered reusability in spaceflight, landing orbiters on runways, and reshaping the future of human space exploration by demonstrating routine access to space;

Whereas NASA’s Kennedy Space Center remains a key driver of Florida’s aerospace economy, supporting tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs and contributing billions annually to the State’s economy, building on the Space Shuttle Program’s legacy of economic vitality;

Whereas Atlantis is displayed at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex as a one-of-a-kind educational and inspirational exhibit for future generations;

Whereas the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, operated on behalf of NASA by Delaware North, serves more than 1,500,000 guests annually, providing immersive STEM education and commemorative experiences;

Whereas the Space Shuttle Atlantis exhibit, a \$100,000,000, 90,000-square-foot marquee attraction that opened on June 29, 2013, offers more than 60 interactive experiences that inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers;

Whereas, in fiscal year 2021, the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex generated approximately \$148,300,000 in economic output, supported 1,390 jobs, and drew 960,000 visitors, demonstrating its continuing contribution to Florida’s economy; and

Whereas the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex serves as a national venue for remembrance, including NASA’s “Day of Remembrance”, reinforcing Florida’s role as steward of the human-spaceflight legacy of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate commemorates the year 2025 as the 40th anniversary of the inaugural flight of the Space Shuttle Atlantis and recognizes the National Aero-

nautics and Space Administration’s Kennedy Space Center for its economic, educational, and cultural contributions to the State of Florida and the United States.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MORAN. 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. 455 and S. Res. 456.

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that 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 (S. Res. 455 and S. Res. 456) were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday, October 20; 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; finally, that the cloture motions filed during today’s session of the Senate ripen at 5:30 p.m.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. MORAN. 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 2:32 p.m., adjourned until Monday, October 20, 2025, at 3 p.m.