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No. 185

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, November 7, 2025, at 2 p.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 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.

Eternal God, thank You for not leaving us alone in a challenging world. You remain our refuge in every storm. As our lawmakers commit this day to You, help them to navigate through the turbulence of this government shutdown.

May Your spirit control their minds, guiding them by the light of Your truth. Lord, inspire them to live worthy of the price You paid for their redemption, making them humble, patient, and kind. Be the resource they need to be faithful stewards of Your unfolding providence.

We pray in Your powerful 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

BOSNIA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I came to the floor of the Senate earlier this year warning my colleagues that the leader of one of the subdivisions within the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Dodik, was ignoring rulings by the national-level Bosnia court. He was threatening to have half the country secede, which, of course, drags up memories we should never forget about the war and the genocide in those countries in the 1990s in which many Bosnian Iowans lost family.

Well, I am glad that he has since complied with the court ruling by stepping down from his position as leader of the RS entity and walked back some of his destabilizing actions. In return, the United States has dropped sanctions against Mr. Dodik and his family.

I am all for rewarding this good behavior, but there are very good reasons to believe that Mr. Dodik has not seen the error of his ways. Mr. Dodik, since, falsely alleged that he was still the rightful President of RS, questioned whether Bosnia and Herzegovina should continue to exist—and can you believe this?—he was photographed embracing Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Belarus.

Mr. Dodik should be on notice then that the United States is watching to see that he stays on the straight and narrow that he wants us to believe that he is on.

I can assure you that this Senator will be on the lookout for any destabilizing actions that threaten the peace in Bosnia. And I will work with the Trump administration to make sure that all actors in the region respect the Dayton Peace Accords that ended the violence and genocide that took place in 1995.

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. THUNE. 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 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 bill by title.

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



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S7907

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

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.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, can this be over now? Have the American people suffered enough or do Democrats need more?

Democrats have snarled air traffic; they have damaged small businesses; they left Federal workers in line at food banks; they jeopardized food assistance—food assistance—for 40 million Americans. Are they satisfied now or does the far left want more?

Surely, Democrats have hit enough milestones. The election is over. Democrats now have the extremely dubious honor of being responsible for the longest government shutdown in American history. So the question is, Can the American people get a break now?

Democrats should be embarrassed—embarrassed—that Federal workers are lining up at food banks and missing bills and in danger of losing homes or cars because Democrats can't summon enough Members to support a clean, nonpartisan funding resolution. That is right—a clean, nonpartisan funding bill sitting right here at the Senate desk. We have not asked Democrats to support a single new Republican policy. We haven't asked them to support a single partisan policy rider. We simply ask them to extend current funding levels for a few weeks so that we could have time to do bipartisan work on appropriations bills. The Democrats couldn't take yes for an answer.

On the subject of appropriations, if any Democrats cherish the faintest hope of still funding the government through a full-year appropriations process—a process that they have delayed for 5 weeks and counting—they should vote for the clean, nonpartisan CR today.

I realize the Democrats have been under a lot of pressure from their far-left base to keep the shutdown going. I assume that it was pressure from Democrats' far-left base that saw the Democratic leader flip his positions on shutdowns 180 degrees in the space of just 6 months. I realize that there are a number of Democrats in the Senate who are not just yielding to pressure from the far left but are themselves members of the far left and are happy to continue this shutdown forever if it means somehow sticking it, they think, to President Trump.

I am hoping there are still Democrats out there who can see beyond the political extremism of their leftist base. And I hope there are some Democrats who can take an honest look at the widespread damage that their shutdown is doing and say: Enough is enough.

Thanksgiving is rapidly approaching. Parents are starting to think about

what they are going to put under the tree. Do Democrats still want Federal employees lining up at food banks at Thanksgiving? at Christmas?

On the topic of the holidays, it is an open question whether people will be able to spend it with their families this year if the shutdown continues. Air traffic has been snarled for weeks as a result of Democrats' shutdown, and things are getting worse. The Transportation Secretary just announced yesterday that the government may be forced to close parts of our airspace if the shutdown continues into next week. Close airspace—think about that.

I could go on. I could talk about the unions asking Democrats to end this shutdown and support a clean continuing resolution. I could talk about the business organizations making the same request. I could read the headlines about Head Start preschools closing and SNAP recipients who are worried about their benefits and National Guard units that aren't training and on and on—every single thing as a result of the Democrats' decision to shut down the government more than 5 weeks ago. But surely—surely—there are at least some Democrat Senators who can see this for themselves, who can see this for themselves and realize it is past time to end this before the damage gets even worse. It is day 36 of Democrats' shutdown—day 36. How much longer are Democrats going to make the American people suffer?

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.

2025 ELECTIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night was a great night for America and a five-alarm fire for Donald Trump and Republicans. The Republicans' high-cost house is on fire, and they have only got themselves to blame.

As loudly and clearly as they could have, the American people said last night: Enough is enough—enough with Donald Trump's tariffs, which are overwhelmingly being paid for by working people and small businesses; enough with Republicans' relentless attack on healthcare, where people are seeing their premiums go up by thousands of dollars, even each month, and they may have to be without healthcare altogether.

Last night was a sign that if Republicans continue with their failed policies, their majorities are at risk, including here in this Senate Chamber. The election showed that Democratic control of the Senate is much closer than people and prognosticators realize.

So let me say it again: Republicans' high-cost house is on fire, and they have only got themselves to blame.

By the way, that is not just my opinion; it is Donald Trump's opinion. Last night, he said that the shutdown is a negative factor for the Republicans. When addressing why he had lost, this is what Trump said:

The shutdown was a big factor, negative for Republicans.

And let me read what Trump said last night. This is Donald Trump speaking:

TRUMP WASN'T ON THE BALLOT, AND SHUTDOWN, WERE THE TWO REASONS THAT REPUBLICANS LOST ELECTIONS TONIGHT.

That is what Trump said. Trump admits that the Republican shutdown is hurting him and his party.

The President is right. Americans realize Republicans are responsible for this awful shutdown, now the longest, officially, in history—what a shameless milestone. Donald Trump has now presided over the longest and second longest shutdowns ever, and he only—only—has himself to blame.

When Leader JEFFRIES and I met with Donald Trump in the Oval Office, last month, we warned him that this would happen. We warned the President of the consequences of ignoring Democrats, ignoring the American people, ignoring the healthcare crisis. We warned the President that ignoring Democrats and insisting on zero negotiations was a recipe for disaster and would come back to haunt him.

Well, Republicans shouldn't ignore us anymore, for their own good and the country's good.

So, this morning, Leader JEFFRIES and I once again demanded a meeting with the President. It is time to sit down and negotiate with Democrats to bring this Republican shutdown to an end, we told the President. We have been asking for a meeting for weeks and even months, but now the election results ought to send a much needed bolt of lightning to Donald Trump that he should meet with us to end this crisis—his shutdown, which he admits hurt him badly in the elections.

It is time to hold a bipartisan meeting of legislative leaders to reopen the government. It is time to fix the ACA premium emergency that is now upon us. Democrats are ready to meet anytime, anywhere, anyplace.

Donald Trump ignores us at his own political peril because the takeaway from last night was simply unmistakable. Democrats swept in States last night across the country, red and blue alike. Democrats won overwhelmingly by more than anyone ever thought in New Jersey and Virginia. Democrats won in Mississippi and won in New York and Pennsylvania and in Georgia.

Democrats won in statewide races, but it went deeper than that. We won in lots of local races too: mayoral races, State supreme court races, ballot measures, and even historic swings

in the Georgia Public Service Commission, where two Democrats were elected statewide, I believe.

Why did Democrats do so well? Because Americans are fed up with Republicans shooting their costs through the roof, particularly on healthcare, on tariffs, and on their electric bills. And Americans saw that Democrats are the ones fighting for them, fighting for lower healthcare costs, fighting for working families.

While all this is happening, what is Donald Trump doing? Depriving hungry Americans of their SNAP benefits? Telling children—hungry children—we are going to cut off your food and use you as a pawn in this shutdown, which the Republicans have caused? Telling the elderly who depend on that SNAP money to adequately feed themselves, the heck with you? Telling a veteran who has PTSD or a worker who is unemployed that we are not going to give you food? How callous, how cruel, how mean, how vindictive, and how calculatingly wrong.

Americans saw the contrast between Democrats and Republicans in full effect last night. They saw that Trump is treating Americans, particularly needy Americans, as political pawns during the shutdown.

From one end of the country to the other, including battleground States, Democrats, Independents, and even Republicans rejected Donald Trump's policies and rejected hard-right elected officials.

And let me say something else. After last night, Donald Trump ought to learn that his petty vindictiveness doesn't work. Here is one glaring example: He tried to ax Federal funding for the Gateway Tunnel between New York and New Jersey—the biggest public works project in the country, employing tens of thousands of workers and ensuring continued prosperity and good transportation in the entire Northeast corridor. But he axed the funds, and his axing the funds was aimed, in his mind, at Democratic leaders like Leader Jeffries and me. In the end, it totally backfired and became a big factor for voters making their decisions in New Jersey and electing MIKIE SHERRILL by an amazing 13 percentage points. One of the main issues in that campaign was Donald Trump's vindictiveness in cutting off this tunnel and trying to use it—again—and all the workers as a hostage.

So let me say it again. Last night serves as a five-alarm fire for Republicans, a warning from the American people. They are tired of Donald Trump raising people's costs, raising healthcare costs, ignoring the needs of the people.

The right way forward for Republicans—and for all of America—is to negotiate with Democrats to reopen the government and extend the ACA premium tax credits. The American people have spoken: Enough is enough.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. President, on SCOTUS and tariffs, which is being argued by the Su-

preme Court, right now as we speak, after an overwhelming rejection of the Trump Republican agenda at the polls, this morning, Donald Trump's lawyers are at the Supreme Court trying to argue his global tariffs are legal. They are illegal, but they are arguing that they are legal.

It is hard to imagine a worse morning after for Donald Trump and Republicans than to have to go to the Supreme Court and defend these tariffs, which are dramatically raising Americans' costs. That is why Republicans were so shellacked last night.

Maybe the Supreme Court will put Donald Trump and Republicans out of their tariff misery by declaring Trump's tariffs illegal—which, of course, we know they are—because Donald Trump's tariffs have been one of the biggest tax hikes on American families in recent memory.

Poll after poll shows that Americans are paying more at the grocery store, that they blame Trump for the rising taxes, and they disapprove of his tariffs.

The Supreme Court should do the right thing and strike down Trump's tariffs before those tariffs spiral our economy into an even bigger crisis.

If our democracy is to mean anything at all, we should remember the Constitution is clear, clear—clear as a bell, clear as the Liberty Bell: The power to tax and tariff resides in Congress, not the President, not by unilateral power, and not based on some BS “emergency” declaration. Donald Trump is not a King. He is bound by the Constitution and by his oath to protect the American people and uphold the rule of law.

Today, the Court should make clear that Donald Trump is not above the law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, 1 year ago today, the American people rejected high prices; they rejected open borders; they rejected the weakness of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. One year ago today, the American people voted to get America back on track, and they did so by voting for a unified Republican government.

Republicans won a historic victory. President Trump won every single battleground State in America. He won the popular vote. He moved over close to 3,000 counties to the right. That is 89 percent of the counties in the United States. Senate Republicans won a 53-seat majority, and House Republicans maintained the majority as well.

Americans gave us a mandate to secure the border, to rebuild the economy, to unleash American energy, and to restore America's strength.

Here we are 1 year later, and America is back on track. The results are undeniable. For the first time in years, America's borders are secure. For the last 5 months, absolutely zero illegal

immigrants have been released into our Nation. Gone are the days under Joe Biden when 10,000 illegal immigrants poured into our country each and every day. When Joe Biden was President, over 10 million illegal immigrants flooded into our Nation. Illegal immigrants were incentivized to come here with the promise of free healthcare, with the promise of free airplane tickets, with the promise of free hotel rooms and free food and free meals and free cell phones.

That era is over. President Trump is successfully removing illegal immigrant criminals from our Nation, taking them away from communities all across the country. Republicans in Congress are finishing the wall, hiring more border agents, and investing in Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The drug cartels are clearly on notice: The border is closed, and America is once again protecting our citizens.

Today, our communities are safer, and the economic turnaround has been equally dramatic. America's energy dominance is back. Gas prices have dropped to the lowest point in 4 years. AAA reports prices are expected to continue to fall and perhaps stay low over the busy Thanksgiving period that is upcoming. Inflation has cooled. Things are more affordable. Remember, under Joe Biden, prices soared by more than 21 percent. Under President Trump, private sector real wages are up over \$1,100 a year. The economy grew 3.8 percent in the second quarter of this year. We are seeing strong economic growth, and more strong economic growth is expected. The Atlanta Federal Reserve predicts third-quarter growth could be 4 percent—even greater economic growth.

You might ask yourself, what is at the heart of this economic comeback? Well, let me tell you. The working family tax cuts, which passed the Senate, passed the House, and were signed into law by the President—that is at the heart of our economic comeback.

This is the most pro-worker, pro-family tax relief in years. In Wyoming alone, families could save \$2,400 this year because of the tax cuts. Waiters, barbers, and bartenders keep \$1,300 more by having to pay no tax on tips. In my home State and in the Presiding Officer's, nurses, firefighters, and police officers can keep \$1,400 more by having to pay no tax on overtime. New parents get a \$1,000 Trump account for every newborn child, to invest in their future, and parents get a bigger child tax credit: \$2,200 more per child. Seniors are going to keep more as well. There is a new \$6,000 deduction on Social Security income. Clearly, the Presiding Officer has heard it, and I have heard it at home as well: Farmers, ranchers, and small business owners are getting relief from the much-dreaded death tax. That is what it means to stand with working Americans.

Let's be clear. If the Democrats had had it their way, families would be

paying much more in taxes—a lot more. Every single Democrat voted for the largest tax increase in American history. Every single Democrat voted for a \$4 trillion tax increase. Had Democrats succeeded, families, seniors, and small businesses would have been financially crushed.

Every Democrat voted for the government to take more of people's hard-earned money. Republicans said people should keep their hard-earned money. Republicans voted for Americans to keep what they earned. That is the difference between Republicans and Democrats.

One year ago, American voters rejected a weak America and also rejected a dangerous world. Today, we see the resurgence of American strength. We are defending our interests and deterring our enemies around the world. Military recruitment has surged to its highest level in 15 years. Morale is high. Deterrence is back.

President Trump successfully crippled Iran's nuclear program. He strengthened the success of the Abraham Accords. He secured the release of the hostages in Gaza. He ended wars around the world not once, not twice, but eight times. President Trump is the President of peace, and he is achieving this peace through American strength and leadership.

These are the policies that Americans want, need, and voted for when they elected President Trump President of the United States once again.

Regrettably, Senate Democrats still can't bring themselves to support the success. They voted against securing the border, against lowering taxes, against strengthening Medicaid, and against everything that helps working families.

Here in the Senate, for months, they delayed hundreds of routine and bipartisan nominees. It was an unprecedented blockade.

Now Democrats have set a new, shameful record. Today, they broke the record for the longest government shutdown in American history. Let me repeat that. Today, the Democrats have broken the record for the longest shutdown in American history.

During the 36 days of the Schumer shutdown, Democrats have voted against reopening the government 14 times. That is 14 votes against paying our troops, 14 votes against paying our Federal workers, 14 votes against paying our air traffic controllers, 14 times against Border Patrol agents, and 14 times against paying our TSA agents.

The Democratic Party has been hijacked by socialists, and now they are holding the American people hostage. Why? Well, it is because the Democrats have become radical and extreme. Gallup pollsters tell us that only one in three Democrats is proud to be an American. Can you imagine that. Only one in three registered Democrats is proud to be an American. That is half the number it was last year.

The party of J.F.K. is gone, and it is now the party of AOC. Democrats are

now the party of socialism and censorship, of weakness and wokeness. They even brag about it, as we saw last night in New York.

Yesterday, in New York City, they elected as mayor a socialist who wants to defund the police, abolish prisons, and give illegal immigrants free healthcare. That is who the Democrats have chosen as the mayor of New York City. That is the Democrats' vision of America's future. It is a dangerous vision. It is a destructive vision.

One year ago, Americans chose a better path. They chose safety, prosperity, and common sense. As a result, today, America is moving in the right direction, and we are going to continue to fight to get America back on track.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, my friend from Wyoming, my colleague on the Republican side, just gave a litany of accomplishments of the Trump administration. That is his view of the political world, and he is certainly entitled to it, but the vote results from last night show that America does not agree with what the Senator from Wyoming said. They are not happy with the MAGA movement and what it has brought to America. The results across the board were overwhelmingly in favor of Democrats last night. It doesn't square with the happy talk which we have heard on the floor about the achievements of the Trump administration.

In fact, in one candid moment, President Trump conceded that the shutdown cost him many votes in last night's election across the board, and he is right. The American people have come to understand what this government shutdown is all about. It is about their bottom line, their home budget, their healthcare, their insurance costs.

In my State—typical—people are seeing a doubling of their health insurance premiums as of January 1 and, in some parts of my State, tripling. In other parts of the country, it is even more. Why is this happening? Because of the big, beautiful, budget bill of the Trump administration. It eliminated the tax treatment that helped families pay for these health insurance premiums. As a consequence, their premiums are going through the roof.

What is that going to do to a family that has to make a choice—a choice that comes down to \$200 or \$300 a month more in health insurance premiums? Some will be able to afford it, I am sure, but others won't, and they will give up on their health insurance coverage. That is a terrible position for any family to be in.

It also creates problems when it comes to healthcare providers—hospitals, clinics, doctors, and such. They are going to find themselves in a terrible situation when these same sick people, with no health insurance, come to the hospital. Sure, they will be treated—we do that in America—but

they are going to end up incurring costs for that hospital that will not be reimbursed. What does that do for the rest of us with health insurance we can afford? We are going to end up paying more when it is all over.

You cannot ignore the health insurance problem in America, as the Republicans hope to do. That is what is driving this government shutdown, and it is time for it to come to an end.

I hope that President Trump, after last night's election results, will see clearly that he is being blamed, rightly, for this shutdown and that it has to come to an end and we have to move forward as a nation—the sooner the better.

The things that are happening across the board here are just indefensible. The President, yesterday, was weaving back and forth between saying he is going to pay all of the SNAP food benefits to hungry families in America and then saying he is going to cut them all off unless we ended the government shutdown—back and forth during the course of the day. It was hard to follow his position. I am still not sure where it ends.

But I worry that families desperate for assistance in paying for food, to put it on the table, are still not certain themselves. The food banks cannot take care of this problem. This program, the SNAP program, known as the Food Stamp Program, is critical to feeding America for over 40 million of our neighbors and friends. It is time to make it clear that the payments are going to be made—no ifs, ands, or buts about it. I hope the President makes that clear today.

OPERATION MIDWAY BLITZ

Mr. President, on an unrelated topic, this coming weekend will mark 2 months since President Trump launched his so-called Operation Midway Blitz in my home State of Illinois. The Presiding Officer will remember what it is all about. The President was sending in ICE agents dressed in combat uniforms—with masks on their face and no identification as to who they work for—to arrest what they considered to be would-be robbers, terrorists, murderers, rapists, and the criminally insane who had come across our border in past years.

They set out to do that, but what has happened is exactly the opposite. Instead of taking dangerous people off the street, they are harassing and intimidating people who have no crimes in their background whatsoever. The stories just come tumbling in every single day.

The head of the Department of Homeland Security calls this ICE force her "dream team." Let me tell you, this "dream team" has done things that are just unthinkable when it comes to the laws and Constitution of this country.

In those 2 months since the President started sending these workers in, he has achieved what I believe to be his true objective here: not to bring down violent crime but to spread fear in the

hearts of our communities, especially our immigrant communities.

In these 2 months, we have seen people thrown to the ground and beaten. This is not speculation; it is videotaped. We have it.

We have seen children ripped from their beds in the middle of the night and zip-tied outside of an apartment complex on the South Shore Avenue of Chicago. And we have seen tear gas canisters deployed against pastors, journalists, and police.

Think about that. It has reached a point that the Federal court is entertaining depositions today from the leader of this effort, the so-called “dream team” ICE agents, trying to explain why their violence can be justified.

Innocent people have been caught up in this terror, not just the “worst of the worst,” as the President promised and his team has claimed, but American citizens, legal residents, and immigrants who have built their lives and raised their families here. They pose no threat to public safety, and yet they are the targets for these ICE agents.

I want to share a story of one of these people.

Three weeks ago, Omar Huerta Cisneros, a legal resident of the United States, a green card holder, was going for a walk in the South Side of Chicago when masked immigrant agents abruptly pulled him into a red car and drove away. Mr. Huerta Cisneros was detained and disappeared by the Trump administration simply for walking down the street as a Hispanic man.

What makes this case especially troubling, though, is what happened after they arrested him. Mr. Cisneros has a mental challenge. He is schizophrenic, and he lacks “the mental capacity to reach out to anybody,” according to his family.

His family only learned of his arrest after footage of the encounter was posted on social media. His family started searching desperately to find him in detention. Now, if this sounds like an extreme case, it is not. It is the usual custom. The ICE agents sweep people off the street, and they disappear sometimes for hours, sometimes for days, sometimes for even longer.

There is no way to check on their whereabouts. If you think that it sounds like something very unusual, if you have watched all the crime shows on TV on what a warrant for an arrest may be, what your arrest will be, what the Miranda warnings may be, this is totally unusual. The ICE agents are making it all up. They are ignoring the law and ignoring the Constitution.

In the behavior characteristics of the Trump administration, people find only silence when they asked what happened to that person just swept up off the street.

The family had to resort to pleading to the community and posting these missing person posters on social media to try to find Mr. Cisneros. This is the photograph that they were advertising,

asking people: Have they seen this man? Can you help us find our member of our family?

They finally did find him, 2 weeks—2 weeks—after the masked Federal agents wrongfully arrested him. Where did they find him? On the streets of the suburbs of Chicago. Family members believed Federal agents just dropped him off, possibly a day after detaining him. But no one contacted the family, and they didn’t know where he slept during this time away from home.

Unfortunately, Mr. Huerta Cisneros’ case is not isolated. Donald Trump has turned Federal law enforcement officers into his own personal secret masked police force to engage in political theater at the expense of real lives. In that process, the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, including the right to due process and the rule of law, have been trampled.

ICE agents, this so-called “dream team,” believe they are above the law and not bound by the Constitution. We are on the slippery slope into authoritarianism. Don’t believe me? Listen to the President’s own words.

In a “60 Minutes” interview this week, he was asked about sending Active-Duty military into American cities. He responded: “I can bring in the Army, the Marines, I could bring in whoever I want” and that he could do so “in a heartbeat” and that “no judge can even challenge me.”

He also said ICE raids “haven’t gone far enough.” Tell that to Mr. Cisneros and his family and every other Illinoisan caught up in these cruel and chaotic raids.

To think that this man is a robber, a rapist, a terrorist, a murderer, criminally insane is just almost laughable if it wasn’t such a sad situation exploiting this poor gentleman.

In the face of such ugliness, Chicago and the people who live there have shown up to stand up for one another. We saw it in Mr. Cisneros’ case, neighbors helping neighbors trying to find this man who was disappeared by the ICE agents in Chicago.

Over the weekend, we had another example. On Halloween, I joined Governor Pritzker in asking the ICE agents to please lay off the families and kids who are out trick-or-treating. They are being terrorized already. There ought to be one night in the year when you give them a break. They refused. In fact, they mocked us that we would even ask for that.

And then came an incident in Evanston, IL, a suburb just north of Chicago. It was an incident which embarrassed a lot of people and worried them that we were moving to a police state, with the ICE agents going up and down the streets looking for people who were raking leaves, checking on each one of them, in terms of their background and their citizenship and their identity.

They swept up almost everybody who was out in the yard. At this time of year, everybody is out in the yard.

That sort of thing really struck a chord in the city of Evanston. They responded, and I knew they would—a strong community.

Over the weekend, hundreds of donors lined the streets near Evanston Township High School to participate in a food drive for their neighbors. The turnout was so overwhelming that the police had to turn off the traffic light at an intersection to accommodate the line of cars waiting to drop off food.

While food was the main draw, Evanston organizers also handed out “Know Your Rights” cards and whistles along with the toiletries. Those whistles have been used by community members to warn others when ICE agents are in the area.

This is what an American community looks like: It is organizing to stand together to defend their neighbors. And while no community should have to resort to such extreme, Evanston and other communities across the country have been forced to do it, and they are willingly doing so.

For the first time in our Nation’s history, the flow of Federal funds for the SNAP program was halted at the direction of President Donald Trump. To think, this President, in order to put political pressure on Congress, is going to cut off the food to disabled people, elderly people, and children is disgusting.

The Trump administration has the power to issue 100 percent of benefits to working families and kids who rely on this program, but the President and the Department of Agriculture are defying court orders and refusing to flip the switch on these emergency funds for circumstances just like this.

In one moment, the Department of Agriculture says they will send just 50 percent of the monthly benefits to SNAP. The next moment, the President says he will only send out SNAP benefits when the government reopens. When it comes to feeding 42 million Americans, our most vulnerable neighbors and friends, suddenly the Trump administration appears confused and, once again, in disarray.

Who in the world is in charge? But it has no problem remodeling the White House bathrooms with marble and gold, throwing a “Great Gatsby” Halloween party for the richest friends, and passing tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires or inviting Senate Republicans down for breakfast as Americans, many of them, struggle to pay for their own breakfast.

It is time for this administration to stop this chaos. Families across America deserve better. I hope that what happened in yesterday’s election is a wake-up call that we need to sit down and end this government shutdown that was initiated by the Republican refusal to discuss the cost of health insurance.

We can do something to help Americans. If we can find \$20 billion or \$40 billion for Argentina, for God’s sake, there has got to be money to help

Americans pay their hospitalization premiums. I hope we get down to business today.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from California.

NOMINATION OF ERIC CHUNYEE TUNG

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, colleagues, what we have seen happening to the Federal judiciary over the last 9 months is beyond concerning; it is corrupting.

We have seen nominees who are deeply partisan and deeply ideological. We have seen nominees who, under any other administration, would be roundly criticized and rejected by this body. And we have seen nominees whose chief qualification is nothing other than loyalty to and relationship to Donald Trump.

So later today, we are going to consider just the latest example of this when the Senate takes up the nomination of Eric Tung to serve on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

This is a lifetime appointment to the Federal bench, colleagues. An appellate court nominee in particular should have the judgment, the independence, and the respect for precedence worthy of the position. But instead, Mr. Tung, the nominee before us, is not here because of his independence or his judicial temperament; he is here because of his ideology.

Mr. Tung embraces an extreme and rigid view of the Constitution that rejects both equality and liberty. He has made it clear that under his constitutional philosophy, there is no protection for rights that most Americans take as fundamental, including the rights to reproductive freedom, marriage equality, and even private consensual relationships. That is not constitutional interpretation; it is a radical blueprint for rolling back decades of progress on individual freedom and equality.

When I gave Mr. Tung an opportunity to explain his history of sexist and anti-labor comments a few months ago in committee, during the confirmation hearing, he deflected. He showed no reflection or evolved thinking, because the truth is Mr. Tung's record and writings reveal a pattern of ideological extremism that calls into question his ability to apply the law fully and fairly.

Now, let me also make it clear that I am not setting out with the goal of denying the Ninth Circuit qualified replacements—far from it. Not just myself, but Senator SCHIFF, my colleague from California, and I both reached out to the White House months ago to inform them of a couple of things—No. 1, that Eric Tung would be unacceptable.

But, importantly, it is important for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to understand that we signaled a willingness to consider more mainstream Republican candidates whom President Trump had previously nominated for district court judgeships. We were willing to try to find that common ground. But clearly the White House wasn't interested, because whether it is the Department of Justice, the FBI, U.S. attorneys, or the Federal bench, the Trump White House is showing us what they truly care about: unwavering loyalty.

So today, I will remind my colleagues that when we reference the judiciary, it is the American people's judiciary, and all the decisions we make today will affect our justice system, the people's judiciary, for years, if not decades.

For those reasons, I urge all my colleagues to join me in strongly opposing Mr. Tung's nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Orr nomination.

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, SNAP benefits have been in the news and a topic of much discussion, and those benefits for over 40 million Americans lapsed over the weekend because the Democrats have chosen to hold government funding hostage for political “leverage”—their word—at the American people's expense. In other words, they are using the American people as pawns. Because of that, their constituents and, indeed, nearly 700,000 Tennesseans are without their SNAP benefits.

Border Patrol agents, our air traffic controllers, and Federal law enforcement have been working a month now without pay. This is why you have the AFGE and the controllers union saying: End the Schumer shutdown now.

We also know that critical Federal assistance—from rural development programs to small business loans—is in jeopardy.

Across the country, people and small businesses are all suffering because of CHUCK SCHUMER and his Schumer shutdown.

And for Democrats—I think they have wanted this. They planned for it, and they wanted to see it happen, so they got it.

Now, over on the House side, the Democratic whip made it very clear during a recent interview—and I will quote her. She said:

Shutdowns are terrible, and of course there will be families that are going to suffer. . . . But it is one of the few leverage times we have.

So to the American people, realize that the Democrats you have elected

see you as pawns and leverage and pieces that they can move around a chessboard.

As the Senate Democrat leader said at the beginning of the shutdown, and I quote him:

Every day gets better for [Democrats].

They see this as improving their political chances.

Over the last month, his party has voted more than a dozen times to keep the government shut down. At the heart of their demands is the permanent extension of President Biden's COVID credits under ObamaCare. This would be a \$450 billion expense to the U.S. taxpayer.

Last week, I was on the floor talking about this and about how Democrats are peddling falsehoods to try to justify their Schumer shutdown. They claim that ObamaCare subsidies are going to expire. In reality, it is only the Biden COVID credit bonus that will expire.

What happened during COVID for the ObamaCare subsidies—they took off the income caps, and a lot of people had zero-dollar premiums. If you were making over half a million dollars a year, you, too, could get a Biden COVID credit bonus and subsidy from the ObamaCare exchange and you, too, could have the U.S. taxpayer picking up the tab for 80 to 90 percent of your health insurance because they plussed up the credit, and they removed the income caps.

Now, the original ObamaCare subsidies—which, by the way, do not expire. These are permanent. They are in law. The original subsidies continue for people who are at 100 to 400 percent of the Federal poverty level.

Our colleagues across the aisle claim that the Biden COVID credits are needed to keep the cost of health insurance premiums down. In reality, ObamaCare is too expensive to afford without the subsidy. So what they are doing is propping up a broken system.

In fact, since 2013, the ObamaCare benchmark plan premium has increased by 237 percent—more than three times the rate for employer-sponsored healthcare plans that most Americans get through their work and from their employer. As these premiums go up, taxpayers are on the hook to subsidize not the individual but, guess what, the insurance company. The subsidy doesn't go to the individual; it goes directly to the insurance company.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle need to understand that their fight for government-run healthcare, which is really what this entire Schumer shutdown is all about, is going to fail. It is time for them to put the American people over and before far-left politics. It is time to reopen the Federal Government.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. President, we all are hearing quite a bit about AI and the potential of AI to transform entire industries for

the better, to make them more efficient.

In Tennessee alone, our advanced manufacturers are using it to become more efficient, to lower costs, and to increase productivity. Healthcare providers are using it to strengthen care, and researchers are using it to discover new treatments. These are all things that are worth celebrating. They are good, and they are yielding good results, but we also know that this emerging technology can be used for harm.

In the case of Google, its AI models have targeted conservatives with defamation for years. During a Senate Commerce Committee hearing last week, I presented evidence to Google's vice president for government affairs and public policy that his company's AI models have repeatedly—repeatedly—fabricated malicious stories about conservative activist Robby Starbuck. He is a Tennessean, and he is a conservative leader in our State.

In one instance, Google's large language model, Gemma, falsely claimed that Starbuck was accused of child rape and that I publicly defended him. Google's AI models have also falsely accused him of being a former adult film star, of facing criminal drug charges, and of shooting a man in Nashville in an argument over a parking spot.

In response, Google's VP claimed that "hallucinations" among their AI models are a common problem and that the company is working on it—as if this harmful defamation is merely a technical glitch. And they refer to it as a hallucination.

In fact, there seems to be a pattern of malicious lying and fiction when it comes to conservatives. So I asked the AI model "Has MARSHA BLACKBURN been accused of rape?" The answer to this question, of course, is an unequivocal no. I never have. Yet, Gemma fabricated an entire outlandish criminal allegation against me. It had a massive story about a rape in 1987, which didn't happen, and accusations of improper conduct, which did not happen. It also came forward with an alleged victim. It was all malicious. It was all made up. It was all a lie. Yet Gemma even generated fake links to fabricated news articles to support the defamatory claim, and, of course, the links didn't work.

This marks a catastrophic failure of oversight of an AI model that has been downloaded by more than 200 million people. So last week, I sent a letter over to Google's CEO Sundar Pichai demanding an explanation as to why Gemma was creating these false allegations, criminal allegations, against conservatives and also against me. I also asked for a list of steps the company is taking to eliminate political bias and defamatory content from its models. Google has not responded to my letter. What they did do was take Gemma down over the weekend.

Despite the AI model's serious flaws, the big tech giant said in a statement

that it is going to continue to work to make Gemma available to their developers.

And the message on this is clear: You need to shut it down. You need to shut it down completely. You need to shut the Gemini system down completely.

The American public deserves to know that, with these AI models, the information is going to be accurate. It is going to be transparent. It is going to be fair, and it is not going to be a tool that is going to be used to fabricate and to smear conservatives.

In the meantime, Google has until tomorrow to respond to the letter demanding answers. And it is important to keep in mind that this is the same Google that operated a Gmail blacklist that suppressed Republican fundraising emails as spam, and it is the same Google that manipulated search results about the 2024 election to benefit Kamala Harris and to harm President Trump, and it is the same Google that suppressed search results of the attempted assassination of President Trump in Butler, PA.

Big Tech has waged a war on conservatives for too long. It is time that the American people see accountability out of these platforms.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Eric Chunyee Tung, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

NOMINATION OF ERIC CHUNYEE TUNG

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Eric Tung to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Mr. Tung is yet another judicial nominee who has been selected by President Trump for his partisan ideology. Mr. Tung has not received blue slips from his home State Senators, and his record demonstrates why.

At his hearing, Mr. Tung stated that he subscribes to "originalism." Earlier this year, he clarified that this means he does not recognize a constitutional right to abortion, marriage equality, or even private consensual sexual activity, writing: "Whether there's a constitutional right to abortion, same sex marriage, sodomy, pornography, transgender procedures—the answer for the originalist is simple: No."

Over the course of his legal career, Mr. Tung has demonstrated his hostility to workers and to voting rights. He has declared his belief in "gender roles" and claimed: "When these radical feminists try to blur gender roles, they undermine institutions like marriage—stitutions which hold society

together." When I gave him an opportunity to renounce his comments, he sought only to justify his extreme views.

Mr. Tung also has strong ties to rightwing organizations and figures. He has called the president of the far-right Article III Project Mike Davis a friend. At his hearing and in his responses to written questions, Mr. Tung refused to disavow overtly racist and sexist statements by Mr. Davis.

Mr. Tung's record suggests he will continue to place his personal views and President Trump ahead of his commitment to the Constitution.

I will oppose Mr. Tung's nomination. I urge my colleagues to join me.

VOTE ON TUNG NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Tung nomination?

Mr. DURBIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 605 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—3

Booker Klobuchar Lee

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the

President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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. 421, Caleb Orr, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs).

John Thune, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Mike Crapo, Jon A. Husted, Rick Scott of Florida, John Boozman, John R. Curtis, Mike Rounds, Kevin Cramer, Ted Cruz, Thom Tillis, Bernie Moreno, Tommy Tuberville, Markwayne Mullin, Katie Boyd Britt, Bill Cassidy, Roger F. Wicker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Caleb Orr, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs), 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 606 Ex.]

YEAS—57

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

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—2

Booker Klobuchar

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 41. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Caleb Orr, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

LOUISVILLE UPS PLANE ACCIDENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know that many of our colleagues and the American people have seen the tragic news out of my hometown just yesterday. And I am grateful for their thoughts and their prayers this morning directed toward the people of Louisville.

Folks around our county, Jefferson County, need those prayers right now and in the days and weeks to come. The death toll from last evening's UPS crash has continued to rise throughout the day. For the families of these victims and for the injured survivors being treated at area hospitals, life will never be the same. There is a lot of grief welling up right now in Kentucky.

This would be true even in the case of a single life lost. But as local first responders, State officials, and Federal investigators continue their work today, I would like to help our colleagues understand what makes this tragedy such a gut punch in a place like Louisville.

During the day, Louisville International hums with thousands of passengers from all across the country. But around the clock, Louisville is also a hub for global shipping and logistics, business supplies, consumer goods, and Christmas gifts.

If it is going somewhere in short order, it is a very good chance it is passing through UPS Worldport in my hometown of Louisville.

None of this is possible without teams of devoted professionals. Louisville is home to logistics experts, warehouse workers, aircraft crews, and maintainers. They take pride in their work, and their community takes pride in them.

That is why this crash cuts so deep. It is about all of us. Today, Jefferson County schools and many local businesses are completely closed. Neighbors are mourning neighbors. So today will be a tough day in the Commonwealth.

But the people of Louisville are grateful for the swift, lifesaving efforts of our first responders, from local police, fire, and EMS. They trust in the prayers of their fellow Americans.

I want them to know that their representatives here in Washington are making sure that every Federal re-

source they need is on the ground and headed their way soon. I spoke with Mayor Greenberg this morning. My team and I will continue to stay in close contact with local, State, and Federal officials, including at the FAA and the NTSB, in the coming days.

But first and foremost, I am keeping my fellow Kentuckians in my prayers and asking our colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, this is exactly what it looks like. The President of the United States is going out of his way to make sure that people don't have enough to eat. And it is hard to believe because it does sound crazy; it does sound partisan. But he really is using hunger as a political weapon.

Let's back up for a second. On September 30, this administration, the Trump administration, released a plan saying that they were going to use a contingency fund to pay SNAP benefits during the shutdown. This is the way it has been done every time there is a shutdown.

There is a pocket of money that is literally there to pay SNAP benefits in case there is an emergency of any kind, including a lapse in appropriations. Then 3 weeks later, they said: Never mind. We are not permitted to pay these benefits during a shutdown.

That was clearly not the case, and they had already issued guidance saying: We are going to use this funding.

They pulled it because they wanted to create leverage.

Then, they went to court to argue against paying these SNAP benefits. Then, two separate judges said: Not only are you permitted to use this contingency fund to pay nutritional assistance benefits to the working poor, children, the elderly, the disabled—not only are you permitted to do that—you are required under the statute to do that.

Now you have two Federal judges saying the law is clear. It is not a question of whether you are permitted to do it or not. It is actually whether you are permitted to not do it. The judges both said you have to do this; it is what the law says.

This week, they announced that they are only going to pay half of the benefits. They are going to pay half of the SNAP benefits that 40 million Americans need. It is kind of even worse than that because SNAP goes through State Agencies, and State Agencies, in a lot of cases—the unemployment system is

like this—they have these antiquated computer systems. So any change in the benefit structure has to be reprogrammed into their computer systems and then loaded up onto the EBT cards.

Some States are going to be able to implement this half benefit within a few days. But there are several States with antiquated computer systems that are saying it could be weeks or even months.

I just want to make this point extremely clear: None of that is necessary. They are clearly feeling some amount of heat and urgency to end the shutdown. Usually, what you do if you are the President of the United States and you feel an urgent need to cut a deal is you try to get the people with whom you would need to make a deal into a room and begin a negotiation. But Trump really doesn't want to do that. He thinks we are evil. His senior adviser has called the Democratic Party a domestic terrorist organization or some such thing. So he is just like—I don't know if he is incapable or, at least so far, unwilling to do the basic blocking and tackling required by being a political leader at any level—county council, mayor, State legislature, Lieutenant Governor, House, Senate, whatever. You have to interact with people that you have disagreements with.

But he doesn't want to do that. His theory of change—Stephen Miller, Russ Vought, some of these folks—is we are just going to squeeze Democrats.

That would be like normal hardball politics, except for this. What they mean by "squeezing Democrats" is they mean threatening to shut down or throttle air traffic. What they mean by squeezing Democrats is canceling long-planned, long-approved projects that benefit everybody across the country. What they mean by squeezing Democrats, in this particular instance, is that 40 million people are going to not have enough to eat.

Look, I don't always want to be the partisan warrior. I like interacting with my Republican colleagues. I come from the State of Hawaii, where there is a decisive majority of Democrats. So one of the muscles I had to develop over the last 13 years was sort of how to interact with the other party and make arrangements, cut deals, compartmentalize the problems that I have with some of these folks on other issues and find common ground.

My appeal to my Republican colleagues is very simple: Can we just leave the kids harmless? Can we leave the hungry harmless? We are clearly in a disagreement about how the appropriations process and this Affordable Care Act subsidy question should be wrestled to the ground. My own view is like, let's just be adults and convene; and then wrangle and argue and shout at each other a little bit; and reconvene and then cut the deal. That is how the country is supposed to work. But separate and apart from that, can we please say that using hunger as a weap-

on is out of bounds in the United States?

There is a long and pretty dark history, an evil history, of politicians—some popularly elected, some not elected—using food as a means of political control. I think that is not a road that we want to go down. I think we want to say that whatever else we are fighting about, if there are Americans who are hungry, then we should hold them harmless.

Just to be clear, there is no shortage of money in the United States of America. The stock market is booming. You have these AI data centers racking up \$100 and \$200 billion capital expenditure plans. There is enough money sloshing around in the public and the private sectors to pay for food. There really is.

If you are a regular person trying to put food on the table for your family, if you are trying to keep your health insurance premiums from more than doubling, if you are struggling to pay your bills to make ends meet because everything is getting more expensive, there is no money for you. But there is enough money for a golden toilet, and there is enough money for a \$173 million new aircraft for the Secretary of Homeland Security. And there is \$40 billion for the country of Argentina, to bail them out, which, coincidentally, is about the amount of money that it would cost to extend these Affordable Care Act tax credits.

So it is not a question that the economy is contracting and our debt is out of control and all the rest of it. This body just passed a \$1.5 trillion deficit increase in the form of a tax cut, where the benefits go, not exclusively but disproportionately, to wealthy individuals. It is not a question of there not being enough money. The problem is that they have decided that there is not enough money for you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

FEDERAL JUDICIARY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today to express my concern about recent attacks on the legitimacy of the judicial branch of government.

A fair and neutral judiciary plays a very indispensable role in our constitutional structure. Judges wield enormous power, and their decisions determine the legal rights of the parties before them.

One especially potent power of the judiciary is the practice of judicial review. As we all know, the judiciary sometimes decides cases that impact the operation of laws passed by Congress or the actions of the executive branch. We accept this judicial review because neutral arbiters are necessary in a system based upon the rule of law, but this system only works if everyone accepts that the arbiters are, in fact, neutral. Litigants, the coequal branches of government, and the American people must be confident that judges are merely saying what the law

is and not what those judges wish the law to be.

Our judicial system also requires respect for appellate review. The Federal courts are hierachal, and the rule of law depends on public confidence that lower courts will faithfully apply and respect the decisions of the higher courts. It is no surprise that some people are not always happy with how the courts exercise judicial power. Criticism is fair and sometimes warranted, but too often it has strayed into outright attacks on the judiciary as an institution.

Today, however, I am here to discuss attacks on the judiciary coming particularly from a concerning place that is within the judiciary itself. It is one thing for the political branches or the public to criticize the Supreme Court. It is entirely different for Federal judges themselves to undermine their own branch of government. In two high-profile instances in the last few months, numerous judges have anonymously gone, as you might expect, to the press to denigrate the Supreme Court. This ought to be deeply concerning not only to this Senator but to the public at large.

On September 4, 2025, NBC News published a report alleging that 12 Federal judges gave anonymous interviews, and 10 of them took that opportunity to criticize the Supreme Court.

One judge described the Supreme Court's conduct as "inexcusable."

Another judge said the Supreme Court "is effectively assisting the Trump administration in 'undermining the lower courts.'"

Then we have a big hit piece by the New York Times on October 11, 2025. That newspaper ran a story where they sought out judges specifically to criticize the Supreme Court. The Times approached 400 of the almost 1,500 Federal judges with questionnaires. The Times intentionally solicited judges in districts that litigants considered to be unfavorable to the current President. Of the 400 judges approached, thank God only a small percentage took the offer. I think this is an important point. Then we can draw the conclusion most Federal judges didn't take the bait of the New York Times because it violated the ethics of the judiciary. So only a small percentage did, but that is still a fabulous 65 judges responding to the Times' questionnaire. It happens that some responded with very harsh criticism. They then gave the Times the fodder that they needed to spin the narrative of a judiciary in crisis.

The Times wrote:

[F]ederal judges called the Supreme Court's emergency orders "mystical," "overly blunt," "incredibly demoralizing and troubling" and "a slap in the face to the district courts."

One judge compared their district's current relationship with the Supreme Court to a "war zone."

Another said the courts were in the midst of a "judicial crisis."

I am deeply concerned—and I hope the public at large is—that these public

attacks on the Court from sitting Federal judges damage the public's faith and confidence in our judicial system. When judges call the legitimacy of their own branch of government into question, they erode the faith of the institution itself.

My colleague, the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary in the House of Representatives, shares these concerns. Together, we sent a letter of concern to Chief Justice Roberts. We expressed our concern that the conduct of the judges, as reported, may violate the applicable ethical canons. We also asked whether the judicial branch will give guidance to Federal judges or even investigate this matter.

The document called the Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges is very clear that judges have an obligation to uphold public confidence in the judiciary. For example, canon 2 states:

[A judge] . . . should act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.

In 2024, Chief Judge Diaz of the Fourth Circuit applied the canon in resolving a judicial complaint against a judge for authoring an opinion piece lambasting a sitting Supreme Court Justice. He concluded that the judge in question violated the canons and "diminish[ed] the public confidence in the integrity and independence of the federal judiciary." Chief Judge Diaz's reasoning appears to apply with similar force to the recent anonymous attacks on the Court.

Anonymous public comments from sitting judges describing the relationship between the Supreme Court and lower courts as a "war zone" and otherwise attacking the legitimacy of the Supreme Court rulings undermine public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary. In fact, it may violate the Code of Conduct.

Judges shouldn't mimic the infighting and rhetorical attacks that are so common among us in the political arena. This damages the public's faith in the judiciary.

The Supreme Court is a uniquely American institution that has played an important role since our Republic's founding. In contrast to the other branches—meaning the political branches of the Federal Government—the Supreme Court is meant to stand above the day-to-day squabbles of politics. And that is not just the Supreme Court, as I implied; that is every level of the judicial branch. For the most part, the Court does this remarkably well—speaking of the Supreme Court. We know this because neither Democrats nor Republicans are always happy with the decision of our highest Court. The Court is either too conservative or too liberal, depending on the day and whom you ask. But at the bottom, the job of the Court is not to please us or agree with us but to say what the law is.

In recent years, we have seen vicious attacks against the Court from a vari-

ety of directions, many aimed at weakening public confidence in this important institution. This is bad for all of us. So today, I am here to defend the integrity of the Supreme Court and to urge the judicial branch to address these attacks that are coming from within—mostly by district court judges—and the ones that reply to everything anonymously and really don't have the guts to stand up publicly with their criticism of the Supreme Court.

So here is my bottom line: I call on the Federal judiciary to give clear guidance to Federal judges on acceptable public commentary and to take seriously the public's perception and confidence in the courts.

I yield the floor.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to begin the next vote.

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

VOTE ON ORR NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Orr nomination?

Ms. ERNST. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 57, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 607 Ex.]

YEAS—57

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

NAYS—43

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

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Louisiana.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to resume legislative session.

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am going to be uncharacteristically brief.

Tomorrow, I will be bringing two bills before the Senate. They both have to do with the shutdown and congressional pay.

The first bill is the No Shutdown Paychecks Act. The second bill is the Withhold Member Pay During Shutdowns Act.

The first bill would provide that, as long as we are shut down—and I will explain why in a moment—as long as we are shut down, no Member of Congress can be paid. And the money will not be—will not be—reimbursed at a later date or repaid at a later date.

The second bill, to address any 27th Amendment concerns, will say: During a shutdown, Members of Congress will not receive their pay, but their pay will be escrowed, and they will receive it after the government is opened back up.

Look, we are in day 36. Like the Presiding Officer, I have heard a lot of rumors about "we are that close to reaching an agreement." We have been "that close" for a week.

Frankly, I hope I am wrong in saying this, but I don't think we are really that close. I wish we were, and I hope we are. But I think we are going to be in this shutdown a while longer. That doesn't give me any joy to say that.

In the meantime, none of our staffs are being paid. No Federal employees are being paid. I got some numbers in this morning that Federal workers have had to borrow \$365 million so far during this 36-day shutdown in order just to pay their rent.

Our military is only being paid partially. Our air traffic controllers are not being paid.

People who receive SNAP payments are only being partially paid. I don't think anybody wants to see anybody go hungry in America. And that is not a partisan statement. I think that is a bipartisan statement.

There is precedent for this.

Some may say: Well, this violates the 27th Amendment.

I don't think it does. That is why I am offering two different flavors of bills.

But in 2013, President Obama did the same thing that I am doing now. They were in a shutdown, and President Obama supported legislation that said: If you don't open up government by this certain date, then you are going to lose your paychecks.

And guess what. Members of Congress had an epiphany, and they found religion. They had a Damascene moment, and they opened up the government. And that is all this bill would do.

I am not trying to grandstand. I wasn't going to bring this bill. When I got back here Monday, I heard all the rumors, like everybody else, that we were close. And I hope we are close. But we are not close enough.

And so I am offering these bills tomorrow, and people can vote yea or they can vote nay. But what is good for the goose is good for the gander.

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

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

The Senator from Connecticut.

2025 ELECTIONS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Louisiana yielding to me, and I am here with Senator PADILLA because we are leading a group of colleagues to talk on the floor of the Senate about a right of the American people that was exercised in overwhelming numbers yesterday: the right to vote. And it was an enormously heartening and encouraging and inspiring example to us of good citizenship and interest in the electoral process.

But we are here because the right to vote is increasingly under assault by this administration—systematic, strategic, relentless assault by an administration that wants to discourage the exercise of that right to vote and to degrade the protections of it that many Americans take for granted because they are so ingrained in our system.

What this administration has done overall in seeking to impound election equipment, collect voter information, intrude on privacy, and discourage election workers by creating fear and intimidation, not to mention dismantling the election protection mechanisms in the CISA and voting rights section of the Department of Justice, the Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Program—these kinds of measures create a real and present danger to our election process.

And it began, literally, with President Trump pardoning the January 6 rioters. Remember, they not only assaulted the Capitol, but their purpose was to stop certification of a lawful transition of power that resulted from the vote. It was an effort to undermine the vote.

In the face of many of these actions, we need to rely on the courts. They are the bulwark that, in many instances, will protect us. We are dependent on organizations that are willing to go to court, and we need to support them with resources.

One example, on March 25, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive order, 14248. Among other things, it attempted to impose on the States new documentation requirements for mail-

in voter registration and voting procedures—just one example of this administration's assault on the right to vote—and it probably went under the radar so far as most public attention was concerned. But it was real. It was potentially destructive and damaging to the right to vote.

And, thankfully, Judge Kollar-Kotelly of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia knew our laws well enough that she, rightfully, held that this Executive order was so patently illegal, so flagrantly unlawful and a blatant violation of our Constitution's carefully crafted separation of powers that she struck down that Executive order. And she wrote:

The States have initial authority to regulate elections. Congress has supervisory authority over those regulations. [But] [t]he President does not feature at all.

And that is why Judge Kollar-Kotelly found that Trump's Executive order "violates the Constitution by usurping power over federal election procedure that is vested in Congress and the States—not in the President."

Sounds to me like the President of the United States might need a civics lesson or at least a reread of the Constitution. The Framers regulated elections in this manner on purpose, part of a carefully crafted compromise between State and Federal legislative power. They did it in this manner to serve a specific end, which was a balancing of responsibility that accorded States their proper sovereign control over elections cast in their borders.

They are sovereign. Our States remain sovereign, as they were then, and their electors are entitled to respect in State and Federal elections under rules that are set by sovereign States.

And that compromise is sound public policy, just as it was when our Framers propounded it. It is right that States and communities—not the President—should determine, in the best instance, how best to conduct elections.

And it is right that, in situations when uniform national election standards are necessary, those determinations are made deliberately by a large body of elected officials directly representing their local communities in Congress.

As the judge said, "The President does not feature at all."

More importantly, the Framers' diffusion of power over elections divided both among the States and within the branch of the Federal Government closest to the people—namely, the Congress—is one of our Nation's most powerful safeguards against autocracy. They were wary of an overbearing Executive. They had just fought to be free of a monarchy. They explicitly avoided giving any power to the President in the realm of elections.

The framework they created establishes a decentralized structure where it is difficult for any single individual or entity to unduly influence or wield unchecked power over elections.

"No King." That was their mantra, literally. They had just overthrown a

King. No single authority to control elections and potentially bring to bear another authoritarian ruler.

But, now, this President has moved us toward a totalitarian regime, and there is no more salient or significant aspect of his effort than the destructive assault on our election system.

A system where one person alone can decide how elections are run is the definition of "tyranny." Russia has a Constitution. Other nations like Russia have constitutions, but elections are rigged. And whether it is China, Russia, Hungary—totalitarian regimes have one ruler. It may not be called a King, but it is a ruler who controls the election process. And lo and behold, 90 percent of the voters in the old Soviet Union, now in Russia, all decide that the guy in power is to be retained.

That is no accident. It is the result of totalitarian control over elections, and that is why this judge's ruling is so profoundly momentous.

The voters of California, Virginia, New Jersey, and New York made their voices heard yesterday, and they were saying as well, no Kings. They exercised the right to vote in tremendous numbers.

In our State of Connecticut, towns where Republican first select people or mayors were in power for decades saw a move from red to blue. What is more important than red to blue is overwhelming numbers of people came to the polls because they were angry and anxious about our democracy and about affordability, about paying the rent, affording groceries, paying for electricity, and, yes, health insurance.

They were looking at the open enrollment exchanges for whether they could afford health insurance. They saw premiums doubling and tripling. They were hit by that sticker shock, and it made them fearful and outraged about what was happening to healthcare, as well as everything else they were paying to afford. And they couldn't afford healthcare and everything else that they needed for their families, and that was a factor as well.

So this outpouring of anger and anxiety that we saw on the issue of affordability was an exercise of the franchise that this administration wants to undermine and undercut and, eventually, eviscerate.

So we need to elevate the judges. Let's name this one—Judge Kollar-Kotelly of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Judge Kollar-Kotelly is a hero in sustaining and protecting the rule of law, in preserving free and open elections, by striking down an Executive order that very simply egregiously overrides State sovereign authority.

Now, I will say States' rights used to be the province of Members of this body who sought to protect segregation. Maybe they were endeavoring to stop Federal law enforcement and the use of States' rights as a sword or a shield had limits and the courts limited them.

But in this instance, there is no excuse and no precedent that permits the President of the United States to take over our election system, and I call on my colleagues in this body to stop rubberstamping his usurpation of our authority. We are the ones, along with States, that have that responsibility.

Congress was specifically chosen to protect our election system when it came to Federal supervision because we are closest to the people, and we should zealously guard that authority because it is essential to our constitutional structure.

I know that a lot of this may seem abstract or opaque, but it goes to the core of our constitutional system, and I call on my colleagues to protect our authority and State officials to safeguard theirs because it is a matter of our democracy, our freedom, and our right to vote.

I note that my colleague Senator PADILLA is here. I started this floor bloc, but I am proud that he and I have worked together on enlisting our colleagues. He is a major champion of election rights. He is one of the leaders in our body that has worked zealously to protect that right, and I am proud to be standing here with him in this cause.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, let me begin by thanking my good friend the Senator from Connecticut Senator BLUMENTHAL for his partnership not just on these issues but in a lot of matters before the judiciary, generally.

But we and others have come to the floor today to celebrate yesterday. Yesterday, Americans in States across the country came out to participate in a tradition as old as the Nation itself: casting their ballots in a democratic election.

And while ballots are still being processed and final results will come in the coming days, it is safe to say that, thanks to the hard-working and unsung heroes known as election workers and volunteers across the country, these elections largely went off smoothly and successfully. Because of their work in States like Virginia and New Jersey, we saw a record turnout. Because of their work in cities like New York, we saw the highest turnout there since 1969 in a municipal election.

From a race for State supreme court justices in the State of Pennsylvania to a statewide proposition in my home State of California, Americans showed up in overwhelming numbers to say in one loud and clear voice that they have had enough.

The question after an election is always: So what message did the voters say? What was the mandate when it comes to a high turnout in an election with larger than expected margins?

The takeaway is this: Enough of the Republican chaos, enough of the power grabs, enough of the corruption, and enough of Trump's billionaire assault on working families.

That is the power of democracy, that we are able to send that type of a message. The people sent that type of a message, that loud of a message, by exercising the right to vote.

But even after the success of last night, let's also be clear about this: One free and fair election does not guarantee the next one. We have to fight to ensure future elections. We have to keep asking ourselves, what do we do between now and next November to protect the next election? Because at this very moment, the President and his allies are doing everything they can to rig the rules of the game.

The reality is that at some point in the last couple of months, the President came to a harsh realization. We have known that his policies have been bad ones. We have known they have been harmful. He has figured out his policies are also very unpopular. Prices on everything from groceries, to housing, to energy bills are going up. Healthcare premiums are spiking. SNAP benefits are being cut. But for the billionaire class, things are just fine because Trump gave them the tax cut that they wanted, and somehow there is now funding for a ballroom.

Americans, though, are fired up. They are angry at a President and a party that are looking out for themselves rather than looking out for the country as a whole. But rather than change their policies that are causing such harm, instead of changing their policies before the midterm elections, President Trump and Republicans would rather change the rules.

We have a responsibility to sound the alarm before it is too late.

Let me revisit my home State of California, where voters came out in big numbers to pass Proposition 50 by a wide margin. Why? We are not celebrating a middecade redistricting. Proposition 50 passed because they have been waiting to respond to the madness because Donald Trump is the one who forced California's hand.

In between trying to pile a little gold covering to every square inch of the White House that he can that hasn't been demolished and pardoning billionaire criminals, President Trump has been making some phone calls. So has the Vice President. They called GOP State lawmakers to redraw congressional maps and to silence Democratic opposition.

It began when President Trump called Texas Governor Greg Abbott and told him to find him five more Republican seats.

When I first heard that, it sounded eerily similar to the call we all heard about from 2020 when President Trump called the secretary of state of Georgia and demanded he find him 11,000 more votes.

We knew what Texas was going to do—a midterm partisan redistricting.

Californians knew right away that enough was enough, and that is what yesterday was all about—leveling the playing field.

By the way, at any moment, Republicans can actually end this redistricting arms race altogether, because there is more than just chatter about Ohio, Florida, Indiana, Missouri, and others. To end that arms race, I invite my Republican colleagues to join me—to join us in supporting true nationwide redistricting reform. Yes, we do have a bill to do just that—Independent redistricting once every 10 years after the census, which is when it should be properly done. But, no, Republicans would rather try to cling to power by changing the rules of the game.

It is why just yesterday the White House issued yet another threat, this time a threat to issue another illegal Executive order to ban mail-in voting. It is why, as races were being called last night and Trump knew things were not going to go his way, the President took to social media to demand Republicans kill the filibuster and ban mail-in voting and other laws that are designed to keep our elections secure but make it easier for eligible U.S. citizens to exercise their fundamental right to vote, to cast their ballot and have their ballot be counted. That is what we are up against.

But wait, there is more. At the same time, the Trump Department of Justice has its hands full. Boy, do they. The Department of Justice has sent letters to at least 40 different States demanding information about their voter maintenance policies and practices. They filed lawsuits against eight States and probably growing—including California—that have refused to hand over the personal, private information of voters. It kind of reminds me of a game that kids sometimes play: Heads, I win; tails, you lose.

What the administration is saying is, you can give us your voter rolls so we can start systematic purging, or you can choose to protect voter information, but we will see you in court, and we are going to claim voter fraud anyway.

But wait, there is more. Donald Trump is also staffing up the White House with like-minded election deniers and conspiracy theorists, hinting at future actions that would disenfranchise even more voters.

Of course, the President has been slandering places like California and our election practices for years, and he did it once again just yesterday, on election day—his words, not mine. The President lies and shouts “fraud” without a shred of evidence. He didn’t wait until election day; he started prior to because he knew he was going to lose.

The White House restated its threat to issue a new, even more illegal Executive order to ban mail-in voting despite the fact that the President himself votes by mail.

On top of all these brazen efforts, they are laying the groundwork for the nuclear option once again.

Think about what we have seen over just the last few months—troops deployed domestically into cities in response to pretend rebellions that exist only in Donald Trump's mind.

Going back to this Proposition 50 in California, I was there with the Governor and other State leaders when we first launched the effort. We held a rally to announce a new, legal, democratic ballot initiative—small “d,” democratic—because ultimately it was going to be up to the voters to decide.

The day of that rally, the day of that kickoff—don't tell me it was a coincidence—who shows up at the doors and the perimeter of this building? Armed Border Patrol agents to try to intimidate people coming in to participate in the kickoff and the announcement.

The election deniers in the administration have been lobbying for the White House to declare a fake national emergency to try to seize unconstitutional powers over our elections.

So I raise all these examples as a shocking reminder of how quickly Donald Trump is moving to upend our free and fair elections, but the reality is, none of this should be surprising. I know it is not to me because he has done it before. It has been 5 years since Donald Trump first tried to steal the 2020 election, and since then, he has only grown more extreme.

We all agree it is important to protect the security and integrity of our elections, but even at a moment in history like this, I remind myself that American democracy was here long before MAGA, and it will be here long after MAGA Republicans are no longer in power. But it will not be by accident.

Members of Congress can and must stand up to every one of Trump's unconstitutional power grabs over State election authority. I am committed to doing my part. If the Trump White House tries to declare some fake national emergency to create a pretense for Federal intervention, I will force a vote here in the Senate to stop it.

But no matter what happens, voters cannot lose hope. That is what is most important. We need Americans to keep showing up each and every election and show up in overwhelming numbers—just as they did yesterday, just as they did for hundreds of years prior—and make clear that it will be the people and only the people who will determine the future of our democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I would have hoped that the basic operation of American democracy and particularly the basic integrity of America's elections would not be a topic that we would have to come to the Senate floor to worry about, but the character down the road in the Oval Office is making all sorts of threats to the cornerstone of America's democracy—our elections.

I will mention three. First, he non-stop lies about rigged elections. He

can't bear to face the fact that Joe Biden beat him by millions of votes fair and square, and so he invented a story of rigged elections.

Well, as has repeatedly been shown, if any election has been rigged recently, it was Donald Trump's first election, where study after study, report after report showed that Russia had been messing around in that election, using covert influence operations to influence American voters and steer them towards their favorite—Donald Trump.

But the lying about rigged elections is a bit of a warning sign because the other thing we have learned about Trump is that his accusations tend to be actual confessions. The bad stuff that he intends to do he announces by accusing others of doing the same thing. So when people notice the mischief that he is up to, he says: Well, everybody does it. That doesn't make it anything other than a lie.

Then he has been out, bullying Republican States, to try to get him more seats in Congress by doing a midseason gerrymandering of their States. This succeeded, kind of, in Texas. When I say it succeeded “kind of,” it succeeded in the sense that they got the gerrymandered districts.

But here is the rub: When you gerrymander more Republican districts into a State, you make the freeboard—the win ratio—for each of those districts a little bit less.

And if yesterday was any message, Republicans need to worry about a wave election washing away Trump's poison and nonsense. In a wave election, those gerrymandered districts that you thought you had moved into the Republican column could get sunk in the wave.

In particular, we have already seen from yesterday's results—more analysis will follow—that it looks like Latino voters, important in Texas, are abandoning Trump. So it may be that Texas's gerrymandering blows up in its face, and wouldn't that be a nice turnabout?

Maybe that is what Republicans in Indiana were thinking when they refused to gerrymander their State. They might well be looking at Texas and saying: You know, voters in Texas might actually have cared more about electric bills, about their homeowners' insurance crisis, about their cost of living, and wanted Texan legislators to do something about that, instead of going off on a partisan gallivant to redistrict the State. And those voters might just hold those Republicans accountable for choosing as their priority to use gerrymandering so that politicians can choose their voters instead of paying attention to the voters who want help with costs, who want their homeowners' insurance problems solved, who are concerned about their electric utility bills, and who are sick to death about what is happening with grocery costs.

The third avenue of attack on elections by Trump is that he is modeling

government election interference in front of our faces right now. When you send the National Guard into American cities, when you deploy masked, plain-clothed, presumably ICE agents to yank people off the street and fling them into unmarked vans and disappear them, you are getting people used to images that Americans are not used to. You are inoculating Americans against that kind of abuse of both military and law enforcement capabilities so that, when it is election day and that kind of nonsense takes place around polling places to discourage voters, we have gotten used to it.

So the lying—the constant lying—about rigged elections, the bullying—the constant bullying—to force State legislatures to gerrymander even though that is not what their voters want, and the constant modeling of government interference in elections—all of that is a signal that we have to be on our guard to protect our democracy.

It is not just Trump. In doing this, Trump has allies. He has allies on the packed and captured Supreme Court—a Court that Republicans packed and captured specifically to help their big, creepy billionaire donors acquire more power in American democracy. And, boy, have we seen enough creepy billionaire power in American democracy: dark money—the secret, sneaky dark money floods that are poisoning our elections, that allow billionaires to channel multimillion-dollar contributions into races by hiding behind front groups and screens and super-PACs so that voters can't do their duty as citizens of figuring out who is telling them what because the loudest and noisiest and most prolific messages are coming from behind masked entities.

It was one of the dirtiest deeds ever done to our democracy, and it was done by the Roberts Court: voter suppression, making sure that White legislatures could discourage Black and Latino voters by changing the rules for when you can vote and how you can vote. We passed a Voting Rights Act in the Congress to stop that kind of behavior, and this Supreme Court—the Roberts Court—has been diligently pulling out, piece by piece, those Voting Rights Act protections.

When they do, what happens? Instantly, those southern legislatures go to work to make it harder and harder for minorities to vote. Hundreds of bills get filed.

Third, when they were confronted with partisan gerrymandering—distorting Americans' right to vote by letting politicians pick voters, instead of voters picking politicians—they said: Oh, well, that is all fine. We are not going to look into any of that. Courts are not allowed to look into whether gerrymandering is legal or illegal, constitutional or unconstitutional.

Those three decisions of flooding our elections with corrupting dark money, letting State legislatures make it harder for certain people to vote whom

they don't want voting, and gerrymandering districts against the will of the public—people hate gerrymandering—those three things have collectively done immense damage to our democracy, and those bad decisions are going to play out in this coming election.

I will close with a point about all three of those cases.

The Citizens United case that let filthy, unlimited dark money pollute our elections, the Shelby case that tore down an essential element of the Voting Rights Act, and the Rucho case that allowed uncontrolled, partisan gerrymandering—all three of them share a very important characteristic in common, and that is that they hang on a false fact. To get where the Court wanted to go, those Republican appointees had to make up a false fact that the decision hung on.

In Citizens United, it was that all the unlimited money would be transparent. Well, we know that was false. Every billion dollars in dark money that falls into our elections proves that was false.

In Shelby, it was that things have changed. You didn't need to worry about southern legislatures trying to keep Democratic voters from showing up. But you saw that that was false because all of those laws were immediately passed to suppress voters.

And in the Rucho case, it was that courts can't figure out gerrymandering stuff; it is just too complicated. But, in fact, courts were figuring it out. It is not even that hard to figure out. The Court just made up, falsely, that this was too hard.

When a court is making up false facts to get to an outcome that it wants, that is not a sign of great integrity in those proceedings.

So we have a lot to worry about, and we have more to worry about after yesterday because last night showed that voters do not like what Trump and his Republican cohorts here in the House and the Senate are doing to our country. This was a small wave, and with any luck, it is building to a bigger wave. Instead of adjusting to popular opinion, what we know they are going to do is to try to use even more tools to corrupt democracy, corrupt elections, and defeat our ability to have the American people decide who they want to lead them at the polls. That is the predicament we are in, and it requires us to be on high alert.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to thank my friends Senators PADILLA and BLUMENTHAL for putting together this floor block.

Yesterday was election day for many Americans. They stood at the ballot box and voted their consciences, but they weren't just voting for a candidate; they were voting for a vision of our Nation.

Will we continue to be that Nation that stands for those powerful words

carved over the entrance to the Supreme Court—"Equal Justice Under Law"—or will we allow MAGA politics and President Trump's assault on the rule of law to damage the democratic process that we hold so dear?

Well, the American people certainly answered that question yesterday with resounding votes rejecting the Trump administration's disastrous policies.

We know the right to vote is under attack from those who seek to undermine and, in some cases, deny the very will of the American people—the heart of our democracy. There has been an effort for years to restrict access to the ballot under the false banner of "election integrity." Under the Trump administration, this effort is being led by the very government entities that were created to protect the right to vote. This betrayal is deliberate, and it is eroding the foundation of our democracy.

Let me be clear: There is no longer a functioning Federal entity actively safeguarding each American's right to vote—our most fundamental, constitutional freedom. The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division—once the defender of voting access for communities of color, those serving in the military, rural voters, and people with disabilities—has been devastated by President Trump.

Let me tell you a little anecdote.

Last night, I was in the grocery store on Capitol Hill, buying a few things to eat. A woman came up to me and said she knew who I was, and she wanted to let me know what her situation was. She works in the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice, and she is furloughed at the present time.

She said: Do you know how many people are left in the Civil Rights Division, which once had almost 200 employees? 63.

It has been devastated by Trump.

Under the Trump administration's reimagined mission, aligned with MAGA politics and driven by the lie of widespread voter fraud, the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section has abdicated its role in confronting the real and rising tide of disenfranchisement.

Attorney General Pam Bondi removed the Voting Section's leadership team and ordered the dismissal of the section's active cases.

The Voting Section is responsible for enforcing Federal laws that were enacted to protect the right to vote, including the Voting Rights Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, the National Voter Registration Act, and the Help America Vote Act. The decision to gut this section by Attorney General Bondi and the White House will harm American voters and cause long-lasting damage. It is part of the Trump legacy.

The Trump administration also ordered the Justice Department to monitor polling sites in California and New Jersey before yesterday's election, at

the request of Republican Party officials. While election monitoring is a crucial tool, deploying monitors on a partisan basis is outrageous. We know that voter fraud is extremely rare—extremely—but President Trump and Republicans continue to baselessly claim it is rampant in trying to suppress the vote.

We must fight these dangerous attempts to restrict the right to vote and restore confidence in our democracy by ensuring that every eligible American has access to the ballot. That is why, in honor of my late friend and voting rights pioneer Congressman John Lewis, I have been proud to introduce a bill that bears his name, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act.

It has been an honor to work with Senator WARNOCK of Georgia—and Senator Leahy before him—to lead this legislation as the former chair and now ranking member of the Judiciary Committee. I remain committed to seeing this bill signed into law.

This legislation should be a no-brainer. The issue of access to the ballot used to enjoy overwhelming bipartisan support. Now it has been gamed and politicized by the MAGA bunch. But since the conservative majority in a divided 5-to-4 Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act of 2013 in its Shelby County decision, this has become an increasingly partisan issue.

Attacks on voting rights aren't happening in a vacuum. Across this country, Republican lawmakers and litigators are using every trick in the book to change the rules of the game in their favor and cling to power—purging voter rolls, closing polling places, making it more difficult by restricting mail-in voting, and undermining the Voting Rights Act—all for one purpose: to limit access to the ballot box.

The Republicans actually believe we are a better nation if fewer people vote. I believe every eligible person should vote if you want a true democracy working.

President Trump is hell-bent on continuing to undermine faith in our elections and attack the rule of law, whether by inciting a violent mob on January 6, which overran the Senate Chamber, to overturn the results of a free and fair election or by demanding that blue States turn over reams of voter data to his administration. President Trump has led a long, coordinated campaign to suppress the vote in America.

We now face a critical question: Will we sit idly by while Trump and MAGA Republicans steamroll the great American experiment, or will we cause some "good" and "necessary" trouble, as John Lewis once said, to save our democracy and our "precious, almost sacred" right to vote?

If yesterday's elections are any indication of how the American people feel about this administration, I would say they better get ready for more "good" trouble.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAYNE. Mr. President, I appreciate the chance to rise today to talk about a success story in Virginia and the elections last night, but I am going to take a little bit of a different tact than my colleagues, and I am not going to talk about my pride in my friends who won elections; I am instead going to talk about the turnout in the elections.

Virginia has Governor's races every 4 years. We do them in an odd-year cycle, where the Governor's race is the year following the Presidential race. This has been our practice for a very, very long time.

We can look at the turnout—although the State has grown in population, we can look at the total turnout in the Governor's race and get some sense for what is happening and how engaged our electorate is.

Virginia has had a history in the past of significant obstacles to voting.

My father-in-law fought in the submarine corps in the Pacific during World War II. He came back to the State, and the first Governor's race after he got back from World War II was in the late 1940s. He noticed that the total turnout in that race represented almost single digits in terms of the eligible voter population. Virtually nobody voted.

My father-in-law Lin, who later became Governor of Virginia, said: Wait, I was in the Pacific fighting for a democracy, and I come home to my home State, and virtually no one is even voting for Governor?

That led him to start a career in politics that eventually achieved him the distinction of being the first Republican ever popularly elected to be Governor of Virginia in 1969.

What was happening in Virginia in those days was poll taxes and literacy tests and other things that restricted people's ability to vote. We have had a remarkable transformation under both Democratic and Republican leaders that has expanded the franchise and expanded participation.

What I want to stress very clearly is voting turnout, voting participation—making it easier to participate is not a partisan thing; it helps Republicans, and it helps Democrats. You can tell that by looking at the history of gubernatorial elections and seeing what happens when turnout goes up. Sometimes it is great for Democrats; sometimes it is great for Republicans.

I will give you an example. Four years ago, in 2021, we had a race in Virginia, and Republicans swept all three statewide offices. Republicans elected Glenn Youngkin to be our Governor, and he has now served the single 4-year term that Virginia grants to Governors. We are the only State where you can't run for reelection. Virginia elected our first woman Lieutenant Governor, Republican Winsome Earle-Sears. She was also the first woman of

color to hold a statewide office. And Virginia elected 4 years ago Jason Miyares—Mr. President, you and I were chatting about him earlier today—who is a Cuban-American, to be our attorney general.

Why do I bring up that election from 4 years ago? I bring it up because it was notable in that the Republicans swept, but it was notable for another reason: The turnout in that race in 2021 was 25 percent higher than the turnout 4 years previously. It was the second largest jump in turnout between any Governor's races in Virginia.

I will say with a matter of pride that the first biggest jump was between my father-in-law's two Governor's races in 1965 and 1969. He ran for Governor as a Republican in 1965 and lost. He ran for Governor as a Republican in 1969 and won. And the turnout jumped by 68 percent. Why? Because the Supreme Court struck down poll taxes and the Voting Rights Act struck down poll taxes in Federal elections. When poll taxes went away, it brought a huge surge of additional participation.

When Governor Youngkin and Winsome Earle-Sears won and Jason Miyares won in 2021, why were they able to get a 25-percent increase in voting participation in Virginia? They did it because Virginia made reforms to guarantee and expand the right to vote. We embraced mail-in voting. We embraced no-excuse absentee voting. We allowed people to vote for 45 days before election day. By doing those three things—some of which President Trump said should be banned at the national level—it helped a Republican ticket sweep all races in Virginia.

We went, by most estimates, from being one of the States that made it harder to vote—traditionally, in the 51 States plus DC, we were usually ranked about 45th in the ease of access to the ballot. We went from the bottom to the top 10, and it was good for a Republican ticket. Governor Youngkin, Lieutenant Governor Sears, and Attorney Governor Miyares won a big election with increased turnout. Expanding access to the ballot is not a partisan thing.

Last night, Democrats had a sweep. My friend Abigail Spanberger, who served in the House with a number of my Senate colleagues, was elected to be Virginia's first woman Governor. My friend Ghazala Hashmi, a State senator—actually, my State senator. She is the one I write cranky letters to when I have to write a cranky letter to an official. She was elected to be Lieutenant Governor of Virginia. And get this—this is pretty amazing—she is the first Muslim-American woman ever elected to a statewide office anywhere in the United States. My friend Jay Jones, whom I have known since he was 11 years old, was elected to be Virginia's first African-American attorney general.

They also saw a big increase in turnout. The turnout we had last night was about 10 percent higher than the turnout we saw in 2021.

The point I just wanted to make by standing here is that my colleagues have talked about the variety of threats there may be to ballot access, whether it is forced redistrictings or whether it is President Trump saying that we should abandon vote-by-mail or make it harder for people to vote. The history of my State shows that if you make it convenient for people to vote, No. 1, more people will vote, and No. 2, that can be good for Republicans or Democrats, depending upon the political dynamic of the time and the strength of the candidates and their campaigns.

It used to be that voting and voting rights in this Chamber were pretty bipartisan. When the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965 nationally, it wouldn't have passed without Republican votes. Yes, it was a Democratic President, L.B.J., who put it on the table, but it was Republican Senators disproportionately who carried the torch to victory on the voting rights bill in 1965, as many southern Democrats opposed that bill.

As the voting rights bill has been reauthorized over time, it was always reauthorized significantly with both Democratic and Republican votes. It has only been in the aftermath of the Shelby decision, which happened right as I came into the Senate, that voting rights have started to seem like a partisan issue, where Democrats have tried to restore some of the voting rights provisions—for example, the preclearance provisions in section 5—but have struggled to find any Republican willing to do it.

So the point that I want to make as I conclude is just that I am happy in Virginia because my friends won last night, but I am happy anytime we have elections where people really participate. Where I get really depressed about elections is when turnout is low.

Last night, we had big participation; that benefited Democrats. Four years ago, we had big participation; that benefited Republicans. The kinds of things we have done in Virginia to make elections more accessible to all are commonsense and convenient rules that I embrace at the national level and that are good for democracy—sometimes benefiting one party, sometimes benefiting another, but ultimately good for democracy and good for voters.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I want to thank Ranking Member PADILLA and Senator BLUMENTHAL, Ranking Member PADILLA of the Rules

Committee, and Senator BLUMENTHAL for organizing a group of my colleagues for coming to the floor today and for their leadership on this issue.

We are focused on, as we saw last night, Americans turned out in droves to vote, to exercise their constitutional right and, really, their duty to vote. And we want to make sure that people can continue to stand up, to show up, whether they are Democrats, Republicans, or Independents, to protect voting rights and ensure that every eligible American can make their voice heard in our democracy.

I also want to thank the State and local election administrators, secretaries of state, poll workers, and everyone else in States like Minnesota, Virginia, California, New Jersey, and more who made sure that yesterday's elections went smoothly.

It takes a lot of people and a lot of planning to do that. Yesterday, millions of people exercised that sacred right. According to preliminary data, Minneapolis saw its second highest turnout for a municipal election with more than 147,000 people casting a ballot in an off year, and in Virginia 3.3 million people voted this year, the State's highest ever turnout in a non-Presidential election year.

As Congressman John Lewis once said, voting is the most powerful tool we have to create a more perfect Union.

In recent years, from the January 6 insurrection to election conspiracies to threats against polling sites in New Jersey, we have seen an alarming rise in dangerous rhetoric and threats against election workers and polling places. Sometimes it is from other countries trying to do harm, regardless of the political outcome, but wanting to mess around in our democracy.

Sometimes it is people trying to influence an election from either side. We have also seen repeated attacks on access to the ballot box from this administration.

The Justice Department has turned away from its mission of enforcing the Voting Rights Act, and the President has issued an unlawful Executive order to overhaul our Nation's elections that would purge American citizens from voter rolls and make it harder for the men and women of our military to vote.

Just as the President overstepped his authority by implementing the across-the-board tariffs, I was at the Supreme Court oral argument today, along with Senator LEE and Senator MARKEY. I will say it was a well-argued case with pointed questions from the Justices. I am very impressed by some of the arguments that were made against these tariffs by both the States and the lawyers for the small businesses, as well as some of the Justices' discussions when it came to the tariffs about Congress's right under the Constitution, under article I, our authority to assess taxes—not an unconstitutional delegation or an overreach by the administration.

And so we have seen this overstep with regard to the tariffs, which is having calamitous effects on my constituents, small businesses, farmers, ranchers. One soybean farmer told me it was the perfect storm of ugly.

But we have also seen this overstep when it comes to the Constitution and people's right to vote. The White House recently confirmed that the President intends to continue his unlawful attacks on voting rights by issuing a new Executive order targeting mail-in voting.

Mail-in voting is nothing new. It dates back to the Civil War, and the President himself has said that voting by mail, voting early, and voting on election day are all good options. I agree. And Americans across the country agree.

In Minnesota, we have made it easier, not harder, for all eligible Americans to vote, including by giving everyone the chance to vote by mail. We have people who vote by mail. Some of these States like Utah and Oregon, they have almost the vast majority of people vote by mail. We are not actually that. We are kind of a mix. We have the highest voter turnout in the country nearly every election in the country.

I go into a hardware store or a cafe, and I know that 70, 80 percent of the people have voted. Sometimes they will come up to me and say: Well, I didn't vote for you, but I did like this one thing you did or I have an idea for you. That means something in a democracy.

But that is because we make it easier to vote, not only with the mail-in voting and the drop-off ballots, but we also have it with same-day registration, which when you look at States that have that, whether they are red or blue or purple, that is probably the most defining thing about if you are going to have high voter turnout. And when you have high voter turnout, believe me, my State has elected everyone from Jesse Ventura to Michele Bachmann to me.

But what all of us have in common is that we had extraordinarily high voter turnout when the people got elected, and that makes people feel like they are part of the franchise. That makes them feel like, wow, we are part of this democracy. We are not left out of it. And that alone is worth something in a democracy, regardless of who gets elected.

In 2024, 36 States allowed voters to cast their votes by mail, and nearly one-third of the voters did, and that is post-pandemic. So instead of creating barriers to the ballot box, we need to expand access to the polls to ensure all eligible Americans can vote in the way that works best for them, regardless of their ZIP Code.

That is why I have led the effort with Ranking Member PADILLA to advance commonsense bills to protect our democracy, including the Freedom to Vote Act. That bill will increase ballot access and reform our campaign fi-

nance system to ensure that our democracy is of, by, and for the American people.

And I would also note, with regard to some of the things that happened coming out of Texas, it also would make sure that we have a fair system when it comes to the House of Representatives and districts and what is going on there.

That is also why I also strongly voted to support the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore and strengthen key portions of the Voting Rights Act. And it is why I worked to give reliable Federal support to State and local governments, so that they can continue to administer safe, secure elections.

This is something we should all be able to agree on. We must support our local election offices and help them maintain their election infrastructure to keep pace with new technology and combat cybersecurity threats.

We should also be able to agree that we should stand by our election workers, including volunteers, who face a barrage of threats and intimidation.

I remember hearing, when I chaired the Rules Committee, from the election officers in places like Pennsylvania, where a Republican election official was threatened simply because he upheld the election results. His entire family was threatened. Or secretaries of State who have the voicemails of the recordings of their families being threatened or their homes being threatened.

And you think about these volunteers, particularly in rural areas, or election officials where they don't have the police there nearby to protect them.

That is why I led the Election Worker Protection Act—legislation to provide States the resources to recruit and train election workers and ensure their safety. Protecting election officials should not be a partisan issue. The security of our elections is directly tied to the security of our election workers.

Nothing is more fundamental to our democracy than our free and fair elections. Voting is how the American people make their voices heard and ensure their elected leaders are held accountable. So while we continue to see attacks on our democracy, it is our duty to never give up hope.

Every election it is inspiring to see Americans, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike exercise their sacred right to vote however they choose.

It was quite a reminder last night how people are going to vote. And they are going to vote for their families and they are going to vote for their own economic security and they are going to vote because they believe in our democracy. Even in an off-year election, when no Senator is on the ballot, when no President is on the ballot, where not even a Member of Congress is on the ballot, but two Governors and some referendums about the judiciary and

some referendums about the elections and some local officials and mayors, people turned out, and they turned out in record number.

So I hope that makes people realize that our democracy is thriving, but our democracy only thrives when we make it so people can vote. And I have been so proud of my State over the years, and, again, we are a purple State. We have elected Republican and Democratic Governors in the last decades. We have elected Republican Senators in the last decades. We have a split legislature. One house is Republican, the State house; the State senate is Democratic.

There was an election last night. On that front, we have an evenly split congressional delegation—four and four—because we don't have gerrymandering, and we have actually competitive elections.

A number of years in these congressional seats, and there we are with the one or two highest voting turnouts in the Nation. Why is that? Because people feel like they are a part of it. That is what we want to have happen in this Nation.

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

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

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, today is the anniversary of the election of President Trump in 2024, and, today, the shutdown of our Federal Government is officially the longest it has ever been—36 days—because we can't come to agreement between our parties and our Chambers. In fact, the House isn't even at work and hasn't been for weeks because Republicans won't work with us to ensure access to healthcare.

We are in a dangerous and unsettled place here at home, but we are also in a dangerous and unsettled place abroad and around the world. My role in appropriations in this Congress is as the senior Democrat on the subcommittee that funds all of our defense and intelligence. Given that role, wherein I have worked with Senator McCONNELL, the chairman, to write the bill that we should be moving forward that would fully fund the security apparatus of the United States, I wanted to come to the floor for a few minutes today and talk with my colleagues and our Nation about what it is that actually keeps us safe at home and abroad.

For my entire life, we have relied upon the U.S. military. We will soon celebrate Veterans Day next week, and all of us should thank those who have served or who are serving. We have relied on them to be something that we often take for granted—nonpartisan,

nonpolitical, an all-volunteer, professional, career military. For that to be sustained—for the folks to continue to step forward, to raise their right hand, and to swear to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic—we need a nation that supports our warfighters; for it is our warfighters who answer the call to serve and to defend no matter what party is in charge, to respect and obey the chain of command and to execute all lawful orders.

I think we rely on the best equipped, the best trained, and the most professional military in the world and, in partnership with them, a global network of alliances. We are the envy of the world not only because of our weapons—the most advanced and sophisticated weapons systems—but because we have the best trained, the best respected, and the most supported military in the world. That additional factor is something stronger than envy, which is respect.

I have traveled over my 15 years here on the Foreign Relations Committee to dozens of countries on literally every continent and have seen directly the respect that other armed forces around the world have for our military—for its civilian control, its professionalization, its training, and equipment.

I grew up in the shadow of the Vietnam war. It was raging as I was a young man. I still remember being in elementary school, with classmates who had older brothers in combat. I still remember, as Saigon fell, when I was in middle school, and as the POWs, including our former colleague, John McCain, were released from years of imprisonment, being shocked at the way some returning veterans were treated—disrespected—and at how there had been a real loss of a sense of respect and appreciation for those who served.

Over the years, our Armed Forces have earned their way back to a place of deep and broad respect in the hearts of the American people. Over the years that I served as county executive, I went to ceremony after ceremony as units of the Delaware National Guard deployed over and over, and then, often—9 months or a year later—as we would welcome them home at wonderful homecoming celebrations, I saw deep and broad support and respect for the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States.

Tragically, I have also had the opportunity, along the flight line of Dover Air Force Base, to welcome home America's fallen, to get to know the families grieving over their loss, and, this year, to be joined by Members of the House and Senate as we have welcomed home our fallen heroes who died serving us overseas. The difference in tenor, in respect, in affection for the men and women of our Armed Forces over the arc of my lifetime—from the 1970s during the Vietnam war to today—has been striking.

Today, as I rise to speak on the 1-year anniversary of President Trump's election, I just wanted to look back and reflect on how, in that year, he and Secretary Hegseth have set us on a course that risks losing again all of that accumulated good will, all of that respect. I want to talk about how they have weakened our alliances, politicized our military, dulled down our military readiness, and brought us closer to needless, even dangerous, wars of choice—all of that leaving us weaker and less safe as we confront the most dangerous world since the end of the Cold War.

President Trump is a master of distraction. So you don't ever have time to step back and look at the bigger pattern. It is amazing how many times a day the topics change. Are we talking about the tearing down of the East Wing or the planning of a new ballroom or the renewed threat to invade a country in Africa—apparently, Nigeria, this week? It is a constant, unending smorgasbord of tweets and greatest hits designed to prevent us, with its blizzard, from ever seeing any pattern. One year after his election, I wanted to take a few minutes and show that pattern to you today.

In his first 10 months as President of the United States, President Trump has fired or pushed out more than 15 of our most senior admirals and generals, starting with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Chief of Naval Operations—fired because they were somehow considered DEI hires or too woke, which is something I find to be utterly without foundation in their service or in the opinions of others who served with them in the Armed Forces.

He hijacked the 250th anniversary parade to celebrate the history of the U.S. Army and turned it into a birthday parade for himself.

More recently, President Trump and Secretary Hegseth gathered all of our most senior military leaders from around the world for a speech here near Washington, at Quantico, which was a massive national security risk, just so they could give political speeches about grooming and about using the military against the enemy within—pulling these decorated and seasoned men and women from core jobs, literally around the world, of protecting America against our adversaries on the frontlines, to be props for a highly political speech.

In unprecedented decisions in modern times, the President has federalized the National Guards from California, from Illinois, and from Oregon over the objections of Governors and has deployed them into cities over the objections of mayors who say: We can deal with the challenges of crime. If you want to send us Federal resources, we would welcome your sending us additional Federal law enforcement, like the ATF and the FBI.

This administration also mobilized the Marines to go into Los Angeles. All of this takes away our military from

their central missions and training for partisan political ends.

This brings us to a second key pillar of our national security—the best trained and equipped military in the world.

Secretary Hegseth, at the beginning of this year, supported a full-year continuing resolution for the Department of Defense for the first time ever. Senator McCONNELL and I, as the chair and ranking member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, were struck at how much harm that does. We are on the verge of doing it again for a terrible second year.

Ask any senior military leader. It makes it impossible to plan, and nothing requires more stable, certain long-term funding than designing and building the next generation of fighter aircraft, building and deploying nuclear-powered submarines, recruiting and training the world's best military and then equipping them with things on land, air, and sea that make them the most lethal Armed Forces on Earth. We can't do that if Secretary Hegseth continues to support full-year continuing resolutions.

It is also important that our warfighters be respected because they know they have the support engagement of the American people on difficult and dangerous missions—something that is lacking when they refuse to fully brief, support, and engage the Senate of the United States—a challenge that is happening right now.

We need a plan, we need preparation, and we need clarity to Congress about what is going on in the Caribbean and what preparations are being made with regard to Venezuela.

I have no objection to the idea that we need to work together to strengthen the interdiction of drugs coming to the United States, but this body, given the Constitution and our role, deserves to be consulted and included so that we can build consensus, common agreement, to support a plan of action so that our warfighters, the men and women of our Armed Forces, know we have their backs. That is the best way to send them into harm's way.

All of this is built on another of President Trump's broken promises. He ran on lowering costs, making America healthy again, and avoiding new foreign wars. On the campaign trail, I often heard that was one of his most popular promises.

Since then, the threats to start new wars with friends and allies and foes alike have been dizzying—Canada, Mexico, Denmark, Panama, Colombia, and Nigeria. Our President tosses these things off casually, but in a meeting I had earlier in his term with leaders from Denmark and Greenland, they were alarmed, frightened, and concerned about how a trusted NATO ally could threaten to seize Greenland—a seemingly casual remark that was then reinforced and repeated over and over.

I am worried that we are now sleep-walking into a war with Venezuela and

an effort to overthrow Maduro, all while leaving the People's Republic of China free rein to run roughshod over the Indo-Pacific, while they massively increase the scope and scale of their aggression.

Let's be clear. There is no love lost between me and Maduro—a brutal dictator—but we should have clarity about how and why we might use our Armed Forces.

Last, a key pillar to our security for the last eight decades, since the end of the Second World War, has been a remarkable global network of powerful alliances. I have long said that one of our key advantages over the People's Republic of China is our network of trusted and deep alliances.

China has nervous neighbors and client states. President Trump is putting all of that at risk. Our adversaries are increasingly aligning. Russians are using Iranian drones, North Korean soldiers, and Chinese technology and funding to help carry out their brutal war of aggression in Ukraine. Meanwhile, our alliances are fraying.

As I mentioned, the President threatened to invade NATO allies like Canada and Denmark and kicked President Volodymyr Zelenskyy out of the Oval Office but rolled out the red carpet for Vladimir Putin; held up crucial arms deliveries and sales to nations that rely on us for their security—from Ukraine to Taiwan; and put at risk our commitment to article 5 and to collective security that have been at the heart of NATO since its founding.

The tariff deals our President has imposed on some of our closest and most trusted allies—allies that have free-trade agreements with us, like South Korea—have put them profoundly on the back foot as they look and wonder whether they can count on our security agreements.

All of this means that over the past year, President Trump has steadily hacked away at the pillars of our military that protect our Nation, making it less stable, making it more likely that the trust and confidence the American people have in our warfighters will crumble.

This is a critical and concerning, even alarming picture from which he is trying to distract us.

The Nation we had a year ago was strong, secure, and moving in a positive direction. Today, I am gravely concerned about the constant distraction and the threats and moves against our allies, our partners, and the ways in which we have undermined our warfighters.

So what should we do from here? Pass our bipartisan appropriations bills. Put on this floor, pass, and get to the President the Defense appropriations bill that I have worked so hard on this year and all the other appropriations bills and move us out of this cycle of rescissions, reconciliation, and continuing resolutions and back to reliable, steady, bipartisan support. Strengthen our alliances. Reassure our

nervous partners. End this recklessness with tariffs that is an on again-off again regime where these taxes, these tariffs, add to Americans' bottom line in a disastrous way and destabilize trust and confidence from our partners and refocus on training and preparing for real wars, not culture wars. This is how we keep our Nation safe.

Just a few days ago, I was up in my father's hometown of Boston and drove through Lexington and Concord, where 250 years ago this year, our forefathers took up arms against the Crown and began what was a long-shot fight, a revolution for liberty and independence for our Nation. We have to remember all who have taken up arms and served our Nation.

I am from a family of veterans. My brother, my sister-in-law, my father, my uncles, my great-great-grandfather, and back to the Revolution, members of my family have stepped forward and served.

For all who have done the same, who have signed on the dotted line, up to and including their lives, committed their willingness to sacrifice, we owe them nothing less than the full measure of devotion that says we will support them. That support requires engagement and trust from this body, engagement and trust with our allies, and the support that our service men and women deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3072

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, President Trump promised Americans during his campaign that, if elected, he would lower costs on day one, and Americans trusted him to do so. Yet all President Trump has done from day one of his Presidency until now has been to raise costs for our families and our businesses.

One of the most outrageous examples of this is with his erratic blanket tariffs that he has imposed on our allies and trade partners, as you have heard from my colleague from Delaware talking about.

But let me be clear. These tariffs for the American public are nothing but taxes. Tariffs are taxes. That is what the American people are seeing every single day, and many of them are seeing it first thing in the morning when they have their cup of coffee.

This is an unacceptable burden to be putting on the American people, and the tools this administration is using to do so are clearly unconstitutional. They are actually being heard in the Supreme Court today.

The good news is, Congress has the authority to do something about it. There is bipartisan, bicameral agreement that not only can we act, but we must. That is why I am here today to pass the bill that I wrote with Senator RAND PAUL of Kentucky. It is called the No Coffee Tax Act. It is a very simple bill. It would roll back President Trump's tax on our coffee.

Let me explain why this is important. The United States is the largest importer of coffee in the world. Why? Because even though we all love our morning coffee, the United States does not have the natural climate or growing conditions needed to produce the amounts of coffee Americans consume every day. Ninety-nine percent of the coffee in this country comes from another country.

Until President Trump took office, Americans had never paid broad tariffs on coffee imports, but now this President has decided to recklessly impose these blanket tariffs on our top sources for coffee—Brazil at 50 percent, and other main coffee producers, like Vietnam, Indonesia, Colombia, and Ethiopia, are being tariffed at outrageous rates.

I don't need to tell you what that has meant for Americans because we have all felt it every single day. I am hearing it from my coffee roasters and wholesalers in Nevada who have been forced to raise their prices to keep up with these tariffs. That is filtering down to local coffee shops—our small businesses—that are in turn having to raise their prices on consumers.

The price of a cup of coffee has skyrocketed nearly 40 percent since last year—40 percent. This is happening all over the country. And it is not just businesses where coffee is their main product; restaurants that serve breakfast are being impacted as well. This is what these irresponsible tariffs have done to America, because, as I have said, tariffs are taxes.

Now, I know that responsible, targeted tariffs on our adversaries can be good for American workers and our national security. There is a smart way to do this, however. Taxing our coffee and raising prices for Americans isn't it.

The bipartisan, bicameral bill Senator PAUL and I introduced would bring coffee tariffs back to the level they were at before President Trump took office—zero percent.

The Senate has already passed legislation supported by both Democrats and Republicans to repeal President Trump's tariffs on Canada and Brazil as well as his global tariffs on the rest of our trading partners. The No Coffee Tax Act is equally important to the American public. Prices are already too high in this country. Getting rid of this unnecessary coffee tax will make Americans' lives and their mornings just a little bit easier.

For that reason, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of my bill, the No Coffee Tax Act, which is at the desk; that the bill be considered read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I rise in opposition to S. 3072, the No Coffee Tax Act.

The bill seeks to exempt from the President's IEEPA tariffs only a single commodity—coffee.

I agree with my colleagues that tariffs generally should be targeted as much as possible to avoid harm to Americans.

We also should consider more exemptions to address the harms arising from potential unintended consequences, including exemptions for unavailable natural resources. The administration agrees.

The very recent trade deals with Cambodia and Malaysia explicitly exempt coffee and some other mostly unavailable natural resources from the reciprocal tariffs. By all accounts, the administration is working to identify similar exemptions in other active trade negotiations. I strongly encourage the President to pursue productive courses of engagement with U.S. stakeholders in doing so.

Voting for one-off exemptions on the Senate floor in isolation of a larger negotiation strategy and broader stakeholder concerns, like S. 3072 asks us to do so now, does not facilitate a predictable process for our negotiators or for any broader segment of the stakeholder engagement.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. CRAPO. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I have a lot of respect for my colleague from Idaho, and I appreciate his comments. I respectfully disagree.

I do think that we have to consider, as the negotiations are taking place, as my colleague talked about the administration is engaging in—how long will that take? I know the USMCA took at least 2 to 3 years. That was just two countries—Mexico and Canada—that we were trying to negotiate with.

While this administration goes through this indiscriminate negotiation without any involvement from Congress, what am I to tell my businesses back home? Those businesses, those coffee shops that closed, those individual breakfast restaurants that are there that are passing off the costs to the consumer—how long do they have to wait until they get an answer from this administration?

That is why this commodity, this particular product—there had never been a tariff on it before because 99 percent of the coffee that we consume comes from out of the country. So it really is having a devastating impact on our small businesses. And they really shouldn't use this leverage in a negotiation tactic for this reason.

I appreciate the comments, however, from my colleague from Idaho.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

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.

COMMEMORATING THE VISIT OF ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, today I would like to commemorate the visit to the United States of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual head of the second-largest Christian Church in the world which boasts 300 million faithful. The Ecumenical Patriarch is also the spiritual leader of more than 4,000 Delawareans who are Greek Orthodox Christians. Delaware's Greek community has a long and vibrant history, and it is an honor to mark the Ecumenical Patriarch's visit.

During his visit to the United States, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew received the Templeton Prize: a recognition of someone who has dedicated themselves to affirming the spiritual dimension of life. The Ecumenical Patriarch received this award for his remarkable leadership working to foster an "ecumenical imperative" to care for creation, in which he has brought together religious, scientific, and world leaders to advocate for greater care for our planet. The Ecumenical Patriarch joins a long list of powerful advocates for change who have received this award, including my good friend Jane Goodall. The Ecumenical Patriarch's receipt of the Templeton Award builds on his previous accolades, including his receipt of the Congressional Gold Medal: the highest award that Congress has to offer.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's commitment to fostering dialogue for the betterment of the world is admirable and an example that we should all seek to follow. His All-Holiness is a tremendous leader in the world and for many in our country, and I look forward to continuing to support his efforts to strive for peace on earth over the years to come.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

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

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be

By Mr. PAUL for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*Charles Arrington, of Illinois, to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term expiring July 1, 2030.

*Edward Forst, of Florida, to be Administrator of General Services.

*Stephen F. Rickard, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

*Elana S. Suttenberg, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

*John Cuong Truong, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

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. KENNEDY:

S. 3104. A bill to make ideologically motivated crimes eligible for the death penalty; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. BUDD):

S. 3105. A bill to regulate human cadaveric islets for transplantation as organs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. KELLY):

S. 3106. A bill to require the approval of Congress before explosive nuclear testing may be resumed; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 3107. A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit reports to Congress on theft of mail and United States Postal Service property, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 3108. A bill to require reports regarding artificial intelligence-related job impacts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 3109. A bill to amend titles 46 and 49, United States Code, to require that individuals who commit human trafficking violations be permanently disqualified from obtaining certain licenses issued by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Transportation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 3110. A bill to update the Department of Transportation's multimodal counter-trafficking training and awareness campaign and to award grants to all modes of transportation to address human trafficking awareness, education, and prevention efforts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MULLIN:

S. 3111. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to adjust the dollar thresholds for National Labor Relations Board jurisdiction over certain labor disputes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. SLOTKIN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 3112. A bill to amend the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 to establish an interagency seasonal and perishable fruits and vegetables working group, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. LEE):

S. 3113. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify that aliens who have been convicted of defrauding the United States Government or unlawfully receiving public benefits are inadmissible and deportable; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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 (for himself, Mr. COONS,

Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. HEINRICH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. Res. 483. A resolution honoring the extraordinary life, leadership, and legacy of Dr. Jane Goodall; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. PETERS):

S. Res. 484. A resolution designating October 2025 as "School Bus Safety Month"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. Res. 485. A resolution designating the month of October 2025 as "National Military Toxic Exposures Awareness Month"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 421

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 421, a bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to establish country of origin labeling requirements for beef, and for other purposes.

S. 567

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 567, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

S. 935

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 935, a bill to prohibit sales and the issuance of licenses for

the export of certain defense articles to the United Arab Emirates, and for other purposes.

S. 976

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 976, a bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to reduce fraudulent enrollments in qualified health plans, and for other purposes.

S. 1404

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1404, a bill to combat organized crime involving the illegal acquisition of retail goods and cargo for the purpose of selling those illegally obtained goods through physical and online retail marketplaces.

S. 1532

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) 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. 1538

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1538, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to expand and improve the enforcement capabilities of the Attorney General, and for other purposes.

S. 1552

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSO BROOKS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1552, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 1677

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1677, a bill to provide health insurance benefits for outpatient and inpatient items and services related to the diagnosis and treatment of a congenital anomaly or birth defect.

S. 1725

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1725, a bill to amend the Animal Health Protection Act with respect to the importation of live dogs, and for other purposes.

S. 1793

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the names of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1793, a bill to protect the United States and assets of the United States from incursions.

S. 2290

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2290, a bill to clarify certain

regulations to allow for the installation of pulsating light systems for high-mounted stop lamps, and for other purposes.

S. 2714

At the request of Mr. HUSTED, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. MORENO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2714, a bill to require artificial intelligence chatbots to implement age verification measures and establish certain protections for minor users, and for other purposes.

S. 2740

At the request of Mr. HUSTED, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2740, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to encourage States to develop academic standards for elementary school and secondary school for artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.

S. 2983

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2983, a bill to reauthorize the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015.

S. 3031

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3031, a bill making continuing appropriations for essential Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration pay and operations in the event of a Federal Government shutdown, and for other purposes.

S. 3090

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 3090, a bill to prohibit the use of funds for an explosive nuclear weapons test.

S. 3103

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3103, a bill to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to products of certain countries.

S.J. RES. 90

At the request of Mr. Kaine, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the Senator from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from

Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) and the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) were added as cosponsors of 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.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 483—HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE, LEADERSHIP, AND LEGACY OF DR. JANE GOODALL

Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. HEINRICH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted the following resolution, which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 483

Whereas Dr. Jane Goodall, born in Hampstead, London, on April 3, 1934, became one of the world's most celebrated ethologists, animal behaviorists, and environmental conservationists;

Whereas, throughout her life, Jane Goodall remained an indefatigable advocate for wildlife, dedicating herself not only to the protection of chimpanzees and other primates, but also to broader efforts to safeguard the natural world;

Whereas Jane Goodall's work extended far beyond science, inspiring generations through her books, films, lectures, and the Jane Goodall Institute and the "Roots and Shoots Program," which encourages youth around the world to work to make the world a better place for people, animals, and the environment;

Whereas, in 1957, at the age of just 23, Ms. Goodall moved to Africa on her own, where she met the famed paleontologist Louis Leakey, and with his support and encouragement, she began the work that would define her life;

Whereas, in 1960, Jane Goodall traveled to the Gombe Stream Chimpanzee Reserve (Gombe) in Tanzania, accompanied by her mother, Vanne, to begin her groundbreaking study of wild chimpanzees and where she established what has become the world's longest-running wild chimpanzee research program, one that continues uninterrupted as of the date of this resolution;

Whereas, while at Gombe, Ms. Goodall, who at the time had not received formal academic training, made observations that challenged prevailing scientific assumptions;

Whereas Ms. Goodall documented chimpanzees making and using tools, hunting, and displaying complex social behaviors, activities that had once been thought exclusive to humans;

Whereas these findings not only transformed the study of primatology but reshaped how the world views the emotional and social lives of all animals;

Whereas, recognizing the importance of formal study, Ms. Goodall enrolled at Newnham College, Cambridge, in 1962, earning a degree in natural sciences and went on

to pursue a doctorate at Darwin College, Cambridge, completing her Ph.D. in 1966 with a thesis on the behavior of free-living chimpanzees;

Whereas Jane Goodall's early years of research at Gombe became the foundation of a scientific legacy that bridged rigorous observation with empathy for the animals she studied;

Whereas Jane Goodall's influence extended far beyond academia, as she authored more than 27 books for both adults and children, appeared in numerous documentaries and films, and became a cultural figure whose presence extended beyond scientific circles;

Whereas, in 2019, the National Geographic Society honored her life's work with "Becoming Jane," a traveling exhibit that continues to tour across the United States;

Whereas Ms. Goodall's most recent book, "The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times," has been translated into more than 20 languages, ensuring her voice resonates with people around the globe;

Whereas Jane Goodall's achievements have been recognized with some of the world's highest honors;

Whereas Jane Goodall was named a United Nations Messenger of Peace in 2002, and 2 years later, she was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire at Buckingham Palace;

Whereas Jane Goodall received the United States Presidential Medal of Freedom, the French Légion d'honneur, the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Life Science, Japan's prestigious Kyoto Prize, the Gandhi-King Award for Nonviolence, the Medal of Tanzania, the Schweitzer Medal, and the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement;

Whereas countless other governments, institutions, and organizations have also celebrated Mr. Goodall's unique contributions;

Whereas Jane Goodall recognized that protecting nature is first and foremost about educating and motivating human beings on whom the survival of all species depends, which became her life's mission, and she also never stopped advocating for the ethical treatment of animals;

Whereas most of the leading primatologists have been either mentored by Jane Goodall or inspired by her life and work;

Whereas, in 1991, Ms. Goodall founded the "Roots and Shoots Program," to bring together young people, from preschool through university, to learn about environmental challenges and to take action to address them;

Whereas, as of the date of this resolution, the Roots and Shoots Program has local chapters in some 75 countries, encompassing thousands of community-based groups and youth members worldwide;

Whereas Jane Goodall recognized the critical role that indigenous people have played throughout history as caretakers of the natural environment and stressed the need to include indigenous people in decisions about policies, programs, and activities that impact their lands and livelihoods;

Whereas Jane Goodall founded the Lake Tanganyika Catchment Reforestation and Education (TACARE) program, recognizing that protecting forests and other natural resources is not possible if people living in the surrounding areas lack the necessities of life;

Whereas the TACARE program supports community-led sustainable agriculture techniques, reforestation, public health, girls' education, fuel-efficient stoves, and small business development;

Whereas Jane Goodall's life was a remarkable blend of science, advocacy, and compassion;

Whereas she showed the world that understanding animals requires not only observation, but empathy, that conservation demands both knowledge and courage, and that hope is a vital force in the struggle to protect the Earth;

Whereas Jane Goodall's life was, above all, one of inspiration, she encouraged people everywhere, regardless of nationality, religion, or political affiliation, to recognize their ability and responsibility to protect wildlife and the planet's threatened ecosystems;

Whereas, whether through scientific discovery, writing, advocacy, or personal example, Jane Goodall conveyed an unshakable belief that individuals can make a difference;

Whereas, on October 1, 2025, at the age of 91, Jane Goodall passed away while continuing the work to which she had devoted her life, raising awareness about threats to the global environment and urging humanity to act to protect it;

Whereas her death marked the end of an extraordinary personal journey, but not of the movement she inspired;

Whereas the programs she founded, the generations she mentored, and the many millions she influenced stand as enduring testaments to her vision and determination; and

Whereas Jane Goodall's legacy will continue to inspire humanity to live in greater harmony with the natural world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) pays tribute to Dr. Jane Goodall's life-long dedication to the survival and ethical treatment of chimpanzees and other living things and to wildlife conservation throughout the world;

(2) commends her tireless efforts to educate the public and especially children about the importance of protecting the natural environment;

(3) extends its deepest condolences and sympathies to Jane Goodall's family and the staff at the Jane Goodall Institute and the Roots and Shoots Program in this time of loss; and

(4) honors the extraordinary life, leadership, and legacy of Jane Goodall, whose efforts to protect wildlife and the natural world continue to inspire people of every nationality on every continent.

SENATE RESOLUTION 484—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 2025 AS “SCHOOL BUS SAFETY MONTH”

Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 484

Whereas, in an average year, on every school day in the United States, approximately 500,000 public and private school buses carry more than 25,000,000 K-12 students to and from school;

Whereas school buses comprise the largest mass transportation fleet in the United States;

Whereas, in an average year, 48 percent of all K-12 students ride a school bus for each of the 180 school days in a year, and school bus operators drive school buses more than 4,400,000,000 miles;

Whereas the Child Safety Network (referred to in this preamble as the “CSN”), which is celebrating 36 years of public service in the United States, supports the CSN Safe Ride campaign, which is designed to provide the school bus industry with driver training, the latest technology, and free safety and security resources, including resources to help parents raise safer and healthier children;

Whereas the designation of School Bus Safety Month will allow broadcast and digital media and social networking industries to commit to disseminating public service announcements that are produced to—

(1) provide free resources designed to safeguard children;

(2) recognize school bus operators and professionals; and

(3) encourage the driving public to engage in safer driving behavior near school buses when students board and disembark from school buses;

Whereas key leaders who deserve recognition during School Bus Safety Month and beyond have—

(1) provided security awareness training materials to more than 14,000 public and private schools;

(2) trained more than 125,000 school bus operators; and

(3) provided more than 175,000 counterterrorism guides to individuals who are key to providing both safety and security for children in the United States; and

Whereas School Bus Safety Month offers the Senate and the people of the United States an opportunity to recognize and thank the school bus operators and the professionals focused on school bus safety and security in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates October 2025 as “School Bus Safety Month”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 485—DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2025 AS “NATIONAL MILITARY TOXIC EXPOSURES AWARENESS MONTH”

Mr. MORAN (for himself, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. CASSIDY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 485

Whereas the profound impacts of military toxic exposures on generations of veterans and military families have created the persistent and urgent need for enhanced public awareness and preventative health measures;

Whereas the history of military toxic exposures dates back more than a century, particularly with the use of chemical warfare in World War I;

Whereas, despite reductions in certain chemical agents during World War II, members of the Armed Forces continued to face significant toxic exposures, including hazardous substances from naval vessels and herbicides during the Korean War and Agent Orange and other tactical herbicides during the Vietnam War;

Whereas the impact of toxic exposure is not limited to veterans alone, but can also affect their families, including their children with medical conditions potentially related to their parents' service, including children born with health issues following the Vietnam War;

Whereas the legacy of toxic exposure extends to veterans known as “Atomic Veterans”, who experienced hazardous radiation exposure, further compounding the health risks associated with service in the Armed Forces;

Whereas generations of veterans have faced toxic exposures while serving abroad;

Whereas veterans have encountered other toxic exposures and environmental hazards during service in the Armed Forces, including contaminated drinking water, asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyl, lead, and radiation;

Whereas, in 1991, the Vietnam Veterans of America achieved a significant legislative

victory, when Congress passed the Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-4), leading to the recognition of Agent Orange as a presumptive hazard and paving the way for benefits for affected veterans;

Whereas subsequent conflicts, including the Persian Gulf War, have seen soldiers, airmen, sailors, and marines facing similar debilitating health issues due to toxic exposures, reinforcing the need for continued advocacy and research;

Whereas multiple veterans service organizations, including Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Vietnam Veterans of America, and others have worked tirelessly to secure legislative improvements, including studies on the effects of toxic exposure and the passage of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-168), also known as the PACT Act;

Whereas the PACT Act expanded eligibility for benefits and health care to veterans of all eras who were exposed to toxic substances;

Whereas the PACT Act established a new, responsive framework so that the Department of Veterans Affairs could more rapidly and transparently make decisions on the presumption of connection to service in the Armed Forces for illnesses and other conditions associated with toxic exposure;

Whereas burn pits, hazardous particulate matter, Agent Orange, oil well fires, fuel leaks, and other toxic events present in various conflicts have emerged as significant health concerns, necessitating research into their long-term effects on veterans and their families;

Whereas the lessons from toxic exposures guide the work and research of the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Congress;

Whereas the effects of toxic exposure are not confined to members of the Armed Forces and their family members, but also can impact civilian workers and residents of military installations exposed to hazardous materials;

Whereas continued vigilance is necessary to prevent future incidents of toxic exposure; and

Whereas the designation of October 2025 as “National Military Toxic Exposures Awareness Month” serves to highlight the historical significance of toxic exposure during service in the Armed Forces, raise awareness of toxic exposure, and commend the work of veterans and veterans' advocates who labor to meet the needs of former members of the Armed Forces who were exposed to toxic substances while in service of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 2025 as “National Military Toxic Exposures Awareness Month”;

(2) recognizes the profound impact toxic exposures have had on veterans, members of the Armed Forces, their families, and their survivors;

(3) honors the sacrifices of individuals impacted by toxic exposure in the Armed Forces;

(4) calls upon the Department of Defense to reinforce the commitment by the Federal Government to prevent future incidents of toxic exposure among members of the Armed Forces;

(5) will continue to explore legislative initiatives aimed at improving health outcomes and preventive measures for current and future generations of members of the Armed Forces and veterans;

(6) commends the Department of Defense for striving to meet or exceed industry standards while working within status of forces agreements with host partner nations overseas in various international locations and urges continued efforts to meet or exceed such standards;

(7) encourages the people of the United States to observe National Military Toxic Exposures Awareness Month by—

(A) honoring the sacrifices of individuals impacted by toxic exposure in the Armed Forces;

(B) promoting awareness of the ongoing challenges and of the resources available to veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(C) supporting affected veterans and their families; and

(8) encourages the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue educating the public and advocating for veterans and their families and survivors affected by toxic exposure by—

(A) promoting awareness of the impact of toxic exposure on veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and their families;

(B) encouraging veterans to utilize available resources from the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans service organizations, and other entities;

(C) providing opportunities for research to understand the impacts of toxic exposure and to prevent future incidents of toxic exposure;

(D) reaching all veterans who may have encountered toxic exposures during service in the Armed Forces and offering screenings and relevant information;

(E) improving clinical practice guidelines for veterans exposed to toxic substances that best meet the unique medical needs of those veterans; and

(F) working with civic-minded groups and the people of the United States to thank members of the Armed Forces and veterans for their service and sacrifice.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have seven requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 11:45 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 4 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY MONTH

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 484, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 484) designating October 2025 as "School Bus Safety Month".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 484) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL MILITARY TOXIC EXPOSURES AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 485, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 485) designating the month of October 2025 as "National Military Toxic Exposures Awareness Month".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 485) was agreed to.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, October 6; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; further, if Senator Kaine makes a motion to discharge S.J. Res. 90, the Senate vote on the motion to discharge at 5 p.m.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 5:48 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 6, 2025, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

STEVEN PEARCE, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, VICE TRACY STONE-MANNING, RESIGNED.

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

DOUGLAS WEAVER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2026, VICE ANNIE CAPUTO.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

DANIEL E. BURROWS, OF COLORADO, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL, VICE AARON REITZ, RESIGNED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. RICHARD W. CORNER II

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. STEPHANIE Q. HOWARD
BRIG. GEN. JENNIFER A. MARRASTHOST

IN THE NAVY

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

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) BENJAMIN G. REYNOLDS

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by
the Senate November 5, 2025:

THE JUDICIARY

ERIC CHUNYEE TUNG, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED
STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CALEB ORR, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SEC-
RETARY OF STATE (ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS).