



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2024

No. 148

## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, we hide beneath the shadow of Your wings until the danger passes. We cry to You because we have so often received help from Your throne. Thank You for Your unfailing love and faithfulness.

Lord, continue to provide for all the needs of our lawmakers, giving them strength for struggles and success, for shadows and sunshine, for valleys and mountain summits. Awaken in them such a fresh appreciation for this great land that they will be prepared to pay the high price for freedom.

Today, give us all a love for right so that we may be instruments for Your glory.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, September 23, 2024.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,  
President pro tempore.

Ms. DUCKWORTH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Rose E. Jenkins, of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court for a term of fifteen years.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday afternoon, we announced that congressional leaders reached a bipartisan agreement to avoid a government shutdown on September 30. This agreement will keep the government open at current funding levels until December 20. This agreement, thankfully, is free of any partisan poison pills and was negotiated in good faith.

I thank the Speaker for working with my team to put this package together over the weekend. Our teams were up early and stayed late into the evening to get it done.

I also wish to thank the House Democratic leader, the Senate Republican leader, and all the appropriators, particularly Senators MURRAY and COLLINS, for helping us get to this point.

The matter is now straightforward. We now have less than a week to pass a funding bill through the House, through the Senate, and onto the President's desk. Both sides will have to act celeritously and with continued bipartisan good faith to meet the funding deadline. Any delay or last-minute poison pill can still push us into a shutdown. I hope and I trust that this will not happen.

Of course, as we proceed, it is important to remember that negotiations didn't have to wait until the last minute. This agreement could have very easily been reached weeks ago, but Speaker JOHNSON and House Republicans chose to listen to Donald Trump's partisan demands instead of working with us from the start to reach a bicameral, bipartisan agreement.

Remember, Donald Trump has spent the entire month urging House Republicans to shut the government down if his poison pills weren't passed. That is outlandishly cynical. Donald Trump knows perfectly well that a shutdown would mean chaos, pain, and needless heartache for the American people, but, as usual, he just doesn't seem to care.

It is astounding that anyone seeking the Presidency would think a shutdown is a good thing, but that is who Donald Trump is at his core—cynical and ill-intentioned. He should have learned his lesson years ago when he told Speaker PELOSI and I to shut down the government and said: 'I'll take the blame.' Well, that didn't work out too well for him, did it?

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



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I am glad his efforts in this instance are on track to fail. We aren't out of the woods yet, but now that we have reached a bipartisan agreement, I hope we are on track to avoid a shutdown. I believe we will avoid that shutdown. With a few more days of bipartisanship and speed and good faith, we can get the job done—certainly before the deadline of a government shutdown.

#### ABORTION

Now, Madam President, on reproductive rights and Project 2025, over the weekend, former President Donald Trump said at an event that, if he becomes President, women “will no longer be thinking about abortion.”

He uttered these words in the middle of another one of his incomprehensible rants, where he lamented about the state of women's healthcare. He lamented that “women have been through a lot” and claimed that things will somehow get better if he returns to office.

At the risk of stating the obvious, Donald Trump has zero credibility when it comes to women's healthcare, and it is both ridiculous and insulting for Donald Trump to suggest women won't have to worry about abortion if he returns to the White House. Of course, they will.

Not 1 week ago, a report was published detailing the tragic story of a woman from Georgia who died because her State's abortion bans prevented her from receiving lifesaving care. The story is equal parts heartbreaking and enraging when you read how this woman was denied proper care because she happened to live in the “wrong State.” Worst of all, there are undoubtedly more stories like hers out there.

And, make no mistake, these abortion bans are now a reality largely because of one person—Donald Trump. More than any single individual, Donald Trump is the reason women worry so much about abortion and reproductive health today. After all, it was Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans who appointed three ultra-conservative Justices to the Supreme Court, with the explicit goal of overturning Roe. It was Donald Trump who, again and again, bragged about ending protections under Roe. Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans are also the ones who cleared the path for draconian bans at the State level, and as much as they now try to deny it, Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans are the ones clamoring for the chance to pass a national abortion ban.

Don't take it from me. Senator VANCE, whom Donald Trump chose as his running mate, said, 2 years ago, he would “certainly like abortion to be illegal nationally.” He “certainly would like abortion to be illegal nationally.” These were the words of Donald Trump's running mate. Statements like these give women plenty of reason to worry about Donald Trump returning to the White House.

Look, when people have their rights taken away, they don't simply stop thinking about the issue.

Former President Trump, that is not how it works. You can't fool people like you are trying to do. When people's rights are taken away, they start worrying about which rights will crumble next.

They wonder: Now that Republicans overturned Roe, what is next? Will women's pregnancies be monitored? Will drugs like mifepristone get banned? Will States start banning IVF?

Now, none of this is theoretical. Many of these ideas are laid out in President Trump's Project 2025, and in a shocker to nobody, an overwhelming majority of Americans thinks the ideas of Project 2025 are toxic. Just yesterday, an NBC poll found that only 4 percent—4 percent—of Americans viewed Project 2025 favorably, and half—more than half—of Americans said they had strongly unfavorable views.

The bottom line is this: Donald Trump and the hard right are the reason reproductive care is at its weakest point in modern history, but as project 2025 makes clear, the MAGA right is just getting started even though most Americans overwhelmingly reject their radical agenda.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

#### ISRAEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, in May 2000, Israeli forces withdrew from southern Lebanon, but while the occupation ended, Hezbollah's appetite for waging war on Israel only grew, and its further deadly attacks on Israel invited the 2006 conflict.

But the history of Israel's fight to defend its northern border and innocent civilians against Hezbollah terrorists bears eerie parallels to the stories of the brutal violence Hamas has perpetrated from Gaza. Israel withdrew there in August 2005, and by 2007, Iran-backed terrorists had bent the enclave to its all-consuming mission, which is war on Israel.

But the most glaring through-lines in Israel's north and south are not the relentless bloodlust of terrorists. They are the predictable delusion of Israel's “friends” and the shameful cowardice of international authorities that claim to stand for peace.

Take, for starters, how the Biden-Harris administration chose to welcome the U.N. General Assembly by signaling its openness—openness—to resuming funding for UNRWA and how it apparently still clings to the fiction that an organization so thoroughly corrupted by Hamas that nearly a dozen of its staff directly—directly—

participated in the October attacks is somehow reformable.

But while the civilized world gathers in one place, the General Assembly might productively spend its time contemplating other pressing questions, for example: Why hasn't the U.N. Security Council managed to enforce resolutions 1559 and 1701 in Lebanon? These resolutions were passed to end and prevent further conflict between Israel and Lebanon by removing the threat Hezbollah posed on Israel's border and to end the threat Hezbollah posed to the State of Lebanon itself.

And why has the U.N. peacekeeping force in Lebanon allowed Hezbollah to build up massive stockpiles on Israel's border, in clear—clear—preparation for war?

Why has the U.N. looked the other way as Hezbollah has expanded its corrosive influence over the institutions of Lebanon's Government?

But setting aside the failures of the so-called international community, this past weekend once again cast a spotlight on America's known naivete toward the glaring facts of Iran-backed war on our friend Israel.

In an interview that might rightly attract scrutiny for its host's obfuscation of the facts on Israel's responses to Hezbollah terrorism, the White House National Security Communications Advisor said out loud what the Biden-Harris administration has been saying by its actual actions for nearly a year:

We've been working since the beginning of the conflict, October 8 . . . to try to prevent an escalation.

So think about that. The only way to claim credit for working to “prevent an escalation” is by pretending like Hezbollah's October 8 attacks—or Hamas's October 7 massacre—weren't actually escalations themselves.

Unfortunately, the administration official also seemed to suggest a moral equivalence—a moral equivalence—between Israel and Hezbollah. He suggested that “military action, by either side” would not be “in either side's best interest” and implied that an Israeli response would itself be escalation—once again, second-guessing Israel's interests, micromanaging their defensive efforts. Blaming Israel for escalation when it is clear—absolutely clear—Hamas and Hezbollah have been the instigators of this conflict. It is a tired playbook.

The administration is telling the world that what America wants is a return to October 6, as if the status quo was either sustainable or peaceful. This, of course, is pure fantasy. Hamas broke a cease-fire on October 7.

Or consider Hezbollah's history as the centerpiece of Iran's “ring of fire” around Israel: Just since the 2006 conflict, Hezbollah terrorists have imported tens of thousands of rockets to target Israel, deployed forces directly to Israel's border, and constructed tunnels that would allow them to emulate Hamas's October 7 invasion.