



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2025

No. 37

Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Daniel Driscoll, of North Carolina, to be Secretary of the Army.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF JAMIESON GREER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, soon, we will be voting on the nomination of Jamieson Greer of Maryland to be U.S. Trade Representative.

I will be supporting that nomination. I voted for his nomination to get out of the Finance Committee because I believe we need a clear change from the last 4 years, when there was never any attempt to do anything to reduce trade barriers.

Unlike his predecessor, I am confident that Mr. Greer will pursue an aggressive trade strategy that includes opening access to new markets through new trade deals. I also believe that Mr. Greer will work to level the playing field for U.S. farmers to compete with Brazil fairly and to deal with China head on. As my colleagues know, I am a free and fair trader, and though I would not like to see extreme tariffs, I am hopeful that Mr. Greer and President Trump will bring us to freer and more fair trade.

We often think of Europe, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, and China as being big problems for us when it comes to trade. I would like to remind my colleagues that there are about 190 other countries on this globe that we can seek agreements with, and taking time to seek those agreements would be good.

Along this line, Senator BOOZMAN, chairman of the Ag Committee, and I,

a member of the Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over trade, sent letters to members of the Finance Committee, the Agriculture Committee, and the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives. We asked our colleagues to listen to somebody who has had some experience in dealing with some of these smaller nations with bilateral trade agreements. That person is a person by the name of Al Johnson.

During the George W. Bush Presidency, he negotiated trade agreements with about a dozen countries that added up to about six or seven different agreements—all bilateral. I think, this is the way President Trump prefers—bilateral negotiations rather than multilateral negotiations. He was very successful, and that success can be measured by the fact that he has shown in his studies that, with these dozen countries with which we negotiated bilateral free-trade agreements during the George W. Bush administration, we increased our trade with those nations by about 600 percent.

So I hope my colleagues will give Al Johnson a chance to talk to them. I know he has already visited with some Members of the U.S. Senate, and he is very vigorously promoting the idea that we ought to have bilateral negotiations—and with a lot of countries that we never think about—that could be beneficial to American exports.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive 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 majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF JAMIESON GREER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday evening, we invoked cloture on the

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

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, National Chaplain Daniel DePozo, the American Legion, Henderson, NV.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Most Heavenly Father, whose love is given freely, we thank You, Lord. May all of our lawmakers who make decisions be guided in Your Name. May they have the wisdom and the courage and, most importantly, the courage of love and heart. We ask You, Lord, for those who are serving now, to give to them the help that is needed.

This great Nation of ours is entrusted to You, O Lord. Your blessings on the men and women who are protecting us as a great Nation, who are also under Your care, we ask You to bless them as well.

We ask this all in Your 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. MORENO). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S1317

nomination of Jamieson Greer to be U.S. Trade Representative.

Mr. Greer is admirably qualified for this position. He spent most of his career specializing in trade law and has extensive international experience. He served as a missionary in Brussels, received a master's degree from two Paris institutions, served as law clerk for the European Court of Justice, and was stationed in both Türkiye and Iraq as a member of the Air Force. Most significantly of all, he spent 3 years of the previous Trump administration serving as Chief of Staff to then-U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who spoke highly of Mr. Greer's work. He is, in short, very well prepared for this role.

One of my top priorities when it comes to trade is expanding opportunities for our Nation's agriculture producers, like the many farmers and ranchers in my State of South Dakota.

The Biden administration frequently seemed to have no interest in trade beyond negotiating on climate and labor issues. Witness the fact that there was not a single FTA negotiated during the Biden administration—not a single one—with all the opportunities across the globe to enter into trade agreements to open up and provide access to America's farmers and ranchers and small business people. Well, that was a real disservice to America's ag producers and to our small businesses.

Trade is critical to the continued success of American agriculture. Twenty percent of U.S. ag products are exported yearly, and exports provide substantial farm income. Soybeans and corn alone accounted for 22 percent of all U.S. exports by value in 2024.

Thanks, in part, to the Biden administration's almost complete inaction on trade, the current agricultural trade deficit is at an alltime high. That is an area of our economy where we have always run trade surpluses historically. Consistently over time, decade after decade, we had always run trade surpluses in agriculture until the last few years under the Biden administration, when we started racking up not only deficits but now record trade deficits. They are at an alltime high. I have to say that is a real problem for our ag producers, especially considering the other challenges that they have been facing, and it is something that needs to be addressed.

I know that the Trump administration is committed to meeting the needs of farmers and ranchers, and I am looking forward to working with Mr. Greer to expand opportunities for our agricultural producers.

I am very encouraged by the fact that Mr. Greer has expressed his commitment to working closely with the Senate Finance Committee, of which I am a member, and with Congress.

President Biden's Trade Representative was completely uninterested in working with Congress. So it is very encouraging to hear of Mr. Greer's commitment to communication and collaboration.

I look forward to a close partnership between the administration and Congress in the coming months and years, as we work to expand opportunities for American producers.

ENERGY

Mr. President, this afternoon, we are going to vote on a resolution to end the energy emergency that President Trump declared upon taking office.

Apparently, according to the resolution's authors, this energy emergency declaration isn't justified. In response to that, I would like to just read a headline from the Washington Post last March. That headline is:

Amid explosive demand, America is running out of power.

Let me just repeat that for my Democratic colleagues:

Amid explosive demand, America is running out of power. [Running out of power.]

The article stated:

Vast swaths of the United States are at risk of running short of power as electricity-hungry data centers and clean technology factories proliferate around the country, leaving utilities and regulators grasping for credible plans to expand the nation's creaking power grid.

Then, of course, there was this headline from another major news outlet in December:

More than half the US faces blackout risks in next decade, NERC finds.

Again:

More than half the US faces blackout risks in next decade . . .

Large swaths of the US—

The article noted—

could experience rolling blackouts due to capacity shortfalls during extreme weather events in the next decade, according to a grid reliability analysis released Tuesday.

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator faces the highest risk of energy shortfalls starting as soon as this summer, according to the report from the North American Electric Reliability Corp., which can force grid operators to trigger rolling outages to prevent wider system harm.

These aren't niche publications. These are mainstream media outlets—mainstream media outlets reporting on the fact that “America is running out of power.”

If my Democrat colleagues don't consider that an emergency, I just don't know what to say.

As these articles—and others—make clear, the U.S. electric grid is extremely shaky.

Thanks in substantial part to a movement to shut down fossil fuel-fired powerplants before reliable sources of clean energy are available to replace them, America is running out of power, even as we face huge new power demands. The boom in data center construction—in particular to power the rise of artificial intelligence—is placing, and will place, vast new demands upon the grid.

A recent CNBC headline noted:

Data centers powering artificial intelligence could use more electricity than entire cities. [. . . more electricity than entire cities.]

If we continue on our current course, there is a very real risk that we are not going to be able to meet that demand; that we are going to end up with widespread brownouts and blackouts or electricity rationing or de facto rationing forced by sky-high energy bills.

I realize that this is an inconvenient truth to my Democrat colleagues. Why? Because it interferes with their plans to force the United States off conventional energy.

If Democrats acknowledge that we are rapidly approaching an energy crisis, they might have to actually consider the consequences of their energy plans; to consider what might happen when you put immense new power demands on an already shaky grid by forcing Americans into electric vehicles; to consider what might happen if you drastically limit domestic oil and gas production, even as the Nation continues to require steady and affordable supply of conventional fuels.

So I do understand why Democrats prefer not to acknowledge our national energy emergency. But acknowledge it or not, it is there. And if we don't take action, we are going to be facing some very serious problems in the very near future.

So I am grateful to have a President who recognizes and acknowledges the energy emergency facing our Nation, and I look forward to working with him to unleash American energy production and achieve a secure, affordable, and reliable energy future with the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive 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.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, over the last month, it has become clear how Donald Trump and Republicans govern. Donald Trump and Republicans have focused on things most Americans don't care about or don't like while refusing to focus on things Americans actually do care about.

Donald Trump and Republicans have focused on things most Americans don't care about or don't even like while refusing to focus on things Americans actually do care about.

Exhibit A of these things that Americans don't like is what is happening today in the House of Representatives. As soon as today, House Republicans will advance a budget resolution clearing the way for perhaps the most draconian cuts to Medicaid in American history, all so Republicans can cut taxes for their billionaires club and have the American people pick up the tab and pay the price. This is in the