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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, March 14, 2025, at 9 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2025

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARKWAYNE MULLIN, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, today, give Your guidance to our lawmakers. Help them to seek first Your Kingdom so that everything will fall into its proper place and their lives will honor You. As they seek greater intimacy with You, empower them to relate honestly with themselves and one another.

Lord, lead them together to find solutions to the problems that beset this great land. Calm their fears and strengthen their faith. Use them to serve You and country with faithfulness. Let Your peace guard their hearts.

We pray in Your sovereign 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 (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 13, 2025.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARKWAYNE MULLIN, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MULLIN 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as the expression goes, it is time for Democrats to fish or cut bait. We have 2 days until government funding expires. Democrats need to decide if they are going to support funding legislation that came over from the House or if they are going to shut down the government. So far, it is looking like they plan to shut it down.

The Democratic leader came to the floor, yesterday afternoon, and had the nerve to complain about the House bill. He wants yet another short-term piece of funding legislation to, as he said, "give Congress time to negotiate bipartisan legislation that can pass."

Well, I am not sure how long the Democratic leader thinks we should drag out the funding process for fiscal year 2025: Until fiscal year 2026? Beyond?

We are already nearly 6 months into the 2025 fiscal year. In other words, we are halfway through—halfway through—this fiscal year, and it is past time to get fiscal year 2025 funding situated.

I would like to suggest to the Democratic leader that, if he has problems with the current situation, maybe—just maybe—he should have funded the government when he was in charge. The reason we are stuck here voting on a CR for the rest of 2025 is because the Democratic leader refused to consider appropriations bills last year.

Senators MURRAY and COLLINS, then chair and vice chair of the Appropriations Committee, did a lot of work to deliver the fiscal year 2025 appropriations bills. In fact, they had moved 11—11—of the 12 bills out of the Appropriations Committee by the end of August, last year—or, I should say, the end of July, last year—and 6 of those bills, 6 of the 11 that the Appropriations Committee passed by the end of July, last year, passed unanimously coming out of the committee. The others were passed with big bipartisan majorities.

And then what happened? Well, then, the Democratic leader just sat on it. In

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



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his remaining 5 months as majority leader, he didn't bring a single fiscal year 2025 appropriations bill to the floor. So it is absolutely rich for him to be coming down to the floor now to call for a short-term CR—another short-term CR—to negotiate fiscal 2025 legislation. He had his chance for months.

I am no fan of continuing resolutions. In fact, I intend to do my very best to ensure that, from here on out, the government is funded through appropriations bills that proceed through regular order. But at this point, our best option is a continuing resolution to fund the remainder of fiscal year 2025 and clear the decks for the fiscal year 2026 appropriations process to begin, because, while the Democrat leader may have forgotten, given his decision to ignore regular-order appropriations last year, it is almost time to start considering fiscal year 2026 appropriations bills.

And I fully intend for us to consider them on the floor. My goal is to schedule floor action for every fiscal year 2026 appropriations bill that comes out of the committee, where they can be debated, amended, and passed for further negotiation with the House.

And that, of course, will require cooperation from Democrats. But I hope—I really hope—the Democrats will remember this situation, and others that we have been placed in, and work in partnership with Republicans to restore the regular-order appropriations process.

Continuing resolutions are never the preferred option, but thanks to the Democrat leader's decision to abandon the fiscal year 2025 appropriations process, the continuing resolution we have before us is the best option we have to fund the government for the balance of this year.

So it is time for the Democrat leader to acknowledge that it is his decisions that put us here and urge his colleagues to accept the situation and vote to fund the government rather than let it shutdown at midnight on Friday. If he doesn't, he will have the American people to answer to.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Senators have been seeing a lot of each other lately—in fact, too much, some might say. The Senate is hopefully about to wrap up its 10th consecutive week in session—the Senate's longest in-session stretch in over 15 years—10 weeks that includes late nights, weekend work, and even an all-night session. We have a lot of accomplishments to report back to our constituents when we are back in our States next week.

The Senate has confirmed 21 members of President Trump's Cabinet, and we have done it at the fastest pace since 2001. That is right. The Senate has gotten through hearings, markups, and floor votes on 21 Cabinet nominees at a record pace. As a result, President Trump has more of his Cabinet in place

today than any President since George W. Bush. We have also confirmed a lot of sub-Cabinet officials and a new FBI Director. Senate committees are continuing to hold hearings and send more of the President's nominees to the floor for a vote.

The Senate Republican majority has also been working to execute our legislative agenda. At the top of the priority list is securing the border.

The first bill we sent to President Trump's desk was the Laken Riley Act, which ensures that criminal illegal immigrants are detained when they are arrested for certain crimes and not returned to America's streets. Senator BRITT led the debate on this bill on the floor, and we had an amendment process that made this bill stronger by adding Senator ERNST's bill, Sarah's Law, and elements of Senator BUDD's bill, the POLICE Act.

Senate Republicans also passed a budget resolution to unlock the process to provide resources to carry out President Trump's border agenda. We have already seen border crossings plummet in response to President Trump's border security measures. Criminal illegal immigrants have been arrested and deported from cities around the country. But to continue these efforts and maintain a secure border will require additional resources, and we are determined to deliver.

We are also working to address the fentanyl crisis by passing the HALT Fentanyl Act. The HALT Fentanyl Act would permanently classify fentanyl-related substances as schedule I drugs and provide law enforcement with the critical tools to go after the people who are bringing this poison into our country and killing Americans. I expect that we will pass this bill soon.

Senate Republicans are also working to eliminate some of the Biden administration's burdensome regulations. As part of our promise to unleash American energy, we passed Senator HOEVEN's resolution to block the Biden natural gas tax, and we also passed Senator KENNEDY's resolution overturning a rule that would have stifled energy development in America's waters. To promote financial freedom, we passed resolutions from Senators RICKETTS and CRUZ to protect America's financial privacy. There will be more regulatory relief to come.

It has been a busy couple of months, and we have gotten a lot done. We could have done even more if Democrats hadn't repeatedly chosen to use the filibuster. That is right. A few short months ago, when Democrats were in the majority, they were making plans to destroy the filibuster. Now that they have been in the minority for 10 weeks, they have already used the filibuster three times.

What are the bills that they blocked? Well, first, there was the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act—a bill that simply requires doctors to give a baby born alive after a failed abortion the same medical care that

any other baby would receive. Then there was the ICC sanctions bill, which would have supported our ally Israel and protected American servicemembers abroad. Just last week, every Democrat joined a filibuster against Senator TUBERVILLE's bill to keep biological men out of women's and girls sports. Now Democrats are threatening yet a fourth filibuster—this time to shut down the Federal Government tomorrow.

I have to say, it is funny how Democrats' opposition to filibuster changes with the prevailing winds.

I promised last year that 2025 would be a busy year, and these past 10 weeks are just the beginning. Republicans are working to deliver for the American people, and we are just getting started.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR EN BLOC—S. 1008, H.R. 1156

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand there are bills at the desk due a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The leader is correct.

The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1008) to provide equitable treatment for the people of the Village Corporation established for the Native Village of Saxman, Alaska, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 1156) to amend the CARES Act to extend the statute of limitations for fraud under certain unemployment programs, and for other purposes.

Mr. THUNE. In order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 41.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Christopher Landau, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State.

CLOTURE MOTION

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