

I am hopeful that enough Democrats will reject their party's threat of shutting down the government and get this bill passed today. As I said yesterday, it is time to move on, and moving forward, appropriation bills are going to be a priority in the Senate.

When the Appropriations Committee sends a bill to the floor, my goal is to bring it to the floor for consideration, and I hope that my Democrat colleagues will cooperate in that effort. We are going to have a debate, consider amendments, and vote; and we are going to try to avoid the end-of-year pileup in continuing resolutions that I know we are all tired of.

Another continuing resolution—another CR—was nobody's first choice, but I can tell you this: The next time the Senate votes on an appropriations bill, it won't be on the eve of another shutdown.

So I appreciate my colleagues' support for this continuing resolution, and I look forward to a much better process for fiscal year 2026.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, as everyone knows, government funding expires at midnight tonight. As I announced yesterday, I will vote to keep the government open.

I believe it is the best way to minimize the harm that the Trump administration will do to the American people. Clearly, this is a Hobson's choice. The CR is a bad bill. But as bad as the CR is, I believe allowing Donald Trump to take even much more power via a government shutdown is a far worse option. A shutdown would allow DOGE to shift into overdrive.

Let me repeat: A shutdown will allow DOGE to shift into overdrive. It would give Donald Trump and DOGE the keys to the city, State, and country. Donald Trump and Elon Musk would be free to destroy vital government services at a much faster rate than they can right now and over a much broader field of destruction that they would render.

In a shutdown, Donald Trump and DOGE will have the power to determine what is considered essential and what is not, and their views on what is not essential would be mean and vicious and would decimate vital services and cause unimaginable harm to the American people.

Making matters even worse, in a shutdown, there is no check on their determinations, Trump and DOGE's determinations on what is essential and what is not. In fact, on February 26,

OMB, led by Russell Vought, told Agencies to work with DOGE to create a list of nonessential workers so that they could reduce staffing even faster in a shutdown.

They are already preparing for a shutdown. Musk has told everybody he wants a shutdown because he knows it will help him achieve his horrible goal of just decimating the Federal Government from one end to the other. In other words, if government were to shut down, DOGE has a plan in place to exploit the crisis for maximum destruction.

In a shutdown, American families would be hurt in ways they almost have never been. It could disrupt regional Veterans Affairs offices, curtail mental health services, and accelerate plans to slash staff at Social Security offices. The list goes on and on and on of the damage—the severe damage—they could do, virtually unchecked.

They can stay in a shutdown as long as they want. There is no off-ramp unless they decide to take that off-ramp, and they won't because this is their best tool for achieving their goal: slash government, slash spending, and use that money for tax breaks for billionaires.

So a shutdown would be the best distraction Donald Trump could ask for—distraction from his awful agenda. Donald Trump owns the chaos in government. He owns the chaos in the stock market. He owns the damage happening to the economy. But he knows that if government shuts down and all the fighting is over which Agencies should be kept and which shouldn't and Republican Senators and Congressmen in just obeisance to Trump keep putting bills on the floor to decide that, it will totally distract from the most important fight of all: fighting Republicans for eviscerating Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid while giving trillions in tax cuts to the ultrarich. That is the fight American people must know about. A shutdown will be a costly distraction from this all-important fight.

Finally, I want to close by reminding everyone it was Republicans who pushed this false shutdown choice. Their inability to govern has led us to this precipice. Our caucus Members have been torn between two awful alternatives, and my colleagues and I have wrestled with which alternative would be worse for the American people. Different Senators come down on different sides of this question, but that does not mean that any Senate Democrat supports a shutdown.

Whatever the outcome, our caucus will be united in our determination to continue the long-term fight to stop Donald Trump's dangerous war on our democracy and on America's working families.

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

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Feinberg nomination.

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

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 35, Stephen Feinberg, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

John Thune, Tim Sheehy, Cynthia M. Lummis, Rick Scott of Florida, Kevin Cramer, Ted Budd, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Lindsey Graham, Markwayne Mullin, Marsha Blackburn, Thom Tillis, Tommy Tuberville, John R. Curtis, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, John Barrasso, Todd Young.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Stephen Feinberg, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) and, the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and, the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 125 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Banks	Ernst	McCormick
Barrasso	Fetterman	Moody
Blackburn	Fischer	Moran
Boozman	Graham	Moreno
Britt	Grassley	Mullin
Budd	Hagerty	Murkowski
Capito	Hoeben	Paul
Cassidy	Husted	Reed
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Ricketts
Cornyn	Johnson	Risch
Cotton	Kaine	Rounds
Cramer	Kennedy	Schmitt
Crapo	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lee	Scott (SC)
Curtis	Marshall	Shaheen
Daines	McConnell	Sheehy

Slotkin	Tillis	Wicker
Sullivan	Tuberville	Young
Thune	Warner	
NAYS—39		
Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Peters
Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kelly	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kim	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	King	Schiff
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Coons	Lujan	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Gallego	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Welch
Hassan	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Padilla	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Booker	Hawley	Lummis
Duckworth	Justice	

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 39.

The motion is agreed to.
The Senator from Iowa.

HALT FENTANYL ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today is a good day for the Senate and a good day for the American people. The Senate will soon pass a bill that is entitled “HALT Fentanyl Act.” The House is expected to take the measure up very soon and send it to President Trump, who is waiting with pen in hand to enact one of his campaign promises.

The HALT Fentanyl Act permanently schedules these deadly substances that have been the main driver of overdose deaths in the United States. No longer does the Drug Enforcement Agency need to play this game of Whac-A-Mole every time a cartel develops a new fentanyl knockoff. In other words, today, a fentanyl knockoff might be illegal, and then they change the chemical makeup of it, and it becomes legal. It is a nightmare for law enforcement.

So no longer will Congress be kicking the can down the road with temporary extensions. We have had many, many extensions over the last several years to keep fentanyl scheduled and its analogs scheduled in I. It also revises policies to research schedule I substances. These are changes the research community has welcomed.

Drug overdoses in the United States have exploded to the highest levels we have ever seen, and, of course, this is thanks to fentanyl and fentanyl knockoffs. The Drug Enforcement Agency has called fentanyl and its knockoffs the “deadliest drug threat the United States has ever faced.”

Since 2016, I have been raising the alarm on deadly synthetic drugs like fentanyl. As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I held a hearing on these substances and the need to stay ahead of the peddlers of this poison. Sadly, it has taken us 9 long years to get to permanently scheduling these deadly knockoffs.

Of course, we thank each of the previous Congresses that, on a temporary basis, extended the scheduling of fentanyl and fentanyl knockoffs, but this bipartisan HALT Fentanyl Act

takes care of this by making it permanent.

Senators CASSIDY, HEINRICH, and JOHNSON were very instrumental in this effort. Their interest in permanently scheduling fentanyl knockoffs inspired the Senate to move this bill to the floor. Republican leadership was also crucial in prioritizing this bill for the floor and helping us navigate the floor process.

Credit is also due to our House colleagues—Representative GRIFFITH, Chairman GUTHRIE, and now retired Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers—who led and championed the HALT Fentanyl Act on the House side.

I would also like to thank Dr. Tim Westlake, who came up with the temporary scheduling structure that we have been using since the year 2018. He has testified before my committee and before the Congress on numerous occasions, and I thank him for his hard work and unflappable dedication.

So, in the end, this campaign earned the support of nearly every major law enforcement organization and also several medical associations and research associations supporting the research component of this bill.

Most importantly, we must say thanks to the countless families organized over a long period of time across the country that have lost loved ones to fentanyl poisoning and have not given up on this type of legislation to make permanent the scheduling.

I want to thank my Senate staff who helped make this possible, especially Colleen Bloss and Michael Perkins, who spearheaded this effort for me and all the committee members. Together, we have taken steps to open the doors of research to permanently schedule the deadliest substance the United States has ever faced and to send a clear message that Congress is willing and ready to act. Together, we have taken an important step to live up to our commitment to our constituents and to the loved ones lost to put them first and to serve them.

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.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 Wyoming.

REMEMBERING ALAN K. SIMPSON

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor with my colleague from Wyoming, Senator CYNTHIA LUMMIS, to mourn one of Wyoming’s most beloved and fiercest champions. He passed earlier this morning. That would be former U.S. Senator Al Simpson—not just former Senator; former member of the Wyoming House of Representatives and former Army veteran. He passed away earlier today at the age of 93 in his hometown of Cody, Wy-

oming. I talked to his wife Ann this morning. She said it was a beautiful, full moon, and Al went to Heaven on a moonbeam.

He is known in Wyoming and in this body and across the country for his incredible life of service and really an unparalleled sense of humor.

Throughout his life, Al boldly fought to uphold the values and the ideals of this great Nation. Whether he was serving in the Army or the Wyoming House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate, his commitment and his contributions were evident everywhere.

He was well known for rolling up his sleeves and working with anyone regardless of party to do what he thought was best for Wyoming and the Nation. When the Nation called on Al Simpson, when they called on him to serve, he was always there fighting for our best interests.

Al once said:

Never let them distort who you are.

So let me tell you about the real Al Simpson. His life and his legacy are defined by the c’s—the c’s standing for his hometown of Cody, and collegiality is a big part, but also there was courage, character, and credibility.

He represented Wyoming in this Chamber as a U.S. Senator from 1979 to 1997, and for that reason alone, Al looms very large in Wyoming’s political history. There is a lot more. He left an indelible mark here in the Senate. While others ran from tough issues, Al welcomed them. It was an opportunity to serve. He actually never backed down from a fight. He embraced the fights as long as he was fighting for what he thought was right.

He sponsored legislation that helped protect our clean water and our clean air. He secured better grazing rights for Wyoming farmers and ranchers. He fought to secure our borders and imposed stiff sanctions on employers who hired illegal immigrants.

He once said:

The first duty of every nation is to secure its border.

He was so right.

He was elected by our Republican conference in the Senate in 1985 to serve as the assistant Republican leader. He was the first Republican whip from the State of Wyoming. He was the whip for 10 years, and he did it under the leadership of Senator Bob Dole. So I am proud to hold the office today that he once held. His leadership brought Wyoming values to Washington, and he left a lasting national impact.

Al came from a family of public servants. His father Milward was both Wyoming Governor and Senator. His dad Milward was Al’s role model for public service and civic leadership. His big brother Pete once explained:

The extent to which we became men we owe to our father.

Everyone who knew Al well knows that his most important influence in his life came from the love of his life,