

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, work on the President's nominations continues apace. Last week, we confirmed nine members of the President's administration, including the Secretary of the Navy, an Assistant Attorney General, and Deputy Secretaries of Treasury, State, and Veterans Affairs.

The President's Cabinet Secretaries, of course, are all in place. And tonight, we will be voting to invoke cloture on Matthew Whitaker to be the U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, and I expect to confirm additional nominees this week as well.

A huge focus early on in any new Congress, with a newly elected President, is filling out the President's administration. We have also been focused on the agenda the President and Republicans were elected to deliver. In the very near future, we will be taking up a budget resolution to lay the groundwork for legislation to make the 2017 tax relief permanent, secure the border, unleash American energy, and provide for our Nation's defense. And all of that will be accompanied by substantial savings measures.

And on the subject of maximizing savings, I just want to be very clear: The House and the Senate are united in aiming to do all we can on this. Sure, the instructions we give to our separate committees, which are responsible for finding those savings, may look a little bit different. But that is not because we don't have a shared commitment to cutting wasteful government spending and saving taxpayer dollars. That is simply a function of Senate rules.

In the Senate, if we fail to meet a single savings instruction—even by a dollar—we lose our ability to consider the legislation under reconciliation rules and the simple majority threshold. So we have to be careful not to miss the mark on this and to provide flexibility as we chart our bicameral course. But that won't stop us from maximizing savings. Again, on that point, we are committed.

But back to the bill that we will be moving forward. As I said, the budget resolution we will take up will lay the groundwork for legislation to make the 2017 tax cuts permanent. The 2017 tax relief we passed put more money in American families' pockets with the largest proportional share of the tax relief going to the middle class. And if we don't act to extend this relief, American families will be taking home lower paychecks next year.

Along with the President, Senate Republicans are committed to ensuring that we not only extend this relief, but that we make it permanent. Americans should not have to worry about their tax relief expiring every few years.

In addition to making this relief permanent, the bill will also, as I said, invest in securing our border, unleashing American energy, and defending our Nation. After years of chaos at our southern border under President Biden

and after years of deficiencies in our military readiness, it is time for a serious investment in border and national security.

As I have said before, if we don't get national security right, Mr. President, the rest is just conversation. It is past time to address the deficiencies in our military readiness and to ensure that the good work President Trump is doing to secure the border and remove criminals from our streets can continue.

I am looking forward to taking up our budget resolution in the very near future so that we can deliver permanent tax relief for Americans, provide certainty to the economy, and make a transformational investment in border, energy, and national security. It is going to be a great bill.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The 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 (Mr. SHEEHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

TARIFFS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this week, Donald Trump is preparing to take a sledgehammer to the American economy by preparing a tsunami of tariffs on all sorts of goods Americans purchase every day—a tsunami of tariffs.

Let's be clear. Donald Trump's tariffs are a tax hike on American families. The average costs families will have to pay for groceries, gas, everyday goods, et cetera, will go up by thousands—thousands of dollars a year out of hard-working people's pockets to pay for these tariffs. And Donald Trump has the gall to call his trade war "Liberation Day." That makes as much sense as calling a layoff notice a promotion letter.

The Trump administration clearly has no strategy or goal behind their tariffs. One minute, they say the tariffs will lead to more people buying American-made goods, but Peter Navarro said yesterday that tariffs will also raise trillions in revenue. This is a total contradiction. You can't use tariffs to both raise revenue and bring jobs back. The only way you raise that much in revenue is if Americans pay that much for goods made abroad, and that means consumers will hurt most.

Donald Trump knows his plan will send costs surging. He said he "hopes" automakers raise their prices—spoken like a true billionaire. Donald Trump saying, I hope automakers will raise their prices? OK, Mr. and Mrs. Consumer, Mr. and Mrs. Average American Family, Donald Trump wants you to pay more while he is giving tax cuts to billionaires.

Senate Republicans—where are they? Always, they just go along with whatever Trump wants no matter how idiotic. Senate Republicans should be shouting from the rooftops to get the President to reverse course on tariffs. People in red States will be especially impacted, from farmers to small businesses. Republicans should be swarming the Senate floor with statements calling on the President to change his mind. But their response has been so feeble, so weak—almost nonexistent—that Americans are right to question which side they are really on.

The worst part is that nobody knows what the tariffs will look like—perhaps not even Donald Trump. On a slow day, he changes his mind about them only once a day. He seems to change his mind about them almost every hour.

This is not what the American people want. Americans and American businesses detest the chaos and unpredictability that Trump brings. No surprise—more and more Americans now disprove of his handling of the economy. Meanwhile, the S&P is on track for its worst quarter compared to the rest of the world since the 1980s. Consumer confidence is at its worst since Donald Trump's first term. Outlook for the economy is at a 12-year low. Household debt is on the rise.

Donald Trump's trade war is playing Russian roulette with the American economy, and it will be households, retirees, consumers, and average families that pay the price.

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

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Whitaker nomination be waived.

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

VOTE-ARAMA

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I have a little advice, really, of a parliamentary nature for the U.S. Senate. I hope it will be taken in the constructive spirit that it is intended. This week, the Senate is expected, once again, to vote on a budget resolution. It is among the most important actions we will take all year.

Unfortunately, one unpleasant aspect of this process will be the so-called vote-arama. We just had one a few weeks ago. There is no specific mention of the vote-arama in the 1974 Congressional Budget Act. This process was never envisioned by the drafters of the budget law. But it evolved to its current form because the Congressional Budget Act allows debate up to 20

hours and does not restrict the number of amendments Senators can offer.

Here is how it actually works. And you know this quite well, Mr. President, as a new Member of the Senate. On the day of the amendment votes, Senators will sit around on the floor and in the Cloakrooms and in the ante-rooms of the Chamber and stare at each other all day, make offers and counteroffers. Then late in the day, usually in the early evening, we begin debate. We make brief 1-minute speeches, and we vote over and over and over into the wee hours of the morning.

One result is that the process is, by then, hidden, relegated to the darkness of nighttime. Most Americans are already asleep when we get down to business in the vote-arama. What they miss, though, is mostly political theater. In this production, the roles never change. I have been in the minority at times during my tenure in the Senate. I have been in the majority, as I am now. But the roles stay the same. The minority party has one job: to offer amendments—germane or not, pertinent or not—that put the majority in an uncomfortable position.

As a Member of the minority party, I have done that. The majority party has the job of defeating every amendment, if possible. It doesn't matter what the merit of the amendments are. The majority party often defeats each one. Why? Because otherwise, we would delay the important work of actually, finally, getting to passage of a budget reconciliation bill, which will come later.

The vote-arama hardly ever has any budgetary substance. The vote-arama is merely a messaging process. Every Member of the Senate, minority and majority, knows this. Americans at least deserve to hear this debate during the light of day. Both parties can achieve their goals without running this process into the wee hours of the morning, which is what we always do.

Over the last few weeks, I have talked with Members on both sides of the aisle, my Republican colleagues and our Democratic friends. I floated the idea of a unanimous consent agreement to conduct these votes during the light of day. I simply say, Mr. President, there is widespread support among the rank and file for getting this done during working hours.

So I would urge the leadership of both parties and all Members of both parties—because it takes unanimous consent—to adopt a unanimous consent agreement that avoids the political theater of a dead-of-night vote-arama. The American people deserve better. And I would like to think the U.S. Senate is better than the process we have come to practice.

I yield the floor.

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 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. 40, Matthew Whitaker, of Iowa, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

John Thune, Katie Boyd Britt, Bernie Moreno, Mike Rounds, Tom Cotton, Markwayne Mullin, John Barrasso, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Rick Scott of Florida, John Hoeven, Roger Marshall, Thom Tillis, Jim Justice, Tim Sheehy, James Lankford, Joni Ernst, John R. Curtis.

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 Matthew Whitaker, of Iowa, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS), and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) would have vote "yea" and the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) would have voted "yea".

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 156 Ex.]

YEAS—49

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

NAYS—42

Alsobrooks	Cantwell	Gillibrand
Baldwin	Cortez Masto	Hassan
Bennet	Duckworth	Heinrich
Blumenthal	Durbin	Hirono
Blunt Rochester	Fetterman	Kaine
Booker	Gallego	Kelly

Kim	Ossoff	Smith
King	Padilla	Van Hollen
Klobuchar	Reed	Warner
Lujan	Rosen	Warnock
Markey	Sanders	Warren
Merkley	Schatz	Welch
Murphy	Schiff	Whitehouse
Murray	Schumer	Wyden

NOT VOTING—9

Barrasso	Hickenlooper	Murkowski
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Peters
Coons	Lummis	Slotkin

(Mr. RICKETTS assumed the Chair.)
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARSHALL). On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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. 46.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Dean Sauer, of Missouri, to be Solicitor General of the United States.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 46, Dean Sauer, of Missouri, to be Solicitor General of the United States.

John Thune, Mike Crapo, Roger Marshall, Shelley Moore Capito, Tommy Tuberville, Jim Justice, James Lankford, John Barrasso, Markwayne Mullin, Tim Sheehy, Mike Rounds, Todd Young, Kevin Cramer, Ted Budd, Roger F. Wicker, Katie Boyd Britt, David McCormick.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.