United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE *119th* CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2025 *No. 70*

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O Lord most holy, we confess to You our unworthiness. Grant that we may every day crave those dispositions which shall make us worthy to be called Your children.

Lord, bless our Senators. Guide them so that in all getting, they will receive understanding. Whatever they lose, may they retain Your powerful providence, growing in grace and in a deeper knowledge of You.

Lord, give them a hunger to know Your sacred Word and a willingness to follow Your precepts. Consecrate with Your presence the road our lawmakers travel, and lead them to Your desired destination.

We pray in Your loving 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. BUDD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Iowa.

WORLD AUTISM MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, April is World Autism Month. This month is a time to recognize the millions of Americans living with autism.

Over the years, we have made progress in increasing awareness and enhancing resources for individuals living with autism. I have worked to pass the Kevin and Avonte's Law, which helps families locate missing loved ones living with autism, Alzheimer's, dementia, and other conditions that may cause them to wander.

The law is named in honor of two young boys with autism, Kevin Curtis Wills from my State of Iowa and Avonte Oquendo from New York, who tragically lost their lives after wandering from safety.

This law provides resources to train first responders and law enforcement, helping each to respond more effectively to these situations. It also provides State and local grants to support communication tools that assist families to quickly locating missing loved ones.

The purpose of this month is to increase the understanding of people living with autism. I am proud that Kevin and Avonte's Law is helping to do just that by enhancing the protection and safety of individuals living with autism.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING POPE FRANCIS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to mention Pope Francis, who died last Monday.

Since he became Pope in 2013, Pope Francis captured the world's attention with his simplicity. He had great compassion for the least among us, and he sought them out wherever he went.

In his final homily on Easter Sunday, he reminded us not to remain stationary, but to go out seeking Jesus everywhere and in everyone. And that is how he lived, going out into the world seeking Jesus and bringing the Gospel to those that he met.

I trust that he is now at home with his Father in Heaven.

My thoughts and prayers are with South Dakota Catholics and all those who are mourning this humble servant of God.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we are kicking off the week today with a vote on a former colleague of ours, David Perdue, to be Ambassador to China. We will be working through several other Ambassador nominations this week, including our Ambassador to our close friend and ally Great Britain.

I don't need to tell anybody that it is important to have these individuals in place. We are going to continue to confirm the President's Ambassadors as expeditiously as possible.

We are also going to continue to focus on filling out the rest of the President's administration. The President needs to have his team in place so that he can do the job he was elected to do. I intend to make sure that happens as quickly as possible.

We have already set a brisk pace on nominations, confirming more than 50 to date. We are going to have a lot more nominees coming out of committee. I want to make it very clear that we are going to process those nominees in a timely fashion. As I have

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

Printed on recycled paper.

said before, we can do this the easy way or the hard way. But one way or another, we are going to get it done. The President needs to have his team in place, and we have a lot of other work to do.

Speaking of some of that other work, before Easter, the House and the Senate took a major step forward on a permanent extension of tax relief for American families by passing a budget resolution that will allow us to proceed to a final bill. We have been working toward the text of this final bill for months, and drafting has only accelerated since passage of the budget resolution. I am looking forward to the House and the Senate taking up the final legislation.

Mr. President, there is a lot on the line here. The tax relief the Republicans passed in 2017, which puts more money in Americans' pockets, is set to expire at the end of this year. Without congressional action, in 2026, tax rates will increase, the child tax credit will be cut in half, and the standard deduction will be nearly halved. Americans making less than $400,000 a year would see a $2.6 trillion tax hike, and a typical family of four making $80,000 would be sending an additional $1,700 to Uncle Sam. Republicans do not intend to let that happen. Our final bill will not only extend the 2017 tax relief for hard-working Americans, it will make it permanent.

In addition to permanent tax relief, our final legislation will invest in our border, energy, and national security. All three have suffered in recent years under the Biden administration, and Republicans are committed to securing our border, unleashing America's abundant energy resources, and ensuring that our military has the resources it needs to deter and defeat any threat.

Finally, our legislation will also include substantial savings measures as we take a hard look at how we spend taxpayer dollars and work to get our country on a more sustainable fiscal path.

Work on drafting this legislation continues. As we consider nominations, measures to repeal burdensome Biden administration regulations, and other legislation on the floor, off the floor, we are getting ever closer to a final bill. It is going to be great.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD J. DURBIN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last week, our dear friend, the senior Senator from Illinois and the Senate Democratic whip, announced he will not seek reelection next year. I will have a lot more to say about DICK DURBIN—one of my close, close friends and someone I roomed with for close to two decades—before he departs, but for now, let me say just this: Senator DURBIN has left an indelible mark on the Senate, on our caucus, on Illinois, and on all of America. He has been a champion for justice and helped Senate Democrats confirm a record number of Federal judges last Congress. He has been a tireless advocate for Illinois families and people in need, and he has been a close and trusted member of my leadership team.

I know Senator DURBIN will spend every remaining minute of his term fighting for Illinois and America and fighting for justice. I look forward to fighting alongside him, as we always have together.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FIRST 100 DAYS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the first 100 days. Well, this week, President Trump marks 100 days as President. It has been 100 days of hell for American families, for our economy, and for our democracy. The start of Donald Trump's second term has been the worst start of any President's in modern times. He now has the lowest approvals any President has seen through his first 100 days since they started polling 80 years ago.

Tomorrow night, Senate Democrats will take to the floor to highlight the disaster of Donald Trump's first 100 days. We will expose his broken promises. We will expose his lies. We will expose the ways he is threatening democracy. So we will take to the floor and expose Donald Trump as a disastrous President in his first 100 days. We ask America to listen.

On the day he became President, Donald Trump promised a golden age for America. Today, that seems laughable. Instead of a golden age, what Americans have gotten is one of the most chaotic, corrupt, and harmful starts to a Presidency in modern history. Before our very eyes, the man who occupies the Oval Office is destroying the foundations of our democracy.

Federal law enforcement is arresting people with little due process, even going as far as arresting a judge in Wisconsin. At least four U.S. citizens—all of them children, two suffering from cancer—have been illegally deported. It is sickening. It is immoral. Arrest a judge to try to threaten and scare judges, which he has done before, saying he is about impeachment and other things? Freedom of expression and the rule of law are under attack. Government has been weaponized against the free press, against academic and judicial independence, against anyone who might disagree with Donald Trump.

Donald Trump doesn't want to be President of a democratic republic. He has said he wants to be a King or some kind of dictator. He said: Let me be a dictator for one day. But his actions show he wants to be one for much longer.

Meanwhile—meanwhile—billionaires like Elon Musk have been handed the keys to the Federal Government with little accountability.

Donald Trump claims he is a better President than George Washington, but he takes inspiration more from the likes of Viktor Orban or worse.

So 100 days into Donald Trump's second term, what exactly do Americans have to feel good about? Is it that Donald Trump's trade war has pushed our country to the brink of recession? Is it that his tariffs will cost families an average of $4,700 annually? Is it that CEOs and business owners are warning about rising costs, empty shelves, and an economic downturn? Maybe it is that the Dow Jones is on track for its worst April since 1932.

The truth is, Donald Trump's Presidency is no golden age; it is a disaster—the worst start to a new administration in modern times.

Americans are already fed up. Americans are already beginning to see that Donald Trump has betrayed them, that Donald Trump's campaign promises before he won election and his actions as President are almost in direct contradiction on issue after issue after issue. They are seeing that Donald Trump is not on their side; he is not on the side of working families. He is on the side of the billionaires, and we are all suffering for it.

What happened during recess corroborated all of this. For the last 2 weeks, my Democratic colleagues and I have seen Americans' frustrations firsthand. During the Easter recess, I traveled from one end of my State to the other. I visited six of seven congressional districts represented by Republicans in Congress in New York, and I spoke with small business owners, seniors, healthcare workers, veterans, local electeds, Republicans, Democrats, Independents—people from all walks of life. People are anxious about tariffs driving up their costs, about inflation eroding their paychecks, and are fearful for the future of Social Security.

Last week, I met with the owner of a women's clothing shop in Suffolk County, a well-known woman in Suffolk County, the head of a very successful business, Tandy's clothes, and a longtime fan of the President. She said she proudly voted for him—right when I was standing there—but now she said her small business wouldn't be able to absorb the shock of a prolonged trade war, that her costs were already up 30 percent. This is a Donald Trump voter who is angry at these tariffs.

No one I met over the last 2 weeks believed we were entering the golden