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Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of James O'Neill, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY CENTENNIAL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the Senate to congratulate the University of Iowa's Department of Ophthalmology. It is the 100th anniversary of this famed department.

For a century, this department has improved the lives of Iowans and made a significant national impact. This department and its members have consistently ranked among the top 10 of the U.S. News & World Report and Ophthalmology Times. Beyond its ranking, the department has been a world leader in treating serious inherited eye diseases and other vision problems.

In the 1990s, the department established the first center for macular degeneration in the United States, providing patient care and conducting research into more effective treatments.

The department has a rich history of innovative research and clinical trials to advance eye care. Today, its research includes making groundbreaking discoveries into genes responsible for common and rare retinal diseases. Researchers are also integrating artificial intelligence to diagnose and treat eye diseases.

Thanks to this dedication, the department has trained generations of doctors and specialists who now serve in hospitals and clinics across the country, expanding its impact far beyond Iowa City, IA.

I commend everyone who has contributed to this remarkable legacy—the present faculty, staff, students, and patients. And, of course, we need to always remember the pioneers in this area who have now passed on.

May the next century be just as impactful as the first century for the University of Iowa's Department of Ophthalmology.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, for many months now, we have been laying the groundwork for legislation to make tax relief for hard-working Americans permanent and invest in our security to build a stronger, safer, and more prosperous America, and we are very nearly there.

It has been an exciting week in the Senate, with the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Armed Services Committee releasing their portions of the text. The text will come from the Commerce Committee and the Banking Committee very soon.

I am grateful for the hard work of so many members and the committee chairs. This has been a deeply collaborative project from the get-go and the product of extensive work both within the Senate and between the Senate and the House. Between the good work of the House and the good work of the Senate, we are going to have an outstanding final bill.

The bill text released this week by the Environment and Public Works and Armed Services Committees covers

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

Author of life, who put into our hearts such deep desires that we cannot be at peace until we rest in You. Mercifully guide our lawmakers on the path of Your choosing.

Lord, may Your Holy Word be for them a lamp and a light in these cataclysmic times. Keep our Senators mindful of the importance of being people of integrity, striving to please You in all of their work. Give them a strong vision of a godly nation and world with a promising future. May their humility match Your willingness to help them. May their dependence on You liberate them from anxieties about the future.

And, Lord, be with the members of the illustrious spring page class of 2025 in all of their tomorrows.

We pray in Your great 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. MULLIN). 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.



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parts of the energy security and national defense sections of the final Senate bill.

As I said on the floor yesterday, energy is the critical resource. Without a reliable energy supply, our homes, schools, hospitals, businesses, factories—our entire country—will literally grind to a halt. That includes our national security and national defense capabilities as well. A secure, stable, abundant energy supply is essential for our national defense, it is essential for our economy, and it is essential for keeping energy affordable for hard-working Americans.

After 4 years of the Biden administration acting to constrain American energy production, our bill will help unleash American energy. It will suspend the Biden administration's natural gas tax, which threatened to both reduce supply and drive up energy prices for Americans. It will seek to end a key part of the Biden administration's electric vehicle mandate, which threatened to put a dangerous new burden on our already shaky electric grid. And more.

Meanwhile, the defense section of the bill released this week by Chairman WICKER will promote peace through strength by reversing the trend of underinvestment in our military. With China beginning to outpace the United States in key defense capabilities and manufacturing, it is especially critical that we act now to prevent the United States from falling behind on the national security front.

The defense title, while no substitute for robust yearly funding, will be a substantial step forward toward rebuilding our military to ensure that our service-members are equipped to deter or defeat any threat.

Our bill will provide \$29 billion for shipbuilding to build 13 new battle force ships, rapidly grow a fleet of unmanned vessels, and expand our maritime industrial base.

It will provide \$25 billion for the President's Golden Dome to defend the homeland from missiles, drones, and hypersonics, including accelerating capabilities for the Space Force and modernizing existing U.S. missile defense sensors and sites like those we have in Alaska.

Our bill will provide \$23 billion to expand advanced manufacturing capacity, restock critical munitions, and rebuild U.S. supply chains.

It will provide \$16 billion to develop and quickly field low-cost and next-generation weapons to arm our troops—weapons like drones, counter-drone capabilities, cheap munitions, AI capabilities, and a whole lot more, including expanding our Air Force fighter fleet and rebuilding our Pacific infrastructure.

Our Nation will be safer and stronger because of the bill. I am grateful to Chairman WICKER, Chairman CAPITO, and all the Members both on and off of these committees who have invested so much time to produce this energy and defense language.

It is exciting to see so many months of work coming to fruition. I look forward to the release of bill text coming from the Banking Committee and the Commerce Committee in the very near future and consideration of this bill on the floor in the coming weeks.

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.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, let me begin this morning with a sobering headline from the New York Times. Times headline: "Millions Would Lose Their Obamacare Coverage Under Trump's Bill." That is exactly what Democrats have been warning about for weeks.

What Republicans call their Big Beautiful Bill is really repeal and replace by another name. It is really repeal and replace by another name. It is a big beautiful betrayal, not a big beautiful bill.

Yesterday, we learned that the devastation potentially has only worsened. The nonpartisan CBO has now grown the number of impacted Americans to 16 million. Sixteen million will lose their Medicaid and ACA coverage.

So the more you look at this bill, things keep getting worse, because CBO now says that not 13.7 million would lose coverage but 16 million. The number of impacted people grows the more you look at this bill.

Things keep getting even worse. We learned yesterday the news that Republicans may want to even go after Medicare. Medicare is on the chopping block. That is right—at yesterday's lunch, Republicans raised the possibility of Medicare cuts to pay for their billionaire tax cuts.

The junior Senator from North Dakota reportedly said:

Why don't we go after that? I think we should.

For Republicans to even suggest Medicare be cut to bankroll billionaire tax breaks is frightening and revolting.

There is more. The junior Senator from Louisiana said:

I'm not worried about people losing their healthcare.

Do you know what happens when people lose their healthcare, when they can't afford it? People die. But what do Republicans have to say about that? Well, the junior Senator from Iowa said this:

Well, we're all going to die.

That quote tells you everything you need to know about this plan—callous, clueless, careless. That is right—this plan is callous, clueless, and careless. But that is the Republican Party for

you these days. They don't get it or, more likely, they don't care—just so long as billionaires can pay less in taxes.

Republicans should forget calling this gargoyle of a bill their Big Beautiful Bill. They might as well call it the We're all Going to Die Act after what the Senator from Iowa said. At least that name is more honest, the We're All Going to Die Act.

Donald Trump may claim this bill won't cut anyone from coverage, but he is lying. Sixteen million people will lose coverage, and 11 million people will lose affordable food. Costs will spike, hospitals will close, and people will die. And why? For a tax break for billionaires.

Now, let me finish with this on a separate note. In order to make the ultrarich even richer, their bill, according to CBO, would add over \$2.4 trillion to the debt. Even Elon Musk calls this thing an "abomination"—his word.

As the saying goes, a broken clock is right twice a day. The Republicans pride themselves as the supposed party of fiscal responsibility, but this bill they have belongs on the Mount Rushmore of fiscally irresponsible bills.

So I close with a warning to Republicans in the Senate: If you proceed with this "Big Ugly Bill," this big betrayal of the American people, it won't be Donald Trump's soothing words that will be enacted in your States but, rather, deep and devastating cuts, millions of job losses. You will rip healthcare from millions, you will explode the debt, and you will shower billionaires with tax breaks. That is what you will be doing no matter what Donald Trump tells you on the telephone, I say to our Republican Senate colleagues. Tread carefully. Tread carefully.

JUDICIAL POWER

We all know that Donald Trump sees himself as a King more than he does a President. He said it himself. Well, the Republicans' so-called Big Beautiful Bill will effectively place a crown on Donald Trump's head.

Buried deep in the Republicans' bill is a nasty provision that would restrict the power of judges to hold government officials in contempt for violating court orders. The goal of this provision is very obvious: Republicans want to codify Donald Trump's attacks on our judiciary into law.

When Senate Republicans include this lawless provision in their bill, Democrats will use every procedural hurdle in existence to kill it, including the Byrd bath process, because this type of draconian provision is a better fit for a dictatorship than for a democracy.

Republicans want to defang the power of the courts. They want to make it easier, in effect, for the Trump administration to defy court rulings. If judges can't hold intransigent public officials in contempt, the judges' rulings are basically meaningless. Why