



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2025

No. 104

Senate

The Senate met at 11:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TIM SHEEHY, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Pastor Randy Phillips, lead pastor of Life Family Austin, from Austin, TX.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

All mighty God, we humbly come before You, recognizing that all authority comes from Your hand. We thank You for this Chamber and for the leaders You have raised up to serve this Nation.

Grant to the Members of this Senate wisdom beyond their own. Let truth guide their decisions and justice be their aim. May their debates be marked with dignity and their hearts governed by compassion, and their service driven by the desire for the common good. Help them to seek unity where there is division, courage where there is fear, and clarity where there is confusion. Let integrity be their compass and humility their constant companion.

Bless their families and keep them safe. Give their staff endurance, and let their conscience be a sign with assurance that their labor is not in vain.

Let a spiritual awakening happen in this country. Let this government be a reflection of Your mercy, justice, and care for all people, especially the weak, the voiceless, and the forgotten.

We pray this not only for our glory, but that Your will would be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

In the mighty Name of Jesus, we pray. 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 17, 2025.

To the Senate:

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

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SHEEHY 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Olivia Trusty, of Maryland,

to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2025.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

MINNESOTA LAWMAKERS SHOOTING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, like all Americans, I was horrified to hear about this weekend's shootings of two State lawmakers in Minnesota and their spouses. Melissa Hortman, a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives, and her husband Mark were murdered on Saturday. And John Hoffman, a member of the State Senate, and his wife Yvette were seriously wounded.

I am profoundly grateful to law enforcement that the alleged shooter is now in custody, and I look forward to seeing him prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

There is no place for this kind of violence in our country. None. My prayers this morning are with the Hortmans' family and loved ones and for the speedy recovery of John and Yvette Hoffman.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, for far too long, the mullahs in Iran have publicly aspired to wipe Israel off the face of the map. And for decades, they have fomented a campaign of terror throughout the Middle East, threatening Israel and innocents everywhere and destabilizing the entire region.

It was Hamas who killed more than 1,000 Israelis on October 7, 2023. But it was Iran who made that attack possible through years of funding, training, and weaponry provided to this terrorist organization.

In the early hours of Friday morning, Israel struck back, attacking a number of sites in Iran, including sites associated with Iran's nuclear program. I spoke with the Israeli Ambassador on Friday and assured him of my prayers for Israel's safety during this time and my hope that their operations—and

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S3407

any to come—will succeed in eliminating the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran and, ultimately, help bring peace to a region that has for far too long been at war.

While the U.S. military is not involved in offensive operations against Iran, U.S. forces on land, at sea, and in the air have helped defend Israel from indiscriminate missile attacks launched by Iran.

President Trump and our country remain steadfast in our defense of Israel and committed to working towards peace in the Middle East and, first and foremost, for the safety of American personnel stationed in the region.

And should Iran have any designs on Americans, I urge the mullahs to think long and hard about the consequences.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION—MEDICAID PROVISION

Well, Mr. President, Democrats continue to melt down over the reconciliation bill that Republicans are getting ready to consider, and their statements continue to be heavy on the hysteria and short on facts, and nowhere is this more true than on the subject of the bill's Medicaid provisions. To hear Democrats talk, you would think Republicans were getting ready to rip Medicaid from the hands of needy children and pregnant women, and nothing—nothing—could be further from the truth.

Today, I would like to take a few minutes to set the record straight and highlight the facts on Republicans' efforts to root out waste, fraud, and abuse from Medicaid and ensure the focus of this program is on the people it was designed to help.

Like other Federal entitlement programs, Medicaid is not on the soundest footing. Between ObamaCare's expansion of Medicaid to able-bodied adults at or about 138 percent of the Federal poverty line and the Biden administration's rules and waivers, Democrats have been growing Medicaid beyond its original scope for quite a while now. And Federal Medicaid spending has soared. Between 2019 and 2023, Medicaid spending grew by more than 50 percent, and that kind of unsustainable growth has consequences, not just for taxpayers who are on the hook for huge, new amounts of money but for the people most in need who have to compete with a lot of new individuals for available resources.

Republicans are committed to preserving and strengthening Medicaid for the people Medicaid was intended to serve, like vulnerable children, pregnant moms, and elderly Americans, and to that end, we are making some commonsense reforms to Medicaid to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse and protect the program for the people who need it the most. That starts with removing people who should not be on the rolls. That means illegal immigrants and other noncitizens, able-bodied adults who can work but refuse to work, and individuals who don't qualify for the program.

We are going to rein in Federal spending to States that choose to di-

rect scarce State dollars to illegal immigrants. We will be instituting basic, commonsense work requirements for able-bodied, working-aged adults who should not be relying on taxpayers for their healthcare unless they are doing their best to find and maintain a job or contribute to their communities, and we will be overturning Biden-era regulations that made it difficult to remove individuals who do not qualify for the program. Are Democrats seriously going to tell us they have a problem with that? Removing these individuals is just basic, good governance. It is fulfilling our barest obligation to ensure that Medicaid is working well for its intended recipients.

I would note that, while Democrat Senators may be melting down over these basic good-governance requirements, some of their States are actually taking similar measures. No less a Democrat State than California is looking to freeze the enrollment of illegal immigrants in its Medicaid Program and charge premiums for illegal immigrants already enrolled. Why? Because the State can no longer afford to cover these individuals and maintain its other obligations. Yet the Democrat Senators here in Washington are melting down because Republicans are daring to focus limited Medicaid dollars on American citizens and those most in need.

In addition to ensuring that the individuals on Medicaid rolls are the ones who should be there, Republicans are making several other commonsense reforms.

Notably, we are taking aim at the rampant abuse of the provider tax loophole. Use of this loophole, which sees States inflate Medicaid service prices in order to garner a larger reimbursement from the Federal Government, was already a problem even before the Biden administration. In fact, President Obama, released multiple budgets featuring measures to rein in abuse of the provider tax, but thanks to waivers the Biden administration issued to California and other blue States last year allowing them to further exploit this loophole, taxpayers are now on the hook for tens of billions of dollars in new spending. Neither the Medicaid Program nor taxpayers can afford that burden, and so we are going to rein things in.

Our bill makes a handful of other modest reforms to restrain waste, fraud, and abuse, but those I just mentioned are the big ones: commonsense reforms to protect and strengthen Medicaid for those who need it the most.

And I would love to know which of these reforms my colleagues object to. We have heard a lot of bluster from Democrats about how this bill will cost enrollment and cost lives, but we have heard very little from them on the actual measures included in the bill.

So I would like to ask them:

Do they believe the Federal Government should still be giving States an enhanced Medicaid match if they cover illegal immigrants?

Do they think individuals who don't qualify for Medicaid should remain on the rolls?

Are they against work requirements for able-bodied, working-aged adults?

Do they think there should be any limits on States' exploiting the provider tax loophole?

Exactly which of our commonsense reforms do Democrats disagree with?

Democrats used to support rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicaid and getting Americans back to work. So what has changed?

While I can't guarantee the source of Democrats' hysteria, I suspect one or more of the following things is going on here:

One, Democrats are still smarting from their election loss last November and are desperate to regain ground with voters, and I suspect that Democrats think that, if they can successfully—even if inaccurately—paint Republicans as targeting vulnerable Americans, they might be able to claw back some electoral support.

Two, I think Democrats tend to reflexively oppose anything supported by President Trump no matter how sensible that policy might be.

And, three, I think that, with Democrats' increasing embrace of the far left, there are Democrats out there who really do believe that government programs can continually expand without consequences and that there is no limit to the amount of taxpayer dollars available for them to play with.

Still, it is incredible that we can't agree on these commonsense reforms, but we are going to move full speed ahead in protecting and preserving Medicaid for the Americans this program was intended to serve.

I want to thank Chairman CRAPO and members of the Finance Committee for their work on the Medicaid provisions of our bill, and I look forward to taking up these provisions in the very near future as part of our final legislation.

WAIVING QUORUM CALLS

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum calls with respect to Executive Calendar Nos. 98 and 99, Olivia Trusty.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

SENATE SAFETY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, about safety and the Capitol and our meeting today that Senator THUNE and I called.

First, I would like to say that the Capitol Police have always been the silent heroes behind the scenes, keeping Members safe. That is no secret. The country saw that for themselves on January 6 and in the footage after, and they are doing a good job. We had a very good meeting where Members