

him to the joint resolution S.J. Res. 59, to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran that have not been authorized by Congress; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations; as follows:

On page 2, between lines 14 and 15, insert the following:

(5) Members of the United States Armed Forces and intelligence community, and all those involved in the planning and successful execution of Operation Midnight Hammer on June 21, 2025, including President Donald J. Trump, should be commended for their efforts in a successful mission.

On page 2, line 15, strike “(5)” and insert “(6)”.

On page 2, line 21, strike “(6)” and insert “(7)”.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have four requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

##### COMMITTEES ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to consider nominations in open session.

##### COMMITTEES ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

##### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

##### SUBCOMMITTEE ON DIGITAL ASSETS

The Subcommittee on Digital Assets of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing in open session.

#### PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following interns in my office be granted floor privileges until June 25, 2025: Ava O'Neal and Alan Lam.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following summer associates in my office be granted floor privileges until June 25, 2025: Parker Zito, Cole Carmouche, Camille Morrison, and Curtis Laurent.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to grant floor privileges to my interns on their shadow

days as follows: Vincent Sheoships for June 24, 2025; and Emma Singleton for July 24, 2025.

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

#### RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following resolutions, which are at the desk: S. Res. 298, S. Res. 299, and S. Res. 300.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

#### ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2025

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stands in recess until 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 25; that following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of Calendar No. 140, Paul Dabbar, and the Senate vote on confirmation at 4:15 p.m.; and that following disposition of the Dabbar nomination, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Calendar No. 93, Kenneth Kies; and if cloture is invoked on the Kies nomination, the Senate vote on confirmation at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, on Thursday June 26; finally, if any nominations are confirmed during Wednesday's session of the Senate, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand in recess under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator MERKLEY.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

#### ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to talk about debt, and more precisely, how the Republican party has been driving massive increases in debt over the last couple decades, both in two ways. The first way is by particular legislative acts, primarily tax bills that have created enormous debt; and the second is by steadily eroding the framework for budgeting and controlling our difference between our revenues and our expenditures that was created in 1974.

If we want to think about the big factors that have been driving up deficits and, therefore, debt, well, the big factors in recent history—war in Afghanistan, massive; war in Iraq, massive; the Bush tax cuts of 2001 and 2003; the Trump tax cuts of 2017—these were huge factors in vastly reducing revenue, primarily by giving enormous giveaways to the very richest Americans.

Well, that is not all the Republican party has been up to in terms of driving massive increases in deficit and debt. They have also been hard at work destroying the infrastructure that all hundred Senators agreed to back in 1974 to get a handle on debt.

Now let's return to the deficits of 1971, 1972, 1973. Those deficits were, on average, \$20 billion—\$20 billion compared to \$2 trillion now. And yet that \$20 billion in deficit, average deficit, over those 3 years was enough to have the Members of the Senate and the Members of the House say: We have to get this under control. If we don't get this under control, we are going to undermine the ability of our work to provide a good foundation for families to thrive in the future through good, strong programs for housing and healthcare and education, good strong programs to create good-paying jobs, and good programs for the security of the United States of America. We are going to undermine all of that—the future for the next generation—if we run up these deficits.

So they created that 1974 act. That 1974 act had a couple of different visions. One was a regular budgeting process. That regular budgeting process was laid out—this is the way that you can, at the front end of each fiscal year or preparing for each fiscal year, you can lay out a vision for how much you are going to spend and how much revenue you are going to create. Those expenditures will be laid out committee by committee, and then we will hold people to it, and we can basically do what a family does—have control over our income and our outgo, our revenue and our expenditures, and therefore control over deficits. That was the vision.

That bill also created something completely separate from that, and that was called reconciliation. Reconciliation is a special fast-track, filibuster-free path—for one reason it was created; all 100 Senators agreed—to reduce the deficit.

You can think of Robert Byrd, who was the fiercest defender of the filibuster—that is the 60 votes required to close debate. Yet even he said: Yes, I am fine setting aside that power that gives strength and leverage to the minority for the purpose of reducing the deficit—that one purpose. That was in 1974.

Now let's fast-forward to 1996, 22 years later. You have a Republican House and a Republican Senate. It is the back end of the Gingrich revolution, the election that occurred in 1994 and the people serving from 1995 to 1997. There were several interesting things that happened in that year, in 1996. One was that Congress said: Let's give the President a line-item veto so that programs can be struck down by the President of the United States.

The Supreme Court said: Not so fast. The Constitution is very clear. It gives the power of the purse to Congress, not to the President of the United States. If you want to give the power to decide what is spent to the President, well then you have to do a constitutional amendment.

Well, that was the end of the line-item veto.

Then the next thing that was turned to was, let's do a balanced budget amendment. Well, a balanced budget amendment requires two-thirds of each Chamber of those duly elected to say yes to the bill, and then it has to be sent out as a constitutional amendment to be confirmed by two-thirds of the States. That is a big undertaking.

In the Senate, it was 1 vote short of having the 67 votes it needed to be passed. Well, that was a very frustrating situation to be in, one vote short. Then the leaders of the House and Senate—the Republican leaders of the House and Senate said: Well, you know, we have this other objective. We want to do a tax bill that will give vast sums of the U.S. Treasury to the very richest Americans, and we know Democrats won't stand for that, so we can't do it through regular order. Let's take that special reconciliation process created in 1974 only for deficit reduction and let's repurpose it to do deficit increases.

But there is a problem there. The whole history was quite clear. You had 22 years of precedent to back up the playing language. So what has to be done? Well, the leader of the Senate, Robert Dole, brought in a new Parliamentarian, Robert Dove, who then created a ruling saying that despite the bill—what it says—and despite the 22 years of precedence, this fast-track can be used to do tax breaks and increase the deficit.

Well, that was a core pillar of the 1974 bill—a fast track only for deficit reduction, a filibuster-free path only for deficit reduction. My Republican colleagues tore it down. They didn't use it immediately because President Clinton, a Democrat, was in the Oval Office. As it turned out, a deal was worked out on other issues, so they

didn't do that tax bill until Bush came in 2001. Then they used that power created in 1996.

The reason I am going through this is to convey that my colleagues who have talked about fiscal responsibility have been misleading America because while they talk about fiscal responsibility in practice, they have been running up massive deficits and debt for the people of this country—through the war in Afghanistan, through the war in Iraq, through the 2001 tax bill that Bush put forward, through his 2003 tax bill, through the Trump 2017 tax bill—and they have been destroying the discipline for the special reconciliation process that was designed only for deficit reduction.

But that nuclear event of 1996 in which black became white and white became black, the total betrayal of those Senators who voted—100 of them—for a special filibuster-free process only for deficit reduction—the total betrayal of them. But two things survived. One was that there would be no ability to use reconciliation for deficit creation—increases outside of the 10-year window. The third was continuing to use honest numbers—the Joint Committee on Taxation for revenue and the Congressional Budget Office for expenditures.

In fact, CBO was created by that 1974 bill so nonpartisan entities would give us honest numbers so we would quit lying to ourselves every time there was a bill about what it cost, quit lying to ourselves about what a tax provision change would mean. We would be honest with ourselves.

You know, it is like a family doing their budget. If they say “Well, we are only going to go out to dinner once a month to save money,” but the reality is that they know they are going to go out to dinner 10 times a month, they are just deceiving themselves. They are putting something in their budget that isn't real.

The idea was integrity—integrity with ourselves, integrity with the American people.

But this brings us to this moment right now on the reconciliation bill because those two pillars of fiscal responsibility that survived the 1996 nuclear action by my Republican colleagues, the two pillars that survived—one, no increase in deficits after 10 years and, second, using honest numbers—those are under complete assault right now, and it is through something that is called by my Republican colleagues a current policy baseline.

Let me explain what this means. Normally, you have a bill, and there is a provision in the bill, and that provision says “Do this,” and it goes to the Joint Committee on Taxation.

They say: It is a revenue measure. Here is how much money that it will raise as compared to not having that provision in the bill.

Not having that provision in the bill is current law. Putting the provision in the bill is the vision that is being

costed out for honest decision making. So here is a provision. How much will it cost? Here is a change in a program. How much will that cost? That is the normal process. That is the normal process of integrity in any budgeting process. We are going to make a change in what we are doing. How much will it cost?

But along comes the decision by my colleague—whom I work with so well on so many things, but on this, I profoundly disagree with him, the chair of the Budget Committee—and he says: Let's stop doing that process where there is a provision in the bill that changes the law and therefore we will estimate how much it costs. Instead, he says, we will simply pretend that a provision in the bill that ended a tax break and now the provision continues that tax break and therefore it costs money—we will pretend that, all along, we knew that it would go on forever, and therefore it costs nothing.

Well, this is the type of smoke and mirrors that the entire 1974 act was designed to stop. Let's stop pretending. Let's stop trying to camouflage what things cost when we make decisions, when we pass laws here. Let's be honest with ourselves. Let's be honest with the American people.

This strategy—how is this to be accomplished? Well, my colleague the chair of the Budget Committee looks to a provision—section 312—in the law.

Let's talk about Section 312. Section 312 is a provision not in Section 313, which is for reconciliation. Section 312 is completely separate, and it has never been used in reconciliation. It was designed to resolve small technical changes.

Let's look at the record of 312. Again, this provision says the chair—actually, it says the Budget Committee, not the chair—the Budget Committee has authority to resolve some technical problems that occur in the process of normal budget bills—not reconciliation; normal budget bills.

Here are the times it has been used, this provision from 312. It has always been used in a bipartisan way, always with consultation, support from Democrats and Republicans, to resolve a technical issue.

For the first time, my colleague the chair of the Budget Committee is saying: We will use it in a partisan fashion where there is no agreement worked out on how to solve a technical issue. We are going to do something that is pure partisan because we want to hide the cost of this reconciliation bill.

A second point is that section 312 has never been used in a broad fashion. It has always been about a narrow provision—again, not in a reconciliation bill. It has been used routinely to enforce spending allocations by committee. It has been used for the Crime Victims Fund. It has been used for the Power Marketing Administration. It has been used to prevent double counting of a dairy program. It made some

adjustments to the Fiscal Responsibility Act. It was always done in a bipartisan way on a very narrow issue.

Then there is now, where it is no longer a narrow issue; it is about the entire cost of the bill. Section 312 has been used to resolve ambiguities—again, each and every time, resolve an ambiguity in a bipartisan way on a narrow issue—except now, it is not about resolving ambiguity; it is about lying to the American people about what the bill costs.

Has it ever been used in reconciliation before? No, because it is not part of the two sections that control the reconciliation process—310 and 313. It is not part of that at all. It has never been used in reconciliation, not once, not ever, because it is not part of the law that guides reconciliation.

Finally, I want to emphasize that because it has been about narrow issues, the amount of money involved has been related to those more narrow provisions. Yes, they sound large when they are in the millions—even once, on the adjustments to the Fiscal Responsibility Act, about \$3 billion, \$2.8 billion—but now we are talking not about a couple of billions, we are talking about more than \$3 trillion. Wow, that is something.

In every possible way, 312 power giving the Budget Committee the ability to resolve small technical issues outside of reconciliation doesn't fit with using it now to create a magical baseline to, well, obfuscate what things cost.

Now, the cost of this bill, the provisions in this bill, as compared to not having the provisions in the bill, is a cost of about \$3 trillion over 10 years. I think the most recent estimate is \$32 trillionish—\$37 trillion, and that is over 30 years.

Here, we have the effort to tell the world that no, no, no, don't worry. It is only a couple hundred billion, the cost.

I was struck this morning by the estimate that came from the Joint Committee on Taxation which laid out that the revenue portion debt of this bill will now reduce revenue over a 10-year period by over \$4 trillion while my colleagues are telling the world: No. No. It will only reduce it by less than \$1 trillion.

Let's stop that type of destruction of the budgeting process. It is not just—not just—that we are lying to ourselves and to the American people about the cost of this bill, we are also destroying that boundary that survived in 1996, that said there will be no deficits in any single title, in any single year

after the budget window. The budget window is a 10-year period.

This morning, I read back through section 313. And right in section 313, it lays it out again: No deficit creation in any title, in any year after the budget window.

So I am coming to the floor to say to my colleagues: Do not corrupt the very instruments we created in a bipartisan fashion to control the deficit. Do not use a fake baseline to lie to the American public about the cost of the provisions in this bill. Do not breach the boundary in which you are now going to create deficits beyond a 10-year period.

The reason we had that estimate of \$37 trillion over 30 years is because now the measures in the bill continue on that create deficits as far as the eye can see, and CBO said we could only estimate it out 30 years. So that is the number: roughly, \$3 trillion over 10 years but \$37 trillion over 30 years.

CBO also told us, the Congressional Budget Office—that nonpartisan keeper of integrity in budget discussions—if our estimate of the interest rate is 1 percent off, it will cost about another \$24 trillion on top of this. So what are we talking about then? We are talking about over \$60 trillion over 30 years.

How does that compare to what we have now? Well, we are actually in the midthirties right now in terms of our Federal debt. We are now over 100 percent of debt to GDP. I had thought, as I got into this discussion, that we were at the 100 percent mark and that our amount of national debt had reached the amount of our gross domestic product. But when I rechecked it, no, we are over it. We are beyond it.

How are we going to be responsible architects of our national journey if we are going to keep pretending that things don't cost in the bills that we pass, if we don't use honest numbers, if we destroy the framework created in 1974 that said no deficits after 10 years? That is not the right course.

We, the Democratic side of the aisle, will keep raising this issue because this bill should never go through this body on a false premise, on a fake cost estimate.

Why is that so important in reconciliation? Because the budget resolution lays out how much revenue change can be tolerated and how much spending can be done by the various committees. So if you don't have honest numbers, you have a completely phony process.

So let's come together and rebuild the bipartisan consensus that we are

going to have a stronger framework, a stronger budgeting framework for the national enterprise.

As we build up this massive additional part of debt through wars and through tax bills that deliver the national Treasury to the richest Americans, as we do that, we are undermining the future of our country.

Please, to my Republican colleagues, do not come to this floor and talk about fiscal responsibility. If you can't walk the walk, don't talk the talk. It is that important. It is that important.

I am going to conclude by noting that even without this breaching of the boundaries regarding deficits that run as far as I can see, even without the process of lying to ourselves about what this would cost, even without that, this is a terrible bill.

This bill is families lose, and billion-aires win, as simple as that: cutting nutrition programs, which means an estimated 4 million children will go hungry; tax breaks for the richest Americans, tax breaks for billionaires; and 16 million people losing healthcare. Why? To fund tax breaks for billionaires. That is just wrong.

There is a better plan. It should be a bipartisan plan, where we seek to have families thrive and billionaires pay their fair share. That is a vision we should all be able to get behind.

So let's take this terrible bill, this bill that creates a debt as far as the eye can see, this bill that creates an estimated \$37 trillion in additional debt or even more than \$60 trillion, if the interest rate predictions are off by 1 percent over 30 years—let's take this bill, and let's put a stake through its heart and start over and instead have that vision of a bill crafted along the lines of families thrive and billionaires pay their fair share.

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RECESS UNTIL 3:30 P.M.  
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands in recess until 3:30 p.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:08 p.m., recessed until Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

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#### CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate June 24, 2025:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DANIEL ZIMMERMAN, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.