



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025

No. 111

Senate

(Legislative day of Tuesday, June 24, 2025)

The Senate met at 3 p.m., on the expiration of the recess, 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.

Gracious, loving God, let Your light, Your wisdom, Your righteousness, and Your love fill our minds and hearts today.

Lord, You have promised Your wisdom for all who need it. Today, more than ever, Your lawmakers need Your wisdom. Illuminate their minds with more than human insight. Close the doors they should not walk through as you lead them through the path you have chosen.

Lord, remind them that as human beings, we sometimes make mistakes. Give our Senators, this day, the grace to listen to those with whom they disagree. Bring from the crucible of conflicting views truth and justice that will bless our Nation and world.

We pray in Your merciful 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. BANKS). 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the Senate to bring up the issue of how the Congress—on a piece of legislation that I am part of—and how President Trump can help the economy through helping small business.

President Biden issued an Executive order in February of 2022. That Executive order required what is called the project labor agreements, or PLAs, on Federal projects over \$35 million. Just to be clear, I meant that Executive order requires project labor agreements.

I opposed this Executive order at that time, and I joined a letter with my colleagues, telling President Biden what a bad idea that was. I believe the Trump administration should deregulate this Biden Executive order.

Project labor agreements are a sort of backdoor way to give unionized contractors a leg up on Federal contracts in competition with nonunion contractors. Plus, there is too much redtape for a business to comply.

Public project labor agreements effectively make it impossible for a contractor to compete for Federal contracts if its workforce isn't unionized. So it is kind of like a union shop outlawed by the Taft-Hartley Act in right-to-work States. About 27 States have right-to-work laws.

Well, most of the workforce in Iowa isn't unionized. This Executive order seems to assume that every workforce should be unionized, and Iowa happens to be a right-to-work State.

It happens that I support the right of workers to organize. I joined a union

from 1962 to 1971. I was a member of the International Association of Machinists. I am proud of my membership in that union and the years I spent on the assembly line at Waterloo Register in Cedar Falls, IA. It happens that my job was putting screw holes in furnace registers. However, I also support the right of workers not to join a union.

Iowa has many companies, small and large, including many family-run enterprises, where they care deeply about their employees. So it is natural that these companies' employees don't feel a need to unionize.

The Federal Government should not tip the scales against these great but small companies and their workers. Federal contracts should be awarded through a fair and competitive bidding process that allows all qualified contractors to compete on a level playing field based on merit, based on experience, quality, and the safety of their workforce.

Project labor agreement mandates prevent many small businesses from competing for Federal projects and may even lead to increased costs for taxpayers.

I told you I was going to talk about legislation that would do the same thing I asked President Biden to do. I am the cosponsor of a bill called the Fair and Open Competition Act prohibiting Federal Agencies from mandating project labor agreements or using PLA preferences on Federal construction contracts.

I am also joining Senator BRITT and a number of my colleagues in urging President Trump to revoke the ill-conceived Biden Executive order mandating project labor agreements on Federal projects. The Biden Executive order should be at the top of the list of a "deregulation" administration, which this Trump administration is and it proudly speaks so.

I yield the floor.

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S3579

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. 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.

ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last November, the American people elected President Trump and a Republican Congress with a clear mandate, and since taking control in Washington this year, we have been working to deliver on our promise of a safer, stronger, and more prosperous America.

Now we have the opportunity to pass a bill that advances all of these priorities and sets our country up for better days ahead. We have worked hard on this, and now it is time to deliver.

The centerpiece of our bill is permanent tax relief for the American people. The 2017 Republican-led tax cuts lowered rates for every income bracket. We doubled the child tax credit and nearly doubled the standard deduction. But those policies will expire at the end of the year without action from Congress, which means a typical family would be hit with a \$1,700 tax hike next year. In my State of South Dakota, South Dakotans would see their taxes go up on average \$2,500. We are determined not to let that happen—not next year, not ever. Our bill makes the 2017 lower tax rates permanent. It raises the child tax credit to \$2,200 per child and links it to inflation permanently, and it maintains the higher standard deduction that 90 percent of taxpayers use.

And we are not stopping there. Seniors will have an even higher standard deduction. Millions of tipped workers will benefit from no tax on tips, and millions of hourly workers will be able to keep more of their overtime pay with no tax on overtime.

Passing this bill means smaller tax bills and bigger paychecks for the American people—permanently.

It will also help get our economy firing on all cylinders again. In 2017, we boosted our economy by lifting the tax burden on American businesses. We lowered tax rates for the owners of small and medium-sized businesses, farms, and ranches. We made it easier for them to recover the cost of investing in their businesses, which, in turn, freed up cash for them to invest in their operations and their workers.

These and other major reforms helped kick-start our economy, and now we have the opportunity to make all of the pro-growth reforms from 2017 permanent and go even further.

Our bill makes the small business deduction permanent. Full expensing for new equipment and domestic R&D will be permanent. Full expensing for new factories and factory improvements will generate growth and job creation and encourage more goods to be made in America.

A higher death tax threshold that is linked to inflation will spare countless family farms, ranches, and small businesses from a potentially devastating tax and the cost of burdensome planning, and the next generation will be able to access new investment accounts when they reach adulthood to use for education, to start a business, to buy their first home—essentially, to get a running start on the American dream. All of this means more money in Americans' pockets, more opportunity, and greater prosperity.

A bill to make America stronger and more prosperous would be incomplete if it didn't make America's farmers and ranchers stronger. Agriculture producers will, of course, benefit from permanent tax relief, but this bill also directly addresses the challenges producers have faced these past few years. It increases reference prices for every covered commodity; it enhances crop insurance coverage and affordability, including for farmers just starting out; and it supports risk management, disaster assistance, and conservation programs that producers depend on.

The last few years have been some of the toughest in recent memory for American agriculture, and I am proud that this bill addresses these issues head-on. I can assure America's farmers and ranchers that their priorities will continue to be a priority here in Washington.

This bill is also about a stronger America, and it makes a generational investment in our national security—all of our national security. That starts with securing our borders. The Trump administration has already done incredible work in stemming the flow of illegal immigrants and deporting criminals who had taken up residence in our country, but there is more work to be done, and law enforcement needs more resources to do it. Our bill provides those resources: the technology and manpower to stop illegal immigrants and illegal drugs at the border; an increased capacity to deport dangerous individuals from our country; and, yes, finally finishing the wall. As I said, the administration has made great progress already, and I am eager to get these resources into the hands of the men and women on the frontlines to solidify those gains.

We are also making a major investment in strengthening our military. Recent events have only reinforced the imperative of military readiness. But in a number of instances, we have let our military strength slip, and adversaries like China have begun to outpace us in key capabilities. Our bill will help reverse that trend. It invests in shipbuilding, supports a new Golden

Dome for missile defense, revitalizes the defense manufacturing capacity in America, and invests in the warfighting technologies of tomorrow. With this bill, we can help ensure that our men and women in uniform have what they need to deter and defeat any threat.

We are safeguarding our national security from every angle, which means addressing energy security. Energy security might not get the same attention as border security or national defense, but it is a big part of keeping America strong and secure. Relying on energy from hostile nations or unstable parts of the world can be a dangerous proposition, and maintaining energy independence is key to keeping a country secure.

We are fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources in this country, and our bill makes sure that the American people benefit from those resources by freeing them up for responsible domestic production for a secure, stable, and affordable supply of energy.

There is a lot more I could say about this bill, but before I close, I just want to talk about how this bill delivers on Republicans' promise to rein in the size of government. It delivers savings to the American people by reining in waste, fraud, and abuse in Federal programs. It includes the largest spending cut in American history as well as commonsense, good-government reforms that haven't been attempted in Washington, DC, in decades. With more revenue—revenue we get by growing the economy, not by raising taxes—this bill will actually help reduce the deficit by as much as \$6 trillion.

This bill delivers on the mandate the American people gave Republicans last year: a stronger America, a safer America, and a more prosperous America. It is right around the corner.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO MOLLY ROWLEY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the late Jack Valenti, the once Special Assistant to LBJ turned longtime President of the Motion Picture Association, once said:

Every good speech contains six words: Let me tell you a story.

I have taken Jack Valenti's advice to heart. I have often told stories that might otherwise have been ignored—stories of the most vulnerable members of our community, those who might not be able to obtain the services of communications agencies, white-shoe law firms, and high-profile lobbyists. For decades, I have been honored to