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No. 16

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 11 a.m.

Senate

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2025

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ASHLEY MOODY, a Senator from the State of Florida.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, this morning we again invite You to enter the gates of our hearts. Come into our lives and remove all faults, pride, and disunity, replacing them with humility and harmony.

Reside with the Members of this legislative body. Create within them a hunger for holiness. Lord, may they dedicate their work as a gift of love to You, consecrating even their thoughts for Your honor. Generate in their minds a spirit of expectancy that the best is yet to be. Increase their joy and peace as they experience the power of Your presence.

We pray in Your mighty Name. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 25, 2025.

To the Senate:

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

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. MOODY 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. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kristi Noem, of

South Dakota, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). The Democratic leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF KRISTI NOEM

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote on the nomination of Kristi Noem. I am voting no today.

There are obvious and bipartisan solutions to fix the mess at our border and to greatly improve our immigration system. Those solutions include the bipartisan border security bill we introduced last year with Senators LANKFORD, MURPHY, and Sinema; and, even better, a comprehensive reform package along the lines of the bipartisan compromise of the Gang of 8 from 2013. These are real solutions that would solve our immigration problem, and Kristi Noem seems headed in the wrong direction.

I will vote no.

CONFIRMATION OF PETER HEGSETH

Mr. President, last night, Senate Republicans entrusted the most powerful military in the world to someone with no experience, terrible judgment, and serious flaws of character. This is a deeply troubling moment.

Our troops deserve so much better than Pete Hegseth. Our country deserves so much better than Pete Hegseth. His flaws were obvious to both sides from the start. Given the deeply concerning information we know about Pete Hegseth and the immense importance of the job he now has, I hope—I hope—for the sake of our troops and the good of our country that he can eventually grow into the job.

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



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Senate Democrats will insist on vigorous oversight of the Defense Department.

INSPECTORS GENERAL

Mr. President, yesterday in the dark of night, President Trump fired at least 12 independent inspectors general at important Federal Agencies across the administration. This is a chilling purge, and it is a preview of the lawless approach Donald Trump and his administration are taking far too often as he is becoming President. These dismissals are possibly in violation of Federal law, which requires Congress to have 30 days' notice of any intent to fire inspectors general.

These firings are Donald Trump's way of telling us he is terrified of accountability and is hostile to facts and to transparency. Inspectors general can be vital for keeping the government honest. They are the ones who tell the truth and shed light on bad behavior, and we all know that there is nothing Donald Trump is more afraid of than someone who is independent. But President Trump, all too often, has an aversion to the truth, and when someone confronts him with truth and facts, he fires them and replaces them with loyalists.

We are a fact-based society—or we have been. If we lose that, we lose the core of America. And Donald Trump's decision to fire 12 of the Federal Government's independent watchdogs is a glaring sign that it is a golden age for abuse in government and even corruption.

When Government Agencies disobey the law in the next year and there is no independent IG to keep them in check, Donald Trump could well regret this action.

PROJECT 2025

Mr. President, now, on Project 2025, does anyone here remember when Donald Trump claimed he had nothing to do with Project 2025? Remember, last year, Donald Trump seemed to go out of his way to distance himself from the wildly unpopular Project 2025? Now, 1 week into Donald Trump's Presidency, that has all gone out the rightwing window.

Under Donald Trump, it is the dawn of a golden age for Project 2025, and this should infuriate working people from one end of America to the other.

Here is a Bloomberg news headline from yesterday:

"Trump's Early Actions Mirror Project 2025 Plan He Once Dismissed."

In fact, according to Bloomberg, more than 30 of the 47 initial Executive actions announced by the administration come directly—directly—from Project 2025.

Let me repeat: More than 30 of the 47 Executive actions announced by the administration come directly from Project 2025. Project 2025 is officially Donald Trump's policy playbook.

Less than a week into his term, President Trump has gone after Medicare savings for drug costs and the cap

on out-of-pocket spending for medications.

Where do you find those ideas? Well, they are right out of the 2025 playbook.

President Trump also signed Executive orders that would eliminate good-paying jobs in clean energy and opened the floodgates for big oil companies. Where do you find that? The Project 2025 playbook.

And even though President Trump said he wanted to leave reproductive care to the States, his actions tell us he was not telling us the truth. He pushed policies barring doctors from sharing information with patients about healthcare, including abortion, and is pushing anti-choice beliefs into the doctor-patient relationship here in the United States and across the globe.

So when Donald Trump threatens to roll back cost savings for prescription drugs or threatens jobs, he is making life easier for the big corporations and more expensive for average people. And where do these ideas come from? These and many, many more come from the 900 or so pages of Project 2025.

So no matter how much Donald Trump tries to convince people he had nothing to do with Project 2025, the truth has now come out. Project 2025 is the Trump agenda, and, unfortunately, it seems very likely we are going to see more of these awful proposals, in the weeks to come, from Project 2025, right into the Trump administration.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. President, yesterday, President Trump traveled to North Carolina and California to tour sites ravaged by both hurricanes and wildfires. While speaking to reporters, the President mentioned the role of FEMA, saying he plans to issue an Executive order that could possibly eliminate FEMA altogether. In his words, "I think we're going to recommend that FEMA go away."

Look, if you want to talk about commonsense reforms to disaster response, that is one thing. But getting rid of FEMA entirely because of the conservative hunger to shrink government at all costs is dangerous—very dangerous. That could leave families, business owners, and local communities fending for themselves.

President Trump's proposal to get rid of FEMA has Project 2025 written all over it. Project 2025 wants to privatize some of FEMA's programs, including national flood insurance, that vulnerable communities rely on desperately. Project 2025 calls for the shrinking of the Federal Government's share of disaster aid and making the States and local taxpayers pay a far larger share. That is antithetical to how Americans stuck together and looked after each other in times of disaster.

Why do we have a national FEMA? Because Americans pulled together, not divided one another. And when an area has trouble, whether it is floods in North Carolina or hurricanes in Florida or fires in California or the devastating effects of Sandy in New York,

the whole Nation pulls together and says: We are going to help those devastated areas. We are all together in this.

Now, Donald Trump and his toying with getting rid of FEMA undoes that beautiful part of America that said: We all stuck with one another when one area had such a disaster that they couldn't deal with it all themselves.

History is clear that, when it comes to disaster response, there are some things only the Federal Government is equipped to do, and President Trump would be mistaken to ignore that.

When States get overwhelmed, when their highways are buckling, when they don't have trucks and ambulances because of flooding or fires or whatever—earthquakes—to get to people in need, FEMA comes right in. It has happened in my State. It has happened in your State. It has happened in everybody's State.

Get rid of FEMA because a group of hard-right people want to see that the wealthy people in America pay less taxes, "a la Project 2025"? Un-American to me and against the grand tradition that we have had for over a century—the tradition of each area of the country helping one another.

Eliminating FEMA without thinking of the consequences will only mean more pain and more confusion from communities at their worst times—times of crisis.

The President should back away from this threat.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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.

NOMINATION OF KRISTI NOEM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, pending before the U.S. Senate on this Saturday morning is the nomination of Governor Kristi Noem of South Dakota to be the Secretary of Homeland Security in the Cabinet of President Trump.

I have never met Governor Noem. I had hoped we would have a chance to get together, but that didn't work out. I made a request for a courtesy meeting, but we couldn't schedule it. My vote is not contingent on a person showing up in my office, but I wish we had a chance to meet and talk about the awesome responsibility she is seeking with this Department.

The Department of Homeland Security is virtually a creation of 9/11. That is when the term "homeland" starting being used in our highest levels of our government in an effort to keep America safe from 9/11 or anything like it happening in the future.

Over the years, it has accepted a major responsibility when it comes to the issue of immigration, particularly when it comes to making certain that