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Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Luke Pettit, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

FOURTH OF JULY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, July 4 is supposed to be a day of celebration and patriotism, but earlier this month, leftwing domestic extremists tried to turn that day into a day of tragedy and a day of terrorism.

On the evening of Independence Day, a group of antifa terrorists carried out an ambush attack on an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Alvarado, TX.

They drew immigration agents outside by shooting fireworks at the building and vandalizing cars in the parking lot. Unarmed ICE officials came outside. They came outside thinking they were just dealing with hooligans and not realizing that there were snipers hiding in the trees.

The gunmen opened fire, but, thankfully, these leftwing terrorists weren't your typical Texas straight shooters. Though they fired 20 to 30 rounds, they failed to kill or critically injure any law enforcement officers.

When a shooter's gun jammed, he didn't know how to clear it so he dropped his weapon and fled the scene. The terrorists tried to hide in a nearby trailer park, endangering residents who were celebrating our Nation's founding.

Thankfully, the local police were able to detain these violent radicals without harm to any bystanders.

This assault on the ICE facility is a direct result of inflammatory rhetoric

aimed at our immigration enforcement officers. As you see every day on TV, leftwing street mobs constantly chant that ICE employees and ICE, generally, is a modern-day KKK.

A Democrat Congressman recently compared ICE agents to Nazis. I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to condemn these outrageous attacks and to condemn the left's hateful rhetoric toward the men and women who enforce our immigration laws.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

RESCISSIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, since day one, the Trump administration has been focused on identifying waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government—something on which, I believe, the American people agree with him on. And last month, the administration submitted a rescissions package to Congress that would cut somewhere around \$9 billion in wasteful spending, with a focus on woke and wasteful foreign aid dollars.

We are going to consider that commonsense legislation this week. I would love to report that I expect strong support from Senators from both parties, but, incredibly, Democrats are melting down at the prospect of even the most minor cuts to Federal spending. You would think we were proposing to defund the entire government, from the way they are talking, instead of proposing cuts amounting to approximately one-tenth of 1 percent of the Federal budget. That is right—one-tenth of 1 percent of the Federal budget.

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.

God, our Father, thank You for eyes to see and hearts to feel the wonders of Your world. Lord, fill our Senators today with fresh faith in Your power to protect and sustain our Nation and world.

May they face challenges with the triumphant confidence that no weapon that has been formed can prevail against Your eternal purposes. Lord, keep our lawmakers calm in temper, clear in mind, sound in heart, and strong in faith. Enable them to perform faithfully and well what You require, even to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You. When this day's work is done, give them refreshment of mind, spirit, and body.

We pray in Your rejuvenating 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. MORENO). 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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S4345

This bill that is inspiring such hysteria in Democrats would cut just one-tenth of 1 percent, or one one-thousandth of the Federal budget.

Now, back in the day, Democrat President Bill Clinton signed into law a rescissions package that was 10 times larger as a percentage of total government spending. Yet today's Democrats can't bring themselves to even contemplate cutting just one one-thousandth of the Federal budget.

And let's remember what kind of cuts that we are talking about here. We are not talking about making difficult decisions about essential Federal programs or gutting foreign aid. We are talking about modest cuts to funding that has been used for things like promoting vegan food in Zambia, funding a pride parade in Lesotho, teaching children how to make environmentally friendly "reproductive health" decisions, making aid more considerate of "sexual orientation and gender identity," and funding a "One Health Workforce," curriculum, which includes material on "environmental racism" and the importance of DEI. The list goes on and on.

Thankfully, the Trump administration has stopped these ridiculous wastes of taxpayer money. Now, it is time for those of us in Congress to do our part and make sure that the budget reflects these commonsense moves, something that every Member of this body should be able to agree on.

The United States is facing serious budget issues. We saw an incredible growth in spending under the Biden administration, which took what should have been a temporary elevation in spending under COVID and essentially made that the government's new baseline—permanent spending.

In 2024, Federal spending was a staggering 54 percent higher than 2019. My Democratic colleagues may not want to acknowledge it, but we have a serious spending problem in this country. And the very least we can do, in response, is to target some of the egregious misuses of taxpayer dollars that we are addressing today in this bill.

In his recent "Dear Colleague" letter, the Democrat leader claimed—in defiance of abundant evidence to the contrary—that Democrats "support ridding our federal [government] of waste, fraud, and abuse."

Well, here is a chance for the Democrat leader and his caucus to put their money where their mouth is. If they really support eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse, they can join Republicans and pass this legislation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill 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.

INFLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, Americans woke up this morning to a troubling headline: "U.S. Inflation Accelerated in June as Trump's Tariffs Pushed Up Prices." That is what the New York Times said this morning.

We have said from the start that Donald Trump's tariffs are a national sales tax on working- and middle-class families, and now these tariffs are causing inflation to rise, as many of us feared. And there is too large a chance that this tariff increase is just the beginning as increased chaos on tariffs rise.

Tariffs raise the price of groceries, add thousands of dollars in additional cost to the average household, and Trump's chaotic approach does nothing—nothing—to make our economy stronger.

Even worse, real wages are down for June as Americans pay more for groceries, electricity, healthcare costs, and that is before the "Big Ugly Betrayal," which will steal people's Medicaid, kill jobs, and jack up people's electricity bills.

Remember what Donald Trump said on the campaign trail? He said that if elected, he would bring costs down on day one. It is now the middle of July, and inflation is going up. That is the definition of a broken promise.

RESCISSIONS

Mr. President, now on cuts, fresh off of handing billionaires their largest tax break in modern history and fresh off of passing the most devastating cuts to healthcare and good-paying jobs ever, Republicans want to do it again. While Republicans roll out the red carpet for billionaires and special interests, they want to cut funding to local news and cut funding for critical foreign aid that keeps China and Russia at bay.

Americans rely on public broadcasting for weather alerts, and these cuts couldn't come at a worse time. The disaster in Texas reminds us that accurate and speedy forecasts are vital to protecting our country and the lives of Americans, and public broadcast is vital and often the only way to get the word out, particularly in rural America. So why the hell is the administration so obsessed with cutting these life-saving services when they are critical for keeping people safe, when we saw, when we didn't have those services working full steam ahead, how many people's lives are endangered and lost in Texas and around the country.

Public broadcasting does more. It is crucial for Americans to receive the local news for keeping track of city hall, for understanding what is happening in their local school boards, for updates on public events, festivals, educational programming, when we know that traditional television is having a lot of trouble.

To be clear, it is not just local news and public radio stations at risk; this package endangers national security,

our own national security. American aid is vital for preventing pandemics and diseases throughout the world. Foreign aid helps farmers. It helps American researchers. It helps U.S. businesses. More importantly, American aid is vital to holding the line against the Chinese Communist Party and Vladimir Putin. If Republicans eviscerate foreign aid, our adversaries will celebrate America's retreat and move to fill the vacuum.

The worst part is that these rescissions cuts are only the beginning. This package, as bad as it is, is a piece of a larger puzzle for Republicans. Their goal is to use rescissions, impoundment, and pocket rescissions to eradicate any bit of bipartisanship out of appropriations and will pave the way for deeper and even more serious spending cuts on things like healthcare, food assistance, energy, and so many other areas. In fact, many in the Freedom Caucus claim that Donald Trump and Republican leaders promised these deeper cuts by these means in exchange for their vote on the "Big Ugly Bill."

We know that Donald Trump and Russell Vought want to send another rescissions package later this summer. Are they going to make more cuts to Medicaid? Are they going to make more cuts to education or nutrition services or aid for veterans?

Republicans didn't bat an eye when adding \$4 trillion to the debt to lower billionaires' taxes, but suddenly, when it comes to local news and rural radio stations, they suddenly balk. They say it is waste. That is disgusting.

FEMA

Mr. President, on FEMA, search and rescue efforts continue in Central Texas 11 days after the devastating July 4 flooding. We continue to pray—to pray—for every life lost. We pray for the families, and we honor the brave first responders who have been on the ground day after day after day.

But honoring those we lost demands accountability. It demands making sure this never happens again. The more we learn about what went wrong, the more one thing becomes painfully clear: Donald Trump, Secretary Noem, and the Department of Homeland Security have failed—failed—in their basic duty to protect Americans from natural disasters.

After spending months demonizing FEMA, after openly calling for it to be dismantled, after shedding thousands of staff and canceling billions in funding, Trump and Noem's disastrous policies have come back to haunt Americans battered by disasters.

This latest tragedy happened in Texas, but the problems go far beyond Texas. This is a nationwide FEMA failure, a systemic issue across the Agency that Donald Trump has made much, much worse. So today, I am calling on the Comptroller General of the GAO, the Government Accountability Office, to immediately investigate, one, how FEMA's funding cuts, staffing cuts, and policy changes contributed to the