



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2025

No. 127

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, July 25, 2025, at 11 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2025

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARKWAYNE MULLIN, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, You know all about us. You know when we sit down and rise up. You know when we trespass and when we obey. Purge our lives of every wrong thing, that we may glorify You in all we think, say, and do.

Lord, guide our lawmakers in their daily work. Enlighten their minds so that they can find solutions to the chaos and confusion in our world.

Teach our Senators to listen for Your voice and to wait for Your guidance. Lift their lives from the cacophony of contention to the concord of a caring community where lawmakers pray forward and support each other.

We pray in Your great 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 executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 24, 2025.

To the Senate:

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

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MULLIN 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 senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Matthew

Lohmeier, of Arizona, to be Under Secretary of the Air Force.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

JEFFREY EPSTEIN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today marks the first day of the House embarking on their "Epstein recess," and already the story Republicans hoped would quietly fade is growing louder by the hour. Just yesterday, the Wall Street Journal reported that Attorney General Pam Bondi and the Department of Justice informed President Trump back in May that his name appears multiple times in the Epstein files.

Let me remind my colleagues, only last week Donald Trump told a reporter that Attorney General Bondi never told him his name was in those files. Now we know that this was a lie, plain and simple, a red-faced lie.

And this revelation raises not just serious questions about President Trump but about Attorney General Bondi herself. Bondi has proven to do all of Trump's bidding. No matter what way you slice it, Attorney General Bondi lied to the American people. She told us we would see the report. She told us it is on her desk. Then we are told there is no report.

So you can understand the deep skepticism Americans have when they hear that today, Bondi's personal prosecutors—yes, the very ones under her direction—are preparing to interview Ghislaine Maxwell, Jeffrey Epstein's longtime accomplice, behind closed doors in Florida.

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



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Let me repeat: Under no circumstances should anyone from Donald Trump's Department of Justice be allowed to privately interview Ghislaine Maxwell. The conflict of interest just stares you in the face, and it is unacceptable.

If you have been following this saga, and given how the White House and Speaker JOHNSON have so mishandled it—and who hasn't been following it—you know exactly why this moment is so dangerous. There is every reason to fear that Donald Trump could offer Ghislaine Maxwell a pardon in exchange for silence or, even worse, phony exoneration.

Let me be clear, Trump is sending his personal lawyer, Todd Blanche, to try to execute a corrupt coverup, potentially offering leniency to a woman who also abused the victims.

Enough. Enough. Enough with the hiding; enough with the excuses; and enough with the coverup. The American people deserve transparency. They deserve answers.

And there are massive questions here, not just for the President but for the Vice President, the Attorney General, the FBI Director, and Republican leaders in Congress. What is in the files? When did they learn about it? And how long have they been misleading the American people?

So, today, on the heels of Speaker JOHNSON fleeing town to avoid accountability and following this damning report from the Wall Street Journal, I am calling on the administration to provide a closed-door briefing to all Senators on the Epstein files. The Senate deserves to hear directly from senior administration officials about Donald Trump's name appearing in these files and the complete lack of transparency shown to date.

Let me say it again. Donald Trump can't play ignorant anymore. He was caught red-handed in a lie, as were his lackeys. He reportedly knew for months that his name was in the Epstein files. He lied about it to the press, and now the truth is coming out.

Over the past few weeks, Trump has tried to change the subject—throwing out wild accusations, attacking his critics, and calling the files a hoax run by Democrats. He has blamed “foolish” and “stupid” Republicans for taking it seriously. He even scolded the American people for caring too much.

Well, we now all know why he was so desperate to make it all disappear—because whenever Donald Trump points a finger, it is because he knows he is guilty of what he is accusing everyone else of. That is his MO. When he does something, when he knows he has done something wrong, instead of admitting it, instead of trying to make amends, he points the finger at someone else and accuses them of the very thing he has done. That is how he has lived his whole life. That is how he has conducted his Presidency. As I said, it is his MO.

Let us not forget, Donald Trump campaigned, just several months back,

on releasing the Epstein files. Donald Trump is the only President or politician to ever campaign on releasing the Epstein files. And now, very simply, Americans are demanding he honor it.

A good number of people voted for Trump because he promised to be their voice against the so-called deep state. But now they have seen he is very much a part of that deep state. He is right in the middle of it.

People believed he would drain the swamp; now he is right in the middle of the swamp. And that is why Americans across the political spectrum—right, center, left, Democrats, Republican, Independents—Americans across the political spectrum are angry with Donald Trump because they now are seeing his promise to drain the swamp was total fiction. He is in the middle of it. He is adding to it.

Trump promised transparency. He told his supporters he would expose the truth. He has done the opposite. He has smothered it more than ever before.

And meanwhile, House Republicans had the chance to show courage, to do the right thing and act, but, instead, Speaker JOHNSON ran for the exits, sending everyone home early and triggering what we now call the “Epstein recess.”

But I would say to Speaker JOHNSON, I would say to Donald Trump and his minions, I would say to all of my Republican colleagues in the Senate: This issue isn't going away. It is only getting bigger and more dangerous the longer Republicans ignore it.

Instead of focusing on appropriations or national priorities like transparency for Americans or funding the government, Speaker JOHNSON and House Republicans will be left cleaning up this mess, a mess of their own making.

Republicans cannot escape the issue—not next week, not next month, not until the American people get answers and the transparency they were promised.

NOMINATION OF EMIL J. BOVE III

Mr. President, now on the Bove cloture vote, later today, Senate Republicans will hold the first procedural vote on one of Donald Trump's nastiest Judicial nominees to date, Emil Bove.

Mr. Bove is beyond unqualified and unworthy of the Federal bench. He is an existential threat to the rule of law and our democracy as we know it.

Mr. Bove is as far from the mainstream as any judicial nominee we have considered in this Chamber. He is a Trumpian henchman, the extreme of the extreme of the extreme. He is openly hostile to the rule of law. He is fundamentally opposed to democratic norms. He lacks the temperament to serve as a jurist.

Above all—above all—Bove is religiously obedient to Donald Trump. We all know that one of the only things that matter to this President is brazen, unyielding obedience to him no matter how wrong he is, no matter what lies he tells.

Mr. Bove made a name for himself by cleaning up Donald Trump's dirty laun-

dry. That is what he did—he cleaned up Donald Trump's dirty laundry. He is a devout January 6 apologist who defended Trump as his personal attorney after Trump was charged with inciting the insurrection.

At the Justice Department, he wielded his power to fire prosecutors working on January 6 criminal cases and punish FBI agents—people who dedicated their lives to our country and were simply following the law. He goes out and tries to punish them because they stopped Donald Trump's insurrection.

So instead of working to hold the January 6 rioters accountable, Bove sided with the rioters, who desecrated the building and violently attacked our police officers. Imagine Republicans going after people who attacked police officers all because Donald Trump incited an insurrection that he now lies about.

Well, that is who Mr. Bove is, and it is not even the all of it. While at the Justice Department, Mr. Bove reportedly told DOJ lawyers to ignore court orders and even deliberately mislead judges. That is what he said. That is what he reportedly told DOJ lawyers—to ignore court orders and mislead judges.

Can you believe we are trying to put this guy on the bench? How low can our Republican colleagues go in obeisance to Donald Trump when so many of them—not all of them, not all of them, but so many of them know he is wrong?

If there is even a shred of truth to these allegations, that is enough to disqualify Mr. Bove from ever holding Federal office and Federal judgeship above all.

My Republican colleagues don't seem to want to get to the facts. Republicans are so afraid of Donald Trump, so willing to do whatever he says, that many of them are going along with Bove's nomination without a whisper, without so much as a whisper of scrutiny. All the signs are pointing towards Bove being a disastrous judge who will take advantage of his power on the Third Circuit to settle scores and advance the Trump agenda.

Republicans have a decision to make. If they still have any respect left for the Senate as a check on the Executive, if they still have any respect for our judiciary and the rule of law, then Republicans should join Democrats and vote no on Mr. Bove's nomination.

HONORING DETECTIVE JOHN M. GIBSON AND
OFFICER JACOB J. CHESTNUT

Mr. President, finally, on a more solemn note, today marks 27 years since Detective John Gibson and Officer Jacob Chestnut of the Capitol Police were killed in the line of duty, defending the Capitol Building from a lone gunman.

In the face of grave danger not only to themselves but to all of us who were in the Capitol that day—I was a Congressman then—Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut responded with extraordinary courage and heroism. Because of their sacrifice, a potentially