

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 majority leader is recognized.

#### MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 4016

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The leader is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4016) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

##### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, appropriations season is well underway. The Senate Appropriations Committee has, so far, passed six bipartisan appropriations bills, and the Republicans are ready to consider a package of appropriations bills and have a floor process, one that involves serious amendments from both sides of the aisle, amendments designed to improve the bills, not score political points or sink the bills with poison pill measures. And there have been some encouraging signs that some of my Democrat colleagues are ready to come to the table on this. And I hope that will prove to be true and we will be able to finish an appropriations package in the coming days and then work with the House in August to get the legislation ready to send to the President.

We are going to have a lot more appropriations work to do in September, and I will continue to push for a regular order process with debate and amendment on the Senate floor, and, hopefully, my Democrat colleagues will support that effort.

It is in the interest of both parties to have a regular-order, bipartisan process, and at least some Democrats have acknowledged as much. It would be nice to see that attitude prevail in the Democrat Party, generally.

I will say, it was disturbing to see the Democrat leader threaten to shut down the government a few weeks ago, and I hope—I really hope—the Democrats will not embrace that position.

In addition to moving forward on an appropriations package, the other thing we need to get done in short order is a package of nominations. Now, while Senate Republicans have made excellent progress on confirming nominees, we could be a lot further along if Democrats hadn't, so far, decided to slow-walk every single civilian nomination from the President.

I don't need to tell anyone here that it is usual for Presidents to get a percentage of their nominees confirmed quickly here in the Senate by either unanimous consent or voice vote. That has been the practice for decades.

By this point in his Presidency, Joe Biden had had 121 civilian nominees confirmed, and 49 of them had been confirmed by voice vote or unanimous consent—49, or a full 40 percent.

Do you want to know how many civilian nominees President Trump has had confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote? None. Zero. Zero percent.

Now, I think it is important. I have got a chart here just for purposes of informing people about what this looks like as I mentioned over the past several decades.

If you start with President H. W. Bush, 41, 98 percent of his nominees to positions in the Federal Government were confirmed by either unanimous consent or voice vote. In other words, basically, the recognition was that these are people that need to be in these positions. There are important jobs that need to be filled in our government so people can carry out the responsibilities and duties on behalf of our country, and 98 percent of the nominees were confirmed either by unanimous consent or voice in his first term.

So let's go back to a Democrat President, Bill Clinton. Same thing, 98 percent of President Bill Clinton's nominees were confirmed either by unanimous consent or by voice vote; in other words, both sides agreeing, in a bipartisan way, that it is important to have positions in our government filled. So that is Bill Clinton, Democrat President.

Then we have George W. Bush, 43. Ninety percent of his nominees were confirmed either by voice or unanimous consent—90 percent.

Then you get another Democrat President, Barack Obama, 90 percent of his nominees were confirmed either by voice or unanimous consent—90 percent, meaning that pretty much everybody here on both sides of the aisle recognized that there are important positions in our government that need to be filled, most of which, at least many of which—like they are today—are bipartisan when they come out of committee.

Then we move into President Trump's first term. That number dropped down to 65.

And then, of course, the Biden administration, Republicans also started to say: Well, if the Dems are going to

do it, we will too. The number dropped down to 57. But it is still important to point out that even in the last Democrat Presidency with Joe Biden, 57 percent—57 percent—of his nominees to positions within the Federal Government were confirmed either by unanimous consent or voice vote here in the U.S. Senate.

And then you look at the current President, President Trump, second term, zero. This isn't sustainable. We can't keep on this track. This has got to change, and it will change. Either Democrats are going to play ball or we are going to figure out a way to change it. We can't have a Federal Government—by the way, there are 1,100 executive branch nominations—which, in my view, is way too many to start with that have to come through the Senate for confirmation—1,100 of them. Many of whom, at this rate, aren't going to get their jobs before President Trump leaves office.

You just can't do this. This isn't a sustainable practice. So something is going to give. The Democrats are going to start to play ball and do what every other Congress, Republican and Democrat, with every other President, Republican and Democrat, has done when it comes to allowing the President—who won an election fair and square and tens of millions of people voted for him—to be able to put his people into their respective offices so they can do the job for the American people and he can do the job the American people voted for him to do.

So I am just going to say one more time: Zero. Zero. In as recently as the last Presidential administration, Democrat President Joe Biden, 57 percent were confirmed by unanimous consent.

So let me just say there are important jobs in the government that are currently standing empty 8 months now into this President's term because Democrats have dragged out the confirmation process and denied President Trump the courtesy that Republicans and Democrats alike in the past have extended to previous Presidents.

Now, I will say that I do think there are at least some of my colleagues, Democrats on the other side of the aisle, who would like to maintain the kind of courtesy on nominations that prevailed in the Senate before this year. And I am hoping, really hoping, that those more pragmatic Democrats will prevail and pave the way for us to work together for the next few days to approve a nominations package.

We have a lot of bipartisan nominees who are available for consideration right now, and we should be able to quickly approve their nominations. And, again, I hope that my Democrat colleagues will come to the table.

Otherwise, we are going to be spending a whole lot more time here on the Senate floor.

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 (Mr. CURTIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### TARIFFS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, Donald Trump announced what he called a deal with South Korea, and it is very similar to the deals we saw with Japan and the European Union. It is all talk, no substance; all hat, no cattle. And it raises the costs for average Americans.

Now, instead of levying a 25-percent tariff, as he has threatened, South Korea will face 15 percent tariffs. And then he pretends like that is some kind of victory. Fifteen percent is far from a victory because it is American families who are the ones who will have to pay for it in the end. Raising your prices by 15 percent on imported goods—that is a lot of money to a lot of people.

In fact, we got some more news this morning. According to the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge, inflation continues to accelerate as Trump tariffs continue to hammer American pocketbooks. That means Americans are paying more. Inflation goes up, the American family pays more. That is because, in part, of Donald Trump's tariffs. That sure doesn't sound like a golden age to me.

Just like the supposed deals with Japan and the European Union, Donald Trump has claimed that South Korea will invest billions towards the United States. The problem is, there is no way to enforce what Donald Trump is saying. It is just talk—more talk, no action. That is all he does.

When he announced his deal with the EU, for instance, the EU immediately said there is no way they are going to be able to meet the kinds of investments Donald Trump was bragging about. The EU stated publicly the agreement was nonbinding and there was no plan to back it up.

So on day one, Donald Trump talks about some huge number that will be invested in America, and the next day, the people who say they are investing say: No way. It is not happening.

The same thing happened with Japan. In Japan, they said—after Donald Trump announced a \$500 billion investment—that they will only be able to invest 2 percent of what Donald Trump bragged about.

So listen to what the negotiators from the other side say the day after Trump puts out his braggadocio. If they were being totally honest, the Europeans, the Japanese, the Koreans would announce that day that what Donald Trump is saying isn't true, but they are announcing it the next day, and people hear it.

It is so typical of Donald Trump. He makes bold promises, talks a big game,

but when reality sets in, he changes the goalposts, makes excuses, lies about what he has done, and then the American people are left paying the price because his policies hurt them.

It may get worse. At midnight tonight, unless Trump changes course, a slew of tariffs will come into effect for dozens of countries that include America's most important trading partners. Four months since Donald Trump's so-called "Liberation Day," his trade war has been an experiment in chaos, dishonesty, and inflation.

Donald Trump has launched America against the rest of the world without a clue, it seems, about what he is trying to do. He seems to make it up every morning when he wakes up. If what he says 2 days later contradicts what he said previously, he doesn't care. Lying doesn't matter to him, and he doesn't believe the American people will see through it, but they do.

Americans are left paying, meanwhile, more of out-of-pocket expenses for everyday goods. It is estimated the average household pays \$2,400 a year extra. That sure doesn't sound like a golden age to me.

And more problems. The tariffs are affecting companies, businesses large and small. Yesterday, Ford said that Donald Trump's tariffs will cost the company \$2 billion—\$2 billion—and that is certainly going to be passed on to the consumers. Imagine what that \$2 billion could do if it weren't for tariffs. Ford might have hired more workers, invested in more plants.

What Donald Trump is doing—costing Ford \$2 billion, costing companies billions more—that doesn't sound like a golden age to me.

Amazon, Walmart, popular toy companies, and other retailers say price hikes may very soon happen. That is where everybody shops. Americans are going to pay more for their groceries, more for their toys, more for their clothes, more for their cars. As families get ready to send their kids back to school, they are facing the pinch as the cost of clothing and pencils and backpacks and all that kind of stuff goes way up. It doesn't sound like a golden age to me.

So Donald Trump can stay in his bubble. He can pretend like 15 percent tariffs on our biggest partners are a cause for celebration. But Donald Trump should ask the American people if 15 percent more for everyday goods is a victory. He won't like what they tell him.

#### CHINA

Mr. President, on China, meanwhile, if there is one country that has benefited from Donald Trump's tariff chaos, it is China. We all know that Trump loves to talk tough against Beijing, but a closer look at the Trump administration's actions towards them show it is just that—talk.

Over the past few weeks, Donald Trump has granted the Chinese Government greater access to American advanced AI chips vital to our national security.

Trump has done a complete flip-flop once again. First, his administration blocked these chips from being sold to the Chinese entities. That was a huge win. But now that has gone out the window.

Donald Trump is also hitting the brakes on new restrictions on other sensitive tech exports to Chinese companies, perhaps hoping it helps trade talks.

Meanwhile, reports are out that Donald Trump canceled the long-planned, high-level security meeting with Taiwan and even blocked their President from coming to the United States.

Donald Trump, our national security should never be a bargaining chip, least of all when dealing with Beijing. But, Mr. President, you somehow think otherwise. President Biden, whom I know you don't like, put a lot of these restrictions in because he saw the dangers of China, and you are backing off.

So while Donald Trump wants America to think he is a tough guy when it comes to the Chinese Government, when it comes to Beijing, his actions over the last 6 months show a pattern of appeasement, and he is unwittingly sending a clear message to adversaries around the world: Under Donald Trump, America's security, prosperity, and technological edge are open to negotiation.

Dollar for dollar, person for person, our tech is better than China's, but when we give them access to what might be the family jewels in terms of tech, in terms of chips, in terms of AI, since they spend more money than we do after DOGE and all those cuts, they are going to get ahead of us, and our children and grandchildren are going to regret it. So will we.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. President, on Social Security, there is just a parade of horrors coming out of this administration. Yesterday, the Trump administration did something they rarely do: They told the truth. It wasn't Donald Trump, but it was one of his minions. They told the truth.

The Trump administration said—in this case, they talked about wanting to privatize Social Security. In the middle of an interview, Secretary of Treasury Scott Bessent said that the so-called "Trump accounts" that Republicans passed in their "Big Ugly Betrayal" could one day be used by Americans as a replacement for Social Security.

Listen to what Bessent said. The accounts that they put into this horrible "Big Ugly Betrayal" bill are a "back door for privatizing Social Security." That is what Bessent said, the highest ranking economic official, probably, in the administration. He said they put in their so-called Big Beautiful Bill "a back door to privatize Social Security."

I don't think our senior citizens think that is a big, beautiful bill when it could privatize their Social Security. Has America heard it? They are hearing it.