

fashion has for the first time been undone in a partisan fashion.

Now we are hearing that Mr. Vought at the OMB, the Office of Management and Budget, is planning to send a rescissions package to us maybe in the middle of August. Why is this important, and why is this a problem and a challenge? It is because he has expounded on a theory that he calls a pocket rescission, and that is, if the fiscal year ends on September 30, which it does, and if he sends it within the last 45 days, he believes that he can thereby, even if we were to meet in September and reject the rescission—that even then, he would be able to use a 45-day pause that is in that 1974 law to not spend the funds that we had directed.

So what does that look like? That looks like a law was passed to spend the funds, but with no change in the law, the President's team stalls until the end of the year, sends in a rescission, and then stalls to the very end of the year and never spends the money. In other words, what was passed into law never happens.

This is a direct attack on the power of the purse, which in the Constitution is allocated to Congress. In that sense, we on the Appropriations Committee are carrying that responsibility, that constitutional responsibility of the power of the purse.

In facing this in the past, the Supreme Court has weighed in twice. The first time was in 1996. Actually, the first time was in 1975. Excuse me. In 1975, the Supreme Court weighed in on the fact that a couple of years earlier, in 1973, President Nixon had frozen, or impounded, funds and not done what Congress had set in a law that had been passed in both Chambers and had been signed by the President.

The Supreme Court said: Hell no. You can't do that. Mr. President, you cannot do that. No President can do that. You have to follow the law. You cannot take the power of the purse.

Then, in 1996, Congress said: Hey, we want to give the President line-item veto.

They passed a law to do so.

The Supreme Court weighed in again and said: Hell no. You have the responsibility under the Constitution of the power of the purse.

So now we are facing the situation in which Mr. Vought is saying: The law is just a suggestion. It is just a ceiling. We can spend less if we want to. We can spend more by transferring funds from one place to the other. The law is just a suggestion.

Well, no, Mr. Vought, it is not just a suggestion, and the President is not a King.

But by doing what he is planning to do with this late rescission, he is basically trying to find a way to, well, run out the tape—"run out the clock" I guess is the right term—run out the clock and alter the power of the purse.

So I am asking for us to stand together, Democrats and Republicans,

and defend our constitutional, bipartisan responsibility and should there be a rescission that comes in in August, for us to come in the first thing in September and vote against it and therefore say no in both Chambers of Congress, thereby sending that message, because that would provide a foundation for us to challenge the strategy Mr. Vought is putting together.

In addition, today, I am asking us to join together, Democrats and Republicans, to say that nothing that is passed by us in the fiscal year 2026 spending bills—nothing that is in those bills will be subject to the 1974 rescission. So this would not be retroactive. It could not at this moment, in this bill, be able to address a possible rescission of funds from 2023 or 2024 or 2025. But we can certainly insulate the funds in 2026 from this partisan attack by the President, this unconstitutional attack by the President.

The first amendment to be up when we convene at 4:15—about 3 minutes from now—will be this amendment to say: Together, Democrats and Republicans, let's defend our constitutional responsibilities, and let's say that nothing we pass in the fiscal year 2026 bill will be subject to that strategy by Mr. Vought and President Trump.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, in a moment, we will begin votes on an appropriations package that includes the fiscal year 2026 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and the Agriculture, FDA, and Rural Development appropriations bills. We will also have the opportunity to consider the fiscal year 2026 Legislative Branch appropriations.

These bills were approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee in overwhelmingly bipartisan votes.

I gave a longer floor speech last week on the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs funding bill, so I will focus my comments now on the Agriculture-FDA and Legislative Branch appropriations.

The Ag-FDA bill was approved unanimously by the Senate Appropriations Committee earlier this month. It is a carefully crafted bill that supports our farmers and rural communities; the safety of our food supply; critical Federal nutrition programs like the WIC Program; and medical research and advancements.

The bill invests in agricultural research that is vital to our farmers as they work to improve the quality, safety, and affordability of our food supply. The dollars invested in these programs, like the potato and blueberry research lines that are so important to my home

State of Maine, have yielded significant improvements to the industries they support.

The bill also invests in research facilities across the country, like the University of Maine Forest Health Lab, to ensure that we can continue to lead in agricultural innovation.

This legislation also supports the administration's request in the areas of food safety and rural housing, and it provides much needed investments in animal and plant health programs to protect our agricultural and natural resources.

It also maintains support for our rural areas to ensure that communities in Maine, and, indeed, across the country, have access to the resources they need to continue to thrive in these challenging times.

Turning now to the fiscal year 2026 Legislative Branch bill. This legislation provides funding for Congress and the offices and agencies that support our work.

It provides an increase for the Capitol Police to help them meet the expanding mission requirements to keep Members safe and Members' staff and visitors to the Capitol Complex safe. The number of threats against Members of Congress has, unfortunately, increased significantly over the past few years. This bill reflects a bipartisan commitment to address these security concerns.

Again, I want to thank the vice chair; Senators BOOZMAN and OSSOFF, the chair and ranking members of the MILCON-VA Subcommittee; Senators HOEVEN and SHAHEEN, the chair and ranking member of the Agriculture Subcommittee; and Senators MULLIN and HEINRICH, the chair and ranking member of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, for their hard work and dedication.

Finally, let me note that these are fiscally responsible bipartisan bills, and I urge my colleagues to support them.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to execute the order with respect to Calendar No. 121, H.R. 3944.

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

Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and resume consideration of H.R. 3944, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3944) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the committee-reported substitute is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 3411

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 3411 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Ms. COLLINS] proposes an amendment numbered 3411.

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of July 31, 2025, under "Text of Amendments.")

AMENDMENT NOS. 3070, AS MODIFIED; 3430; 3025; 3409; 3081, AS MODIFIED; 3082, AS MODIFIED; 3416; 3080, AS MODIFIED; 3208; 3073, AS MODIFIED; 3110; 3431; 3418; 3163, AS MODIFIED; 3433; 3200; 3190, AS MODIFIED, AND 3220, AS MODIFIED TO AMENDMENT NO. 3411

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the managers' package to amendment No. 3411 were considered and agreed to.

The amendments were agreed to en bloc, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3070, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To strike a provision relating to hemp)

Strike section 781 of division B.

AMENDMENT NO. 3430

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the use of third-party contractors to conduct medical disability examinations of veterans for purposes of obtaining disability compensation)

At the appropriate place in title II of division A, insert the following:

SEC. 2. REPORT ON THE USE OF THIRD-PARTY CONTRACTORS TO CONDUCT MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS OF VETERANS FOR PURPOSES OF OBTAINING DISABILITY COMPENSATION.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the use of third-party contractors to conduct medical disability examinations of veterans for purposes of obtaining disability compensation.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report submitted pursuant to subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) The number of contractors used in each State to conduct disability compensation examinations.

(2) Contract performance and quality measures.

(3) The average miles a veteran is required to travel to attend a contract medical disability examination, disaggregated by State.

(4) The average wait time for an individual to receive an examination.

(5) A description of the process at the Department for handling complaints of veterans about their experience with a contracted medical disability examiner.

AMENDMENT NO. 3025

(Purpose: To require a report on veterans participating in the housing choice voucher program)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ (a) Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs and Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committees on Veterans' Affairs and Finan-

cial Services of the House of Representatives a report that identifies, as of the date of the report, the total number of veterans participating in the housing choice voucher program under section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)).

(b) In this section, the term "veteran"—

(1) means a person who, regardless of length of service, was a member of the armed forces (as that term is defined in section 101 of title 10, United States Code); and

(2) does not include a person who—

(A) received a dishonorable discharge from the armed forces; or

(B) was discharged or dismissed from the armed forces by reason of the sentence of a general court-martial.

AMENDMENT NO. 3409

(Purpose: To allocate amounts for telehealth for veterans)

In section 250 of title II of division A, strike "programs." and insert "programs; and, \$6,356,000,000 shall be made available for telehealth for veterans."

AMENDMENT NO. 3081, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To provide for the continuation of National Cemetery Administration surveys)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION SURVEYS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall continue to—

(1) administer the customer service survey of the National Cemetery Administration to veterans, families, and funeral homes through ongoing survey activities; and

(2) publish the results of such survey.

(b) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 days before the date on which any change is made to the survey described in subsection (a), including with respect to methodology, participants, or scope, the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs shall submit a description of such change to—

(1) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

AMENDMENT NO. 3082, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To address interment schedule availability at cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ INTERMENT SCHEDULE AVAILABILITY AT CEMETERIES UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall maintain, on the publicly accessible website landing page of the National Cemetery Administration, a spreadsheet or similar document displaying the most recent interment schedule availability for each operational cemetery under the control of the National Cemetery Administration.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, make the spreadsheet or similar document described in subsection (a) available as required by such subsection; and

(2) once every 30 days thereafter, update such spreadsheet or similar document.

(c) DEFINITION OF INTERMENT SCHEDULE AVAILABILITY.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to

the appropriate committees of Congress a proposed definition for the term "interment schedule availability" that—

(1) generally means the number of business days between the establishment of a case for a deceased individual and the first availability for the interment of the individual; and

(2) takes into account the ability to meet the family's preferred dates, days of the week, and times for scheduling the interment.

(d) REPORT ON HISTORICAL DATA.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on data for interment schedule availability during the five-year period ending on the date on which the report is submitted.

(e) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate committees of Congress" means—

(1) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

AMENDMENT NO. 3416

(Purpose: To allocate amounts for opioid prevention and treatment programs)

In section 250 of title II of division A, strike "programs." and insert "programs; and, \$709,573,000 shall be made available for opioid prevention and treatment programs."

AMENDMENT NO. 3080, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To require reports on facilities at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____ (a)(1) Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Health Agency shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report detailing the current and projected capacity, patient load, staffing requirements, and outstanding infrastructure needs at the General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

(2) The report required by paragraph (1) shall—

(A) assess the role of the hospital specified in such paragraph in supporting medical readiness and emergency care for active duty members of the Armed Forces, dependents of such members, and retirees;

(B) evaluate potential impacts to access and quality of care, including in the surrounding community, if the hospital were to be realigned, downgraded, or have its scope of services reduced; and

(C) assess how the hospital supports the functions and mission of Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, including training activities and programs.

(b)(1) Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report detailing the current condition of military family housing at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, including ongoing or planned renovation and upgrade projects, timelines for completion, and any challenges affecting such improvements.

(2) The report required by paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) the total estimated cost of conducting all necessary renovation and replacement activities for deficient family housing units, the number of units in need of replacement,

and a detailed plan for carrying out those activities; and

(B) an assessment of the impact of housing conditions on quality of life and readiness of members of the Armed Forces and their dependents;

(C) recommendations for addressing any identified shortcomings; and

(D) the findings from consultations with military families who live in housing units at Fort Leonard Wood.

AMENDMENT NO. 3208

(Purpose: To require a briefing on the current status, path forward, and timeline to construct a new medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Reno, Nevada)

At the appropriate place in title II of division A, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a briefing on the current status, path forward, and timeline to construct a new medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Reno, Nevada, utilizing in full the funds that have been previously appropriated for such purpose prior to their expiration.

AMENDMENT NO. 3073, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To require a report on New World screwworm readiness and response)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _____. REPORT ON NEW WORLD SCREWORM READINESS AND RESPONSE.

Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to Congress a report on the New World Screwworm domestic readiness and response initiative of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, with a particular focus on—

(1)(A) domestic readiness, including the construction of a domestic production facility in the event of a threat of a domestic outbreak; and

(B) exploring partnerships with States and industry with respect to that construction and other domestic preparedness efforts;

(2) sterile fly production technology and other eradication tools and technologies; and

(3) the benefits of and barriers, including timelines and costs, to enhanced domestic, as compared to international, sterile fly production.

AMENDMENT NO. 3110

(Purpose: To require an assessment of the feasibility of expanding the agricultural quarantine and inspection program to products entering Hawaii)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. ASSESSMENT OF FEASIBILITY OF EXPANDING AGRICULTURAL QUARANTINE AND INSPECTION PROGRAM TO PRODUCTS ENTERING HAWAII.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service shall conduct and submit to Congress an assessment regarding the feasibility of expanding the Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection program to products entering the State of Hawaii, which shall include a determination of the methods of transportation and the types of commerce that are the most likely contributors of invasive pests entering the State of Hawaii and recommendations on how to begin implementing the expansion and an estimate of the cost.

AMENDMENT NO. 3431

(Purpose: To allocate amounts for the Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program)

In section 250 of title II of division A, strike “programs.” and insert “programs; and, \$36,879,000 shall be made available for the Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 3418

(Purpose: To provide appropriations to expedite fiber research on industrial hemp and expand cereal research into mycotoxin risk mitigation)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) For an additional amount for “Agricultural Programs—Agricultural Research Service—Salaries and Expenses”, there is appropriated \$500,000, to remain available until expended, to expedite fiber research on industrial hemp between the Cereal Disease Laboratory and the Cotton Fiber Bioscience and Utilization Research Unit, including cooperative agreements with qualified nonprofit organizations.

(b) For an additional amount for “Agricultural Programs—Agricultural Research Service—Salaries and Expenses”, there is appropriated \$500,000, to remain available until expended, to expand existing cereal research into methods to mitigate mycotoxin risks.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the amount appropriated by this Act under the heading “Agricultural Programs—Processing, Research, and Marketing—Office of the Secretary” in title I for the Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs shall be reduced by \$1,000,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 3163, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To fund activities relating to the suppression and control of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SUPPRESSION OF MORMON CRICKETS AND GRASSHOPPERS.

Of the funds provided in this Act under the heading “SALARIES AND EXPENSES” under the heading “ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE” under the heading “AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS” under title I of division B, \$6,500,000 shall be for activities related to the suppression and control of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers in Western States, of which not less than \$2,000,000 shall be for actual treatment of landscape.

AMENDMENT NO. 3433

(Purpose: To limit the availability of funds for canceling large contracts without prior notice and explanation to Congress)

At the end of title II of division A, add the following:

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR CANCELING LARGE CONTRACTS.

None of the amounts appropriated by this title may be obligated or expended to cancel a contract with a value that exceeds \$10,000,000 until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has submitted to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives an advance notification and written explanation of contingency plans to replace the relevant service being cancelled, including any necessary change in the Department’s staffing levels.

AMENDMENT NO. 3200

(Purpose: To increase funding for rural decentralized water systems)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the amount made available in the second undesignated paragraph under the heading “RURAL WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM ACCOUNT” under the heading “RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE” in title III for—

(1) the rural utilities program described in section 306E of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act shall be \$6,500,000, of which not less than \$1,500,000 shall be used to provide subgrants to eligible individuals for the construction, refurbishing, and servicing of individually owned household decentralized wastewater systems; and

(2) grants pursuant to section 306(a)(2)(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act shall be \$238,900,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 3190, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To increase funding for the Healthy Fluid Milk Incentives Program, with an offset)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the amount made available for—

(1) “Domestic Food Programs—Food and Nutrition Service—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” shall be \$118,140,341,000, of which \$4,000,000 shall be for the Healthy Fluid Milk Incentives Program; and

(2) “Agricultural Programs—Processing, Research, and Marketing—Office of the Secretary” shall be \$50,792,000, of which not to exceed \$5,000,000 shall be available for the Office of Communications.

AMENDMENT NO. 3220, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To require a report on funding for State homes for veterans)

At the appropriate place in title II of division A, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and each Member of Congress a report on the current backlog in funding for construction and renovation of State homes for veterans.

(b) The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A list of all unfunded or partially funded applications for construction grants for State homes, including those identified on the priority lists for fiscal year 2024 and 2025.

(2) The estimated total funding required to fully fund all projects under such pending applications.

(3) A description of the key hurdles to clearing the backlog of construction grant applications, including administrative, regulatory, and funding-related barriers.

(4) Any recommendations for administrative or legislative action to reduce delays and accelerate the approval and completion of State home projects.

(5) An exploration of potential options for interim or alternative sources of funding to sustain or advance priority projects currently awaiting Federal support, including an evaluation of such options for feasibility and potential impact.

(c) The requirement under subsection (b)(5) shall not be construed as relieving Congress of its responsibility to fund State homes fully and in a timely manner.

(d) In this section, the term “State home” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

AMENDMENT NO. 3114 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3411

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 3114 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oregon [Mr. MERKLEY] proposes an amendment numbered 3114 to amendment No. 3411.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To limit rescissions of funding)

At the appropriate place in the matter preceding division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . RESCISSION LIMITATION.

No amounts may be rescinded from amounts provided under any division of this Act or any other appropriation Act for fiscal year 2026, unless the rescission is made through an appropriation Act (as defined in section 3 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 622)).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate, equally divided.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, this amendment protects the work that we are doing today from a future rescission happening in a partisan basis.

Now, realize this only affects FY 2026 and therefore only bills that have been both passed here and in the House and signed by President Trump.

But here is why this is important: The work that we have done on a bipartisan basis has never been undone, until this last month, in the history of the Senate since the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 was passed.

Why? Because we agreed that the rescissions—that is, to repeal existing spending already in law—would be done in a bipartisan way, just as the initial bill was done in a bipartisan way.

This is important for us to work together, no matter who is in the White House in the future.

I must say, this bipartisan work is so important to preserve our responsibilities under the Constitution here in the Senate and the House, where the Constitution assigns the responsibility for the power of the purse.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I will oppose this and will make a point of order here in a second.

This amendment would prevent Congress and the President from using the congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act's fast-track process for considering rescissions in fiscal year 2026 and beyond.

Under the Merkley amendment, rescissions can only be included in appropriations bills, which would need 60 votes. And the law in question allows a fast-track provision for rescissions. Senator MERKLEY's amendment would do away with that.

This amendment is subject to a point of order for violating Section 306 of the congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, which requires legislation dealing with the Budget Committee's jurisdiction to be reported or discharged from the Budget Committee.

POINT OF ORDER

The pending amendment No. 3114 contains matters within the Budget Committee's jurisdiction. I, therefore, raise a point of order against the amendment pursuant to Section 306 of the Congressional Budget Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, how many seconds do I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has no seconds left.

Mr. MERKLEY. In that case, Mr. President, my—

Mr. GRAHAM. In the spirit of the endeavor, I will give you 15 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. You don't have 15 seconds.

Mr. GRAHAM. Well, I will one day get 15 seconds, and I will give it to you when I do.

Mr. MERKLEY. I ask unanimous consent for 15 seconds for my colleague and 15 seconds for myself on why this should or should not be waived.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Please go ahead.

Mr. GRAHAM. I don't have anything else to say.

Mr. MERKLEY. Thank you.

I will borrow his 15 as well as mine.

MOTION TO WAIVE

Mr. President, we do have the power to waive this. It does take 60 votes, but this would be all of us together saying we should defend the bipartisan work here now, just as we have through the entire history since 1974. We are talking about a half century of bipartisan strategy being undone with the possibility of partisan rescissions.

Let's do our rescissions in a bipartisan way, in committee. And for that reason, unless there is a rebuttal from my colleague, I will make the formal request to waive.

OK, continuing.

Pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Review Act of 1974 and the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions, I move to waive all applicable sections of that act and applicable budget points of order for the purposes of the pending measure.

VOTE ON MOTION

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEG0), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 44, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 472 Leg.]

YEAS—44

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Rosen
Baldwin	Kaine	Sanders
Bennet	Kelly	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kim	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	King	Schumer
Booker	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cantwell	Lujan	Slotkin
Coons	Markey	Smith
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warner
Fetterman	Murray	Warnock
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Warren
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden
Hickenlooper	Reed	

NAYS—51

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lankford	Sheehy
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Cruz	Lummis	Thune
Curtis	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McCormick	Tuberville
Ernst	Moody	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Young

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy	Gallego	Welch
Duckworth	McConnell	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 44, and the nays are 51.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen, not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The point of order is sustained, and the amendment falls.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, the Veterans Crisis Line is a critical—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator wish to call up his amendment?

AMENDMENT NO. 3432 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3411

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 3432 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: The Senator from Connecticut [Mr. BLUMENTHAL], for himself and Mr. PADILLA, proposes an amendment numbered 3432 to Amendment No. 3411.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds to reduce services under the Veterans Crisis Line)

At the appropriate place in title II of division A, insert the following:

SEC. _____. No funds appropriated by this title shall be used to reduce staffing, limit hours of operation, decrease training opportunities, curb access to relevant information technology systems, or otherwise reduce the capacity of the Veterans Crisis Line established under section 1720F(h) of title 38, United States Code, to respond to and provide resources to veterans in crisis.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, this amendment seeks to protect the victims crisis hotline, a critical lifeline for veterans who may take their own lives from the kind of cuts that we have seen during these first 6 months

of the Trump administration. Incredibly, the Trump administration fired the 24 crisis line employees without warning or cause. This staff coordinates the on-ground emergency response when veterans call and they feel they have no way to go on.

It directly conflicted with the assurances we were given by Secretary Collins that he would not fire frontline employees, and veterans' benefits and care would remain untouched.

Fortunately, we have bipartisan support for the Veterans Crisis Line, and I want to thank the chairman of the committee, Senator MORAN, for his support on this measure. Now, the damage—some of it has already been done, as we have heard in our hearing of June 25. Firsthand witnesses told us about the confusion and chaos that has resulted.

We need to invest the resources, now more than ever, and, in fact, more resources than we have devoted so far, more staff, and make sure that we keep faith with veterans when they are in crisis as a result of the service and sacrifice that we have asked of them.

It is critical to their mission and ours, and I ask for my colleagues to support this measure. I believe that a voice vote will be appropriate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, we want to thank Senator BLUMENTHAL and Senator MORAN for their hard work on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. We all support the mission at the Veterans Crisis Line. Preventing veteran suicide is a common goal shared by everyone in this Chamber. The VCL has taken more than 7.16 million calls since it was established. The VA reports that veterans who contact VCL are 10 times more likely to receive mental health care than those who do not.

I support this amendment and urge its adoption and would be glad to scream out "yes" with a voice vote.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3432

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on adoption of the amendment.

The amendment (No. 3432) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

AMENDMENT NO. 3447 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3411

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 3447 and ask it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Connecticut [Mr. MURPHY], for himself and Mr. KELLY, proposes an amendment numbered 3447 to Amendment No. 3411.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require a report on veterans who would have been reported to the national instant criminal background check system and who die by suicide with a firearm)

In section 412 of division A, before the period at the end, insert the following: "Pro-

vided, That, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish quarterly on a publicly available website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a report on the number of veterans who would have been reported to the national instant criminal background check system established under section 103 of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (34 U.S.C. 40901) if such reporting by the Secretary was permitted but for this section, and of those veterans, the number of suicides by firearm that occurred in the previous quarter".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, every year, there are 6,400 veterans who die by suicide. This is an urgent crisis that I know matters to colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

A few years ago, we made a change in law that restores gun rights to veterans who have been deemed mentally incompetent. These are veterans who can't manage their financial affairs, can't balance a checkbook—about 35 percent of them are diagnosed with schizophrenia.

All this amendment seeks to do is to collect information to see what the rate of suicide has been amongst that population of veterans, many of them deeply mentally ill, who now are able to purchase a gun. This is just an amendment seeking to get that information so that we can make our best determination on a bipartisan basis as to how to best protect veterans who are at moments of crisis in their life.

If it were up to me, we would restore the previous policy for 30 years. Democrats and Republicans agreed that those veterans diagnosed with schizophrenia should not be able to buy a gun, but all I am asking for here is an amendment that would seek to get information on the rate of suicide for this population of veterans.

I would hope that my colleagues would support the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, veterans who are found by competent judicial authority to be a danger to themselves or others are reported to NICS under current law. There is no evidence to suggest that individuals who require a fiduciary are inherently more prone to violence.

Under the terms of current law with this amendment in place, veterans who are found to be a danger to themselves or others by a judge, magistrate, or other judicial authority are reported to the NICS system, as is entirely appropriate.

Needing help with your finances doesn't make you mentally incapacitated or mentally incompetent.

For this reason, I urge a "no" vote.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3447

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGOS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 44, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 473 Leg.]

YEAS—44

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Rosen
Baldwin	Kaine	Sanders
Bennet	Kelly	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kim	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	King	Schumer
Booker	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cantwell	Lujan	Slotkin
Coons	Markey	Smith
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warner
Fetterman	Murray	Warnock
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Warren
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden
Hickenlooper	Reed	

NAYS—51

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lankford	Sheehy
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Cruz	Lummis	Thune
Curtis	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McCormick	Tuberville
Ernst	Moody	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Young

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy	Gallego	Welch
Duckworth	McConnell	

The amendment (No. 3447) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. LUJAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we go to 10-minute votes.

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

The Senator from Maryland.

AMENDMENT NO. 3115 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3411

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from New Mexico for that.

I call up my amendment No. 3115 that I offer on behalf of myself and Senators ALSOBROOKS, KAINE, and WARNER and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maryland [Mr. VAN HOLLEN] proposes an amendment numbered 3115 to amendment No. 3411.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit funds from being used for reorganization of the Department of Agriculture and to require a benefit-cost analysis on that reorganization, a public comment period, and a report)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . LIMITATIONS ON REORGANIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds made available to the Department of Agriculture in this Act or any other Act may be used to implement the Department of Agriculture memorandum issued on July 24, 2025 (relating to the Department of Agriculture reorganization plan) (referred to in this section as the “Memorandum”), or any similar plan relating to reorganization of the Department of Agriculture.

(b) BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

(1) conduct a benefit-cost analysis on the Memorandum and any similar plan relating to reorganization of the Department of Agriculture; and

(2) submit to the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Agriculture an unredacted report that contains—

(A) the findings of that benefit-cost analysis; and

(B) such other information as the Office of Inspector General determines necessary for that benefit-cost analysis.

(c) PUBLIC COMMENT; REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

(1) carry out a public comment period on the Memorandum and any similar plan relating to reorganization of the Department of Agriculture to solicit public comment from agricultural producers and other communities on the impact of that reorganization; and

(2) submit to the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Agriculture a report that contains—

(A) a description of how that reorganization will retain sufficient staff expertise to carry out Department of Agriculture mission areas and result in greater efficiencies and customer service for agricultural producers and other communities; and

(B) such other information as the Office of Inspector General determines necessary for the report.

(d) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—The Office of Inspector General of the Department of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and make publicly available, the reports received under subsections (b)(2) and (c)(2).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, USDA has proposed a massive reorganization plan having done absolutely no due diligence. They have not talked to families or to farmers or to rural communities about it. They have not backed up their estimates of cost savings, and they have not provided the information needed to assure that this reorganization will not harm the critical work that USDA does.

This amendment directs USDA to take a step back and provide a transparent, informed, carefully considered plan for any such reorganization before implementing it. In other words, look and aim before you shoot.

It requires a vetted benefit-cost analysis and review of how this reorganiza-

tion would impact USDA’s staff expertise and ability to provide customer service. It requires a public comment process so our constituents and stakeholders can weigh in. Once USDA takes those steps, Congress can assess the need for that reorganization in fiscal year 2027.

I urge a “yes” vote on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

The Secretary of Agriculture has put forth a proposal to move some of the people that work in the DC area, to move those functions out to the country to be closer to the farmers and the ranchers they serve. I very much support this effort. We are at the front end of this effort.

She has testified in front of our Agriculture Approps Committee that she will work with us on it. The Ag-authorized committee is working on it as well. In fact, yesterday, I met with the Deputy Secretary of USDA. He committed to work on it.

We have a good process. We do not need to overly handcuff the USDA as they work to make this transition, which is a transition that we should make. We are working on it in the right way. We are at the front end of the proposal, not the back end.

I ask for a “no” vote on this amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3115

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGOS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 42, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 474 Leg.]

YEAS—42

Alsobrooks	Kaine	Rosen
Baldwin	Kelly	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kim	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	King	Schiff
Booker	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Lujan	Shaheen
Coons	Markley	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Smith
Durbin	Murphy	Van Hollen
Fetterman	Murray	Warner
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Warnock
Hassan	Padilla	Warren
Heinrich	Peters	Whitehouse
Hirono	Reed	Wyden

NAYS—53

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Bennet	Hagerty	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hawley	Paul
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeben	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Collins	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Lummis	Tillis
Curtis	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moran	

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy	Gallego	Welch
Duckworth	McConnell	

The amendment (No. 3114) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

AMENDMENT NO. 3466 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3411

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator DUCKWORTH, I call up amendment No. 3466 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Georgia [Mr. OSSOFF], for Ms. DUCKWORTH, proposes an amendment numbered 3466 to amendment No. 3411.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the plan of the Secretary for Department of Veterans Affairs workforce reduction in fiscal year 2026)

At the appropriate place in title II of division A, insert the following:

SEC. 2 ____ . REPORT ON PLAN OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO REDUCE WORKFORCE OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the current plan of the Secretary to reduce the workforce of the Department of Veterans Affairs in fiscal year 2026.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report submitted pursuant to subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) The analysis used by the Secretary to determine what, if any, workforce reductions are necessary to provide timely care and benefits for Veterans and why.

(2) How that analysis ensures that wait times will not be adversely affected by such reductions, but rather, assisted.

(c) LESSONS LEARNED.—The Secretary shall ensure that analyses submitted pursuant to subsection (b) incorporate lessons learned from terminations and reinstatements occurring in fiscal year 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, Senator DUCKWORTH has an amendment that warrants bipartisan support.

Secretary Collins has announced earlier this year his plan to fire 80,000 personnel at the VA. Amidst public outrage, he has backed off that plan. We still don’t know his intentions for mass firings in this coming fiscal year. All this amendment does is ask for a report on what the impact will be on the

provision of timely care and benefits for our veterans. So this is not a partisan or a political matter. If there are going to be significant reductions in force at the VA, we should know how it affects veterans' benefits.

I urge a vote for Senator DUCKWORTH's amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I understand Senator DUCKWORTH's concern. However, Secretary Collins publicly announced that, through normal attrition, early retirements, and deferred resignations, the VA staff would be properly sized by the end of fiscal year 2025. The rumored large-scale reduction in force is not necessary, and the VA has no plans to seek any further staffing reductions. Mission-critical positions at the VA are exempt from a hiring freeze and are not eligible for early retirement or deferred resignations.

To quote Secretary Collins:

A department-wide RIF is off the table.

Senator TUBERVILLE has an amendment that does not focus on rumored RIFs that will not take place but instead focuses on VA staffing reviews, the new staffing models it is pursuing, and the methodology underpinning these efforts.

For that reason, I ask for a "no" vote on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. OSSOFF. I would just note, if that is the case, the Department can make that clear in their report.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3466

Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on adoption of the amendment.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 475 Leg.]

YEAS—45

Alsobrooks	Fetterman	Klobuchar
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Lujan
Bennet	Hassan	Markley
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Merkley
Blunt Rochester	Hickenlooper	Murphy
Booker	Hirono	Murray
Cantwell	Kaine	Ossoff
Coons	Kelly	Padilla
Cortez Masto	Kim	Peters
Durbin	King	Reed

Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schiff
Schumer

Shaheen
Slotkin
Smith
Sullivan
Van Hollen

Warner
Warnock
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—50

Banks
Barrasso
Blackburn
Boozman
Britt
Budd
Capito
Collins
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Curtis
Daines
Ernst
Fischer

Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Husted
Hyde-Smith
Johnson
Justice
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McCormick
Moody
Moran

Moreno
Mullin
Murkowski
Paul
Ricketts
Risch
Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Sheehy
Thune
Tillis
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy
Duckworth

Gallego
McConnell

Welch

The amendment (No. 3466) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

AMENDMENT NO. 3413 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3411

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 3413 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alabama [Mr. TUBERVILLE] proposes an amendment numbered 3413 to Amendment No. 3411.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a report on the efforts of the Secretary to review and implement staffing models at the Department of Veterans Affairs that will ensure timely, high quality delivery of health care, benefits, and other services furnished by the Department)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. REPORT ON REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STAFFING MODELS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) DEFINITION OF APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—In this section, the term "appropriate committees of Congress" means—

(1) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(b) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the efforts of the Secretary to review and implement staffing models at the Department of Veterans Affairs that will ensure timely, high quality delivery of health care, benefits, and other services furnished by the Department. Such report shall describe the methodology and review process the Secretary is using to create the staffing models for the Department.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, as a son of a World War II veteran, I have seen firsthand the critical role that the VA plays in caring for those who have served our country. Unfortunately,

under President Biden's leadership, it was a dumpster fire.

Some of my Democratic colleagues seem to have forgotten about these failures, so let's take a trip down memory lane.

It was Department of Veterans Affairs under President Biden that rehired and gave full backpay to hundreds of VA employees who had been fired for failing to do their jobs. These employees were not let go by mistake; they had been fired for poor performance.

But, apparently, the Biden administration didn't care about that. The Biden VA decision to rehire these bad employees cost us \$134 million.

Or my colleagues have forgotten that, magically, the VA had a multibillion-dollar budget shortfall last year. How does that even happen? There is zero accountability, unfortunately.

Thank goodness President Trump and Secretary Collins are in charge now. They are working around the clock to right-size the VA. The Trump administration is singularly focused on making sure veterans have timely access to quality care and benefits.

We need to support Secretary Collins and this administration in achieving the core goals for our veterans, not waste our time playing politics.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, the Senator from Alabama offers an amendment that would require the VA to submit a report on the implementation of staffing models, and that is sorely needed. And I rise in support of this amendment.

We saw Secretary Collins initially say he wanted to fire 15 percent of the VA workforce—80,000 people—with no explanation. Then he demolished morality at the VA so that 30,000 people quit. Now he says he is not going to fire 80,000 people. He fired most of the new hires, probationary workers, many of them veterans, until that was held up in court. None of this is supported by any kind of analysis or assessment of how it would impact wait times or the provision of service for veterans.

So I appreciate the Senator from Alabama for wanting to hold the administration accountable.

I urge a "yes" vote to the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. I accept it, and I ask for a voice vote.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3413

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on adoption of the amendment. The amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 3413) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

AMENDMENT NO. 3414 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3411

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 3414 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Louisiana [Mr. KENNEDY] proposes an amendment numbered 3414 to amendment No. 3411.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To reduce the Agriculture discretionary appropriations by 2 percent across the board)

On page 219, after line 25, add the following:

SEC. 783. Each discretionary appropriation made under this division is reduced, on a pro rata basis, by the amount necessary to reduce the amount of discretionary appropriations made available under this division, but for this section, by 2 percent.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this is an amendment to the Ag Appropriations Subcommittee budget. Our chair of that subcommittee is able, he is talented, and he exercises power maturely, in my judgment.

I just think we ought to reduce spending. It is clear to me that to do that, we are going to have to do it by baby steps.

This amendment would reduce fiscal year 2026 Agriculture discretionary spending appropriations, if you will, by 2 percent—2 percent. That would take us from \$27.1 billion to \$26.55 billion—a reduction of \$542 million. That represents 0.007 percent of the total that the Federal Government is currently spending on an annualized basis.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but if the Federal budget were a 24-hour day—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. KENNEDY.—this reduction represents about 7 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, this amendment would be an across-the-board cut. We made targeted cuts, and we had to fully fund WIC, which was a significant increase. So our cuts are actually more than the 2 percent that the gentleman is talking about.

I support his desire to reduce spending, but, overall, we are up a little over 1 percent with that significant increase of about 7 percent in WIC.

Again, I think we have done this the right way. We still have to go to conference with the House. They are about 5 percent below where we are. So I would ask for a “no” vote on this amendment and defer to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I want to agree with Chairman HOEVEN. This amendment would apply an indiscriminate cut across a carefully negotiated bipartisan bill. It would create a funding shortfall for the WIC Program, threaten the ability of the FDA to collect user fees, undermine farm loan programs, shortchange the Nation's food safety enterprise, and hamper our ability to fight animal and plant diseases

like bird flu and New World screwworm. I bet you didn't know what that was.

I urge my colleagues to join Senator HOEVEN and me in opposing this amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3414

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays have been requested. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGOS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 14, nays 81, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 476 Leg.]

YEAS—14

Banks	Hagerty	Paul
Barrasso	Johnson	Schmitt
Budd	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lummis	Tuberville
Curtis	Moody	

NAYS—81

Alsobrooks	Hawley	Padilla
Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blackburn	Hirono	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hoeben	Risch
Blunt Rochester	Husted	Rosen
Booker	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Boozman	Justice	Sanders
Britt	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schiff
Capito	Kim	Schumer
Collins	King	Scott (SC)
Coons	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cornyn	Lankford	Sheehy
Cortez Masto	Lee	Slotkin
Cotton	Lujan	Smith
Cramer	Markey	Sullivan
Crapo	Marshall	Thune
Daines	McCormick	Tillis
Durbin	Merkley	Van Hollen
Ernst	Moran	Warner
Fetterman	Moreno	Warnock
Fischer	Mullin	Warren
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Graham	Murphy	Wicker
Grassley	Murray	Wyden
Hassan	Ossoff	Young

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy	Gallegos	Welch
Duckworth	McConnell	

The amendment (No. 3414) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

AMENDMENT NO. 3113, AS MODIFIED, TO

AMENDMENT NO. 3411

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 3113 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Florida [Mr. SCOTT] proposes an amendment numbered 3113 to amendment No. 3411.

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

(Purpose: To reduce funding for certain programs under the division making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies)

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the amount made available for—

(1) “Agricultural Programs—National Institute of Food and Agriculture—Research and Education Activities” shall be \$487,510,000;

(2) “Agricultural Programs—Economic Research Service” shall be \$80,000,000;

(3) “Agricultural Programs—National Agricultural Statistics Service” shall be \$185,000,000;

(4) “Agricultural Programs—Agricultural Research Service—Salaries and Expenses” shall be \$1,700,000,000;

(5) “Agricultural Programs—Agricultural Research Service—Buildings and Facilities” shall be \$42,500,000;

(6) “Farm Production and Conservation Programs—Natural Resources Conservation Service—Conservation Operations” shall be \$112,259,000;

(7) “Farm Production and Conservation Programs—Natural Resources Conservation Service—Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations” shall be \$36,360,000;

(8) “Farm Production and Conservation Programs—Farm Production and Conservation Business Center—Salaries and Expenses” shall be \$214,000,000;

(9) “Farm Production and Conservation Programs—Farm Service Agency—Salaries and Expenses” shall be \$950,000,000, of which no amounts shall be required to be used for the hiring of new employees to fill vacancies and anticipated vacancies at Farm Service Agency county offices and farm loan officers;

(10) “Rural Development Programs—Rural Development—Salaries and Expenses” shall be \$265,008,000;

(11) “Rural Development Programs—Rural Housing Service—Rural Housing Insurance Fund Program Account” for—

(A) gross obligations of the principal amount of section 523 self-help housing land development loans shall be \$0; and

(B) the cost of section 523 self-help housing land development loans, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be \$0;

(12) “Rural Development Programs—Rural Housing Service—Rural Housing Voucher Account” shall be \$0;

(13) “Rural Development Programs—Rural Housing Service—Mutual and Self-Help Housing Grants” shall be \$0;

(14) “Rural Development Programs—Rural Housing Service—Rural Housing Assistance Grants” shall be \$0;

(15) “Rural Development Programs—Rural Housing Service—Rural Community Facilities Program Account” for the cost of loans, loan guarantees, and grants, including the cost of modifying loans, shall be \$204,436,000, of which no amounts shall be available for community facilities grants, as authorized by section 306(a)(19) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, or grants to tribal colleges as authorized by section 306(a)(25) of such Act;

(16) “Rural Development Programs—Rural Utilities Service—Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loans Program Account” for—

(A) cost-of-money rural telecommunications loans made pursuant to section

305(d)(2) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 shall be \$0; and

(B) guaranteed rural telecommunications loans made pursuant to section 306 of that Act shall be \$0;

(17) “Domestic Food Programs—Food and Nutrition Service—Commodity Assistance Program” shall be \$91,070,000, of which no amounts shall be available for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program; and

(18) “Foreign Assistance and Related Programs—Foreign Agricultural Service—McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program Grants” shall be \$0.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, first and most importantly, I want to thank my colleagues for their work on these appropriations bills and the support of our agriculture community in this bill.

Our Nation is \$37 trillion in debt and running \$2 trillion deficits after years of Democrats grossly expanding Federal spending. We have to start somewhere to get our out-of-control spending in check, and the President’s budget is a great place to start.

President Trump made a promise to the American people that he would bring fiscal sanity to our Nation and turn the economy around. He wants to balance the budget, and so do I. The President put forward a budget proposal that works toward that goal. We should be passing appropriations bills that respect his requests and the will of the American people.

My amendment would put us closer to the President’s budget request for the ag budget as he delivers on his promise to the American people.

I encourage my colleagues to support my amendment and restore fiscal sanity.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I support my colleagues’ efforts to find spending reductions. He does make a number of changes that go in line with the President’s budget, but he does a number of things that absolutely will not work.

For example, cuts ag research by more than 40 percent. Let me repeat that. He cuts ag research by more than 40 percent. Cuts the FSA. That is most important Agency for our farmers. That is out in farm country where they are—cuts that Farm Service Agency by 20 percent; rural development, cut 20 percent; technical assistance at NRCS by 80 percent.

So, again, we did make reductions. We actually reduced about 2 percent, but then we do fully fund WIC, which caused the increase to 1 percent. I ask for a “no” vote on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I agree with Senator HOEVEN. This amendment really would undermine the serious bipartisan work that went into crafting a strong bill within the confines of our allocation, and I think Senator HOEVEN made that point very well.

It would slash a host of things that are critical to farmers, producers in rural communities, hamstringing research and extension programs at land-grant universities, cutting funding for the Farm Service Agency, gutting rural development programs, eliminating the Commodity Supplemental Food Program that would rip away nutrition assistance for 700,000 seniors.

I would urge my colleagues to join Senator HOEVEN and me in opposing this amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3113, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. ROUNDS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGU) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 15, nays 81, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 477 Leg.]

YEAS—15

Banks	Hagerty	Moody
Barrasso	Johnson	Moreno
Budd	Kennedy	Paul
Curtis	Lee	Schmitt
Ernst	Lummis	Scott (FL)

NAYS—81

Alsobrooks	Hassan	Peters
Baldwin	Hawley	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hickenlooper	Risch
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Blunt Rochester	Hoeven	Rounds
Booker	Husted	Sanders
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Britt	Justice	Schiff
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Capito	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kim	Shaheen
Coons	King	Sheehy
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Smith
Cotton	Lujan	Sullivan
Cramer	Markey	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Tillis
Cruz	McCormick	Tuberville
Daines	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Moran	Warner
Durbin	Mullin	Warnock
Fetterman	Murkowski	Warren
Fischer	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wicker
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden
Grassley	Padilla	Young

NOT VOTING—4

Cassidy	McConnell	Welch
Gallego		

The amendment (No. 3113) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

AMENDMENT NO. 3428 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3411

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 3428 and ask it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wisconsin [Mr. JOHNSON] proposes an amendment numbered 3428 to Amendment No. 3411.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To limit disclosures regarding earmarks)

On page 2, after line 13, add the following:

SEC. 4. LIMITATION ON DISCLOSURE OF EARMARKS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section—

(1) the term “congressional earmark” has the meaning given that term in clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the term “disclosure” means a mention or reference in any communications sent from the official office of a Member of Congress, any debate of a bill other than this Act in a congressional committee or on the floor of the Senate or the House of Representatives, any media interview or appearance, any public speaking engagement, or any public communications pursuant to a political campaign.

(b) LIMITATION.—Funds provided under any division of this Act for a congressional earmark shall be rescinded if a Member of Congress who requested and received the congressional earmark makes a disclosure of the congressional earmark outside of official debate of this Act in the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate or the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives or on the floor of the Senate or the House of Representatives.

(c) NOTICE.—Not later than 15 days after the date on which funds provided for any congressional earmark are rescinded under subsection (b), the head of the Federal agency to which the funds were made available shall notify the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives about the rescission.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, the late great Senator Tom Colburn referred to earmarks as the gateway drug to runaway spending.

In testimony before the House in 2018, he stated: I have witnessed earmarking up close and know it is inherently corrupt. Earmarks are abused as a form of currency to buy and sell votes of politicians and to reward political supporters.

Convicted superlobbyist Jack Abramoff affectionately called the earmark system “the favor factory.”

I am sad to report that the favor factory is up and running about \$1.3 billion worth of earmarks in this bill alone.

My amendment acknowledges the reality that those of us who are opposed to earmarks are grossly outnumbered, so as hard as we try to ban them, we won’t be able to. So my amendment simply tries to prevent earmarks being used as a quasi-campaign contribution. So members can talk about the earmarks in official Senate proceedings, subcommittee hearings, committee hearings, on the floor, in official Senate publications, but if they go on media, if they set up press releases, if they use them in ads, those earmarks are automatically rescinded.

If people really don't believe that this is a favor factory, this amendment should pass 100 to zero.

I urge a "yes" vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the Appropriations Committee takes very seriously the oversight and accountability of every CDS request. The project and certifications for each item are posted on both the committee website and Members' official website. Senators have to certify that neither they nor any immediate family member has a financial interest in the item request, and GAO, which is Congress's nonpartisan auditor, conducts an analysis of select projects every year.

The Johnson amendment would prohibit virtually any public communication about CDS and make the process less transparent.

This amendment states the remedy for breaking that new rule, for telling our constituents what we are doing is to rescind that CDS.

This is an important way for Senators to advocate for their States and communities through investments in local projects like improving transportation, drinking water infrastructure, workforce programs, childcare centers.

This amendment would take away your ability to be responsive to your communities. We absolutely should be letting our constituents know what we are doing here and what we are advocating for.

I strongly urge you to oppose this amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3428

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. JOHNSON. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 21, nays 75, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 478 Leg.]

YEAS—21

Banks	Ernst	Lummis
Blackburn	Hagerty	Marshall
Budd	Hawley	Moody
Crapo	Johnson	Moreno
Cruz	Kennedy	Paul
Curtis	Lankford	Risch
Daines	Lee	Scott (FL)

NAYS—75

Alsobrooks	Blumenthal	Britt
Baldwin	Blunt Rochester	Cantwell
Barrasso	Booker	Capito
Bennet	Boozman	Collins

Coons	Kelly	Schatz
Cornyn	Kim	Schiff
Cortez Masto	King	Schmitt
Cotton	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cramer	Lujan	Scott (SC)
Duckworth	Markey	Shaheen
Durbin	McCormick	Sheehy
Fetterman	Merkley	Slotkin
Fischer	Moran	Smith
Gillibrand	Mullin	Sullivan
Graham	Murkowski	Thune
Grassley	Murphy	Tillis
Hassan	Murray	Tuberville
Heinrich	Ossoff	Van Hollen
Hickenlooper	Padilla	Warner
Hirono	Peters	Warnock
Hoeben	Reed	Warren
Husted	Ricketts	Whitehouse
Hyde-Smith	Rosen	Wicker
Justice	Rounds	Wyden
Kaine	Sanders	Young

NOT VOTING—4

Cassidy	McConnell	Welch
Gallego		

The amendment (No. 3428) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

AMENDMENT NO. 3411, AS AMENDED

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, first, let me announce to our colleagues that we are on the verge of an accomplishment that we have not done since 2018, and that is, pass appropriations bills across the Senate floor prior to the August recess.

(Applause.)

That is exercising our constitutional responsibility for the power of the purse, and it would not have happened without the extraordinarily hard work of the members of the Appropriations Committee. My colleague the vice chair, PATTY MURRAY—Senator MURRAY has been determined to reach this goal.

I also want to commend the leadership of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, and I hope Legislative Branch Subcommittees for their work on the fiscal year 2026 bills.

Again, I think we can all be pleased that the Senate lived up to its responsibilities tonight.

Let me just end by thanking Leader THUNE for bringing these bills to the Senate floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I echo the thanks to all of our subcommittee and committee members and especially to the chair of our committee, Senator COLLINS, all of our staff—everyone who has worked really hard to get here.

These are good, bipartisan bills—bills that make crucial investments to help all of our farms and families and veterans and servicemembers thrive.

I urge a "yes" vote. I believe Congress should decide how to spend taxpayer dollars. This is how we do it. Vote yes.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3411, AS AMENDED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

Ms. COLLINS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 87, nays 9, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 479 Leg.]

YEAS—87

Alsobrooks	Graham	Murkowski
Baldwin	Grassley	Murray
Banks	Hagerty	Ossoff
Barrasso	Hassan	Peters
Bennet	Hawley	Reed
Blackburn	Heinrich	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Risch
Blunt Rochester	Hirono	Rosen
Boozman	Hoeben	Rounds
Britt	Husted	Schatz
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cantwell	Johnson	Schumer
Capito	Justice	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Coons	Kelly	Shaheen
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cortez Masto	Kim	Slotkin
Cotton	King	Smith
Cramer	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Curtis	Lujan	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCormick	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Ernst	Moody	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Moreno	Wyden
Gillibrand	Mullin	Young

NAYS—9

Booker	Murphy	Sanders
Lummis	Padilla	Schiff
Markey	Paul	Warren

NOT VOTING—4

Cassidy	McConnell	Welch
Gallego		

The amendment (No. 3411), as amended, was agreed to.

(Mr. HUSTED assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). On this vote, the yeas are 87, the nays are 9.

The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the amendment, as amended, is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 3411), as amended, was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the third time.

The amendments were ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

VOTE ON H.R. 3944, AS AMENDED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. PETERS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and

the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 87, nays 9, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 480 Leg.]

YEAS—87

Alsobrooks	Graham	Murkowski
Baldwin	Grassley	Murray
Banks	Hagerty	Ossoff
Barrasso	Hassan	Peters
Bennet	Hawley	Reed
Blackburn	Heinrich	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Risch
Blunt Rochester	Hirono	Rosen
Boozman	Hoeben	Rounds
Britt	Husted	Schatz
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cantwell	Johnson	Schumer
Capito	Justice	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Coons	Kelly	Shaheen
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cortez Masto	Kim	Slotkin
Cotton	King	Smith
Cramer	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Curtis	Lujan	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCormick	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Ernst	Moody	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Moreno	Wyden
Gillibrand	Mullin	Young

NAYS—9

Booker	Murphy	Sanders
Lummis	Padilla	Schiff
Markey	Paul	Warren

NOT VOTING—4

Cassidy	McConnell	Welch
Gallego		

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 87, the nays are 9.

The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the bill, as amended, is passed.

The bill (H.R. 3944), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

AMENDMENT NO. 3412

(Purpose: To improve the bill.)

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 3412 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. MULLIN] proposes an amendment numbered 3412.

The amendment is as follows:

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of July 31, 2025, under “Text of Amendments.”)

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to ask my colleagues to support this fiscal year 2026 Legislative Branch bill.

This is a solid, bipartisan bill that meets the needs of Congress and supports our Agencies, especially the Sergeant at Arms and the Capitol Police, in a very fiscally responsible manner.

I commit to my colleagues to continue working in a bipartisan manner to address the best path forward for all of our security needs for the Members,

for our families, and for the friends who may be around us. It is challenging, and I understand that. I commit to you guys—all—that I will work to meet those needs. We have had a bipartisan commitment from both sides, and I hear y’all’s concerns. We will get those addressed, but this amendment moves us in the right direction.

With that, I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, thank you to Chair COLLINS and Vice Chair MURRAY.

The legislative branch bill is the smallest of the bills produced by the Senate Appropriations Committee, but it is really one of the most important because it helps to make sure that the legislature maintains its role as a separate and equal branch of government. It is no secret that this balance of power enshrined by the Founders in the Constitution could not be more important than it is today.

To be an effective check and balance to the executive branch, Congress and our support Agencies need adequate resources to carry out our responsibilities. This bill allocates those resources, allowing us to do the jobs that we were elected to do for the people of this Nation. Like most bills, each side got some of what they wanted and some of what they didn’t, but like any good legislation, we continued to find common ground across the aisle on so many important points. This includes a continued focus on investments, constituent services and security, oversight, and campus operation.

It also includes placeholders for several important, security-related activities that Chair MULLIN and I have collectively agreed to further develop and appropriately fund in conference based on additional information that we expect to receive from the Sergeant at Arms and the Capitol Police.

I want to especially thank Chair MULLIN and his clerk Molly McCarty for their incredible work with us on the Legislative Branch bill and report and demonstrating their commitment to continuing to work with me to provide the resources necessary to protect all of us. I also want to thank Richard Braddock and my team for their work to develop this bipartisan bill.

I believe this legislation provides a bipartisan package supporting our most critical needs, and I would really urge all of our colleagues to vote in favor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am the reason we are voting on this bill separately. I am going to vote no, and I would like to explain why.

I am not telling any of you to vote no, I am just telling you to follow your heart but take your brain with you.

As best I can tell, every bill that has come out of the Appropriations Committee has represented an increase in

spending. This bill, which is our bill, funds the legislative branch, has the largest increase in spending. I think we can do better.

That is not a reflection of the conscientious and thoughtful work done by my colleagues, both of whom just spoke. I just think we need to set an example. When we are increasing our spending 6 percent and others less, we are sending a message that we are special, and I don’t think we are.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3412

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. MULLEN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 81, nays 15, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 481 Leg.]

YEAS—81

Alsobrooks	Fischer	Murray
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Ossoff
Barrasso	Graham	Peters
Bennet	Grassley	Reed
Blackburn	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Risch
Blunt Rochester	Hawley	Rosen
Booker	Heinrich	Rounds
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Britt	Hirono	Schmitt
Budd	Hoeben	Schumer
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Capito	Justice	Shaheen
Collins	Kaine	Sheehy
Coons	Kelly	Slotkin
Cornyn	Kim	Smith
Cortez Masto	King	Sullivan
Cotton	Klobuchar	Thune
Cramer	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Lujan	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Van Hollen
Curtis	McCormick	Warner
Daines	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Moran	Whitehouse
Durbin	Moreno	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	Wyden
Fetterman	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—15

Banks	Lummis	Paul
Husted	Markey	Sanders
Johnson	Moody	Schiff
Kennedy	Murphy	Scott (FL)
Lee	Padilla	Warren

NOT VOTING—4

Cassidy	McConnell	Welch
Gallego		

The amendment (No. 3412) was agreed to. (The bill (H.R. 3944), as amended, will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, so we have now passed three appropriations bills—helping our farmers, helping our

veterans, helping our security. It shows that when both sides want to work together, we can get things done.

We hope we can make the same kind of progress on further appropriations bills that we have made on these.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I want to just congratulate Chair COLLINS, Vice Chair MURRAY, members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and the committee sub chairs this evening—I know, at least on our side, Chair BOOZMAN, Chair HOEVEN, Chair MULLIN—in getting a package of appropriations bills across the floor. It is a major accomplishment and something that I hope is a pattern for things to come. And so I would say thank you to all who worked so hard to get us to this point, including the many members of your staff who have worked night and day these last several weeks.

And the committee continues to report out, with big bipartisan margins, appropriations bills, and I hope we can get some more of them on the floor soon. So, again, congrats to the members of the committee, and let's vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session and consider the Rinaldi nomination.

VOTE ON RINALDI NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Rinaldi nomination?

Mr. PETERS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 482 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Banks	Cruz	Johnson
Barrasso	Curtis	Justice
Blackburn	Daines	Kennedy
Boozman	Ernst	Lankford
Britt	Fischer	Lee
Budd	Graham	Lummis
Capito	Grassley	Marshall
Collins	Hagerty	McCormick
Cornyn	Hawley	Moody
Cotton	Hoeven	Moran
Cramer	Husted	Moreno
Crapo	Hyde-Smith	Mullin

Murkowski
Paul
Ricketts
Risch
Rounds

Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Sheehy
Sullivan

Thune
Tillis
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

Sheehy
Sullivan

Thune
Tuberville

Wicker
Young

NAYS—43

Alsobrooks
Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Blunt Rochester
Booker
Cantwell
Coons
Cortez Masto
Duckworth
Durbin
Fetterman
Gillibrand
Hassan
Heinrich

Hickenlooper
Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
Kim
King
Klobuchar
Lujan
Markey
Merkley
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters

Reed
Rosen
Schatz
Schiff
Schumer
Shaheen
Slotkin
Smith
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

Alsobrooks
Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Blunt Rochester
Booker
Cantwell
Coons
Cortez Masto
Duckworth
Durbin
Gillibrand
Hassan
Heinrich
Hickenlooper

Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
Kim
King
Klobuchar
Lujan
Markey
Merkley
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Reed

Rosen
Schatz
Schiff
Schumer
Shaheen
Slotkin
Smith
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NOT VOTING—6

Cassidy
Gallego

McConnell
Sanders
Tillis
Welch

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy
Gallego

McConnell
Sanders
Welch

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Under the previous order, the clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of David Woll, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

VOTE ON WOLL NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Woll nomination?

Mr. COONS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 483 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Banks	Ernst	Lummis
Barrasso	Fetterman	Marshall
Blackburn	Fischer	McCormick
Boozman	Graham	Moody
Britt	Grassley	Moran
Budd	Hagerty	Moreno
Capito	Hawley	Mullin
Collins	Hoeven	Murkowski
Cornyn	Husted	Paul
Cotton	Hyde-Smith	Ricketts
Cramer	Johnson	Risch
Crapo	Justice	Rounds
	Kennedy	Schmitt
	Lankford	Scott (FL)
	Lee	Scott (SC)

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Nicholas Kent, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Education.

VOTE ON KENT NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question occurs on the nomination.

Mr. KELLY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 484 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lankford	Sheehy
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
	Lummis	Thune
	Marshall	Tuberville
	McCormick	Wicker
	Moody	Young
	Moran	