

some of this wrongdoing out and declassifying stuff that shouldn't have been classified in the first place.

Now, what I have just told you is not the end of the story. There is a lot more to uncover, and you can expect more documents to be released from this Senator in the coming months. This is not a Republican issue, this is not a Democrat issue, this is an issue of the bureaucracy, in this case the FBI being used as a political weapon, covering up. In fact, some of these documents that I released, Director Patel told me, and I think he also told the public this, that they found some of this evidence in what the FBI would call a burn bag.

So we have got to make sure that this stuff doesn't happen again.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon, we reached an agreement with Democrats on an appropriations package, and I am pleased to report that as of last night, we passed three of the fiscal year 2026 appropriations bills: Military Construction-Veterans Affairs, Legislative Branch, and Agriculture. Those are the three appropriations bills that we were able to pass last night.

I would say it is a very good start on appropriations, and a striking contrast, I might add, to last year when the Democrat leader failed to bring a single appropriations bill to the floor for a vote, notwithstanding the fact that 11 of the 12 passed out of the Appropriations Committee with big bipartisan margins.

And I want to thank Senate Appropriations Committee Chair COLLINS, as well as Senators HOEVEN, BOOZMAN, and MULLIN. I also want to thank Senator MORAN, who had done outstanding work on the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. And that would have passed last night had it not been for the opposition of a single Democrat Senator.

Thanks are due to all the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which has now reported out 8—8—of the 12 fiscal year 2026 appropriations bills.

The Senate is currently in its best place on appropriations in years, and I am grateful for all those who worked cooperatively and in good faith to make last night's votes happen. It is good to have the Senate back on a regular-order track on appropriations, and I will continue to work for a regular-order process as we continue, and I hope that Democrats will join us in that effort.

It was disturbing to hear the Democrat leader threaten to shut down the government in his July 8 "Dear Colleague" letter. And I hope—I really hope—the Democrats will not embrace that position but will continue to work with Republicans to fund the government.

As I said, we are in the best place we have been in years, but we have a lot of work to do. And I hope that we will be able to continue the good work we began last night with continued bipartisan cooperation.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, I wish I had more good news or better news to offer this morning on the nominations front. I wish I could say that we had also reached an agreement on a nominations package yesterday, but, unfortunately, the Democrats continue to engage in their historic obstruction.

[F]or decades, Democrats and Republicans have regularly cooperated to swiftly confirm the many, many individuals selected by each President to serve in their administration.

Regardless of the party in the White House, both sides have long agreed that a President deserves to have his or her Administration in place, quickly.

That doesn't mean we don't disagree. But it does mean when nominees are held up, opposed, or blocked—it's for a legitimate purpose, not for leverage in partisan games, to score political points at the expense of public safety.

Now let me repeat that last line:

But it does mean when nominees are held up, opposed, or blocked—it's for a legitimate purpose, not for leverage in partisan games, to score political points at the expense of public safety.

Now, interestingly enough, those last lines aren't mine. Those are the words of the Democrat leader just 3 short years ago. And I wish—I truly wish—it was the philosophy of the Democrat leader and his party still espoused today. But, instead, they have embraced a historic level of obstruction, slow-walking every single one of President Trump's civilian nominees, including—including—nominees who have ultimately received substantial Democrat support. That is the very definition of the partisan games the Democrat leader deplored just a few short years ago.

And so just to put a fine point on that, I want to show you where we are relative to history with regard to nominations.

As you can see going back to the Presidency of George H. W. Bush—41, as he is affectionately described—98 percent of all the nominees were confirmed either by voice vote or unanimous consent. That was also true of the Democrat President Bill Clinton. George W. Bush, 43, had 90 percent of his nominees confirmed either by voice vote or unanimous consent. And President Obama—so we went Republican back to Democrat—also had 90 percent of his nominees confirmed either by voice vote or unanimous consent.

Now, that started to drop off in the first Trump administration down to 65

percent. It dropped down to 57 percent during the Biden administration.

But what is really striking is here we are 6 months into—more than that really now—this current administration, and that right there, a big fat zero, is what the Democrats have allowed in terms of nominees either confirmed by voice vote or unanimous consent.

Now, under any circumstance, I understand there are strong disagreements with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle—don't like the President, all that; there is certainly that element—but this is historic and unprecedented obstruction when it comes to allowing someone who has been elected by the people of this country, in a fairly significant, I would argue, mandate, an election, to get their person in place to do the jobs that the American people elected that President—President Trump—to do. And so you cannot, under any circumstance, defend that.

Now, you can say—you know, we can argue, and these numbers are not moving in the right direction, which is why I would argue we have got to change the process by which we do this; otherwise we are going to continue to deteriorate to where any President who comes in here is going to be very, very hard-pressed to do the job the American people elected him to do.

But, really, that one right there, that big fat zero, sticks out in a very big and significant way.

And I wonder how Democrats' continued determination to slow-walk President Trump's nominees will play with the voters who, after all, as I said, elected President Trump with the thought that he would be able to fill up his administration.

Democrats need to get serious about agreeing to a nominations package to confirm a number of these outstanding nominations, and I would tell you—and they are well aware of this—that a lot of the nominees on the current backlog are nominees who have bipartisan support; in some cases, broad bipartisan support, multiple Democrats voting for these nominees coming out of the committee. There are a whole bunch of those that are backed up on this backlog.

And so I sincerely hope that they will change their tune and decide to work with this administration to make that happen; otherwise, I mean, I have said this before, and I think it is true. We are setting records around here for hours in session. We are setting records around here for number of votes cast—I mean, not by a little, by a lot—relative to previous Senates, and a lot of it has to do with that statistic I just pointed out.

It is time for that to change, and we are not asking a lot. We are just simply saying: Treat this President, at least on some level, in the way that previous Presidents, both Democrats and Republican Presidents, have been treated in the past by both Republican and Democrat Senates.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Puzder nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I just listened to my friend, the majority leader, speak. Let me say, historically bad nominees deserve historic levels of scrutiny. I saw the majority leader bring out a chart again today comparing the situation right now to past nominees from past administrations. What he fails to mention is we have never seen nominees as flawed, as compromised, as unqualified as we have right now. And the Republican Senators know that.

So, once again, historically bad nominees deserve a historical level of scrutiny.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, on approps, we did get appropriations bills done last night, and now I would like to say a few words on what needs to happen with appropriations moving forward. Last night was another clear example of Democrats working in good faith to put the needs of families, veterans, moms, kids, and rural communities ahead of the special interests. Donald Trump and DOGE have run roughshod on hundreds of billions of dollars in funding that so many communities depend on, including funding to care for parents, to care for rural Americans, and to care for those, our veterans, who have served this country.

But last night's appropriations bills were a rejection of the Trump-Vought agenda. We took a good step in reversing those DOGE cuts and fully funding many critical programs last night, including funds to care for our veterans and our farmers. Specifically, we provided our Nation's veterans with the benefits and medical care they have earned, while countering the awful DOGE cuts at the VA. We provided for rural veterans' care, expanded access for telehealth, and fully funded benefits through the PACT Act to cover those suffering from toxic exposure, and so much more.

And that is not all. We are fully funding WIC, which cares for women and children's nutrition and healthcare. We protect rural funding, too.

These numbers are all much higher than what House Republicans are push-

ing in their legislation, and it is bipartisan agreement here in the Senate, unlike the House.

So last night's legislation wasn't a perfect bill but a step in the right direction. And it is an example how the funding process could work—could work—if the other side is willing to work in good faith, instead of listening all the time to Donald Trump and Russell Vought and the extreme right.

Democrats want the bipartisan funding process to work. We believe that when we have legislation before us that takes real steps—important steps—to help the American people in many ways, we should take it seriously. That is why we worked on these bills over the past week in good faith.

But we have a long way to go. We know that. We all know that. Democrats aren't going to take things for granted and some difficult bills remain ahead of us. The onus is on the Republican majority to determine how this Chamber is going to operate when it matters most during the appropriations process. They must do more to ensure that process stays bipartisan in the fall. They cannot just keep caving to Donald Trump and Russell Vought when they try to kill bipartisan cooperation, push illegal impoundment of funds or rescission packages. We have seen that already, and it is unacceptable. The process isn't easy, but we are showing today that it is possible.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 186, Andrew Puzder, of Tennessee, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Bernie Moreno, Tommy Tuberville, Kevin Cramer, Ron Johnson, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, John Barrasso, Marsha Blackburn, Roger Marshall, Jon A. Husted, Roger F. Wicker, Jim Banks, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Ted Budd, David McCormick.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Andrew Puzder, of Tennessee, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the Rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Sen-

ator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 485 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—7

Duckworth	Sanders	Welch
Gallego	Tillis	
McConnell	Warner	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 41. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, when I walked through that door—I guess it was only about 50 minutes ago—I had no intention of speaking. Half an hour ago, I had no intention of speaking today. But I need a little therapy. So congratulations, therapists—I have a couple of things on my mind.

As I stand here—as we stand here—uncertain about what this Saturday morning in August is going to produce, I just had some thoughts. My first thought seems probably pretty basic, and it is to the Democrats in the Chamber—specifically, their leadership.

Breaking news: Donald Trump won the election. He is the President of the United States. You don't have to like it, but he did. He won.

What got me a little bit ramped up this morning was I started thinking about all of Joe Biden's nominees that I voted for, and I got to thinking about