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## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of new beginnings, the author and sustainer of our faith, thank You for this fresh start as we strive again to do the work of freedom.

Bless our lawmakers to seek to do Your will, empowering them with greater knowledge and discernment so that they may approve the things that are excellent. Lord, give them a productivity that comes from the power of Your Spirit, using them to do Your work on Earth. Show them Your greatness and Your mighty hand during this season of wars, violence, and polarization.

You are our rock, our fortress, and our deliverer. We will trust in Your strength and preserve this land we live in so that we will be instruments of Your peace. We pray in Your invincible name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026—Motion to Proceed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2296, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 115, S. 2296, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2026 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### TRIBUTE TO JONI ERNST

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, one minute to honor my colleague JONI ERNST. She announced today that she will not seek another term in the U.S. Senate. It has been a wonderful opportunity serving with her and serving Iowans since 2015.

As the Senate's first female combat veteran and Iowa's first woman elected to Congress, she broke barriers at every turn and accomplished what she set out to do by coming to the U.S. Senate, in her words:

Make 'em squeal.

After a long career in the Iowa National Guard as well as elected office, JONI has served our country and State with pride and with distinction.

Barbara and I wish her well and know that whatever she chooses to do in her next chapter, they will be lucky to have this outstanding leader on the team. I will miss serving with JONI but know she will enjoy having more time to cherish her favorite role as a mother and grandmother.

#### TRIBUTE TO EDUCATORS

Mr. President, now on another subject, across Iowa and America, stu-

dents and teachers are back in the classroom. As we look ahead to a new academic year, I would like to commend the dedicated educators, administrators, and support staff who make a difference in the lives of students each and every day. Teachers make a lasting impact on their students from one school year to the next and even decades after their students leave the classroom.

Like so many families across my home State, I am proud to have teachers in my own family tree. I am the son of a schoolteacher. My mother taught in one-room rural schools for nearly a half century, 49 years to be exact. My sister Lois was lauded for her work ethic and being a respected mentor to her peers. She taught business and computer classes to three generations of students.

Today, I would like to sing the praises of my daughter-in-law Diane Grassley. She is married to my son Robin who operates our fourth-generation family farm in New Hartford, IA, with their son Patrick Grassley. At the start of this school year, Diane marks 25 years of service in the Dike-New Hartford Community School District where she works as a teacher associate. Barbara and I congratulate Diane on this remarkable milestone, and we are proud to say that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree because both of Diane's daughters followed in their mother's footsteps. Dana teaches math at Union Middle School in Dysart, IA, and Carrie is a school counselor at the Dike Elementary School.

Congratulations, Diane, on your decades of service and unwavering commitment to educating the next generation in the Dike-New Hartford Community School District.

As a proud father-in-law and a graduate of New Hartford High School, I say: #rollblue to the Wolverines. Have a great year.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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



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S5539

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.

#### NOMINATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it has been a very busy year here in the U.S. Senate. From confirming President Trump's nominees to repealing burdensome Biden administration regulations, to passing the One Big Beautiful Bill, to preventing a massive tax hike on hard-working Americans, Republicans have been hard at work delivering on the mandate we received from the American people.

The Senate has taken, so far, 499 votes this year, more than in any Congress at this point in the last 35-plus years. In fact, we have taken more votes in 2025 already in 8 months than the Senate has taken in a full 12 months for most—all but 2—of the past 36 years.

But we have a lot more work to do, and we are going to get it done. That starts this week with consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act, one of the most important pieces of legislation that we consider every year.

That will be followed by continued appropriations work so we can get the government funded by the September 30 deadline. We have already done some good work on appropriations. In fact, for the first time in years, we went into August having passed 3 of the 12 appropriations bills. The last time that happened—a single appropriations bill passed before the August break—was 2018.

But needless to say, there is a lot more to do. And I hope that our Democrat colleagues will resist the calls from within for a shutdown and work with us to fund the government.

Along with the National Defense Authorization Act and funding the government, we have another important task to accomplish in the coming weeks and that is making major headway on confirming more of President Trump's nominees. Thanks to a lot of hours here in the Senate to overcome Democrat obstruction, we went into August having confirmed 135 of the President's civilian nominees, more than had been confirmed by this point in his first term. But there are a lot more nominees to go.

I am here to tell my Democrat colleagues that their historic obstruction cannot continue. When voters elect a President, that comes with certain expectations, one of which is that a President will be able to fill up his or her administration with his or her nominees. And, historically, the Senate has reflected that by confirming most of a President's civilian nominees by

unanimous consent or voice vote, which means without obstruction and blocking. President George H. W. Bush had 98 percent of his civilian nominees confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote here in the Senate, and so did President Clinton. President George W. Bush and President Obama both had 90 percent of their civilian nominees confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote. But things changed during the first Trump administration. Democrats started obstructing nominees who had previously been confirmed without a drawn-out process.

But even so, both President Trump and his first administration and President Biden had more than half of their civilian nominees confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote without a long, drawn-out process.

Well, fast forward to 2025. As of today, September 2, President Trump has not had a single one—single one—of his civilian nominees confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote, not a single one. By this point in his administration, President Biden had 76—76—confirmed without dragging it out and delaying and blocking and obstructing. When I say that President Trump's nominees have faced a historic level of obstruction, I am not being political or hyperbolic. I am doing nothing more than stating the bare facts. Between the calendar and committees, we currently have nominees pending for a total of 302 civilian positions. And 95 percent of those positions—95 percent—were confirmed by voice vote at least once during the previous three incoming administrations. Yet Democrats seem unwilling to expedite consideration for a single one.

This cannot continue. The American people elected President Trump. And like any President, he deserves to be able to fill up his administration. In fact, we owe the voters nothing less. That doesn't mean rubberstamping every nominee, but it does mean an end to the ridiculous—and I mean ridiculous—delays on every nomination, including on nominations the Democrats ended up supporting in significant numbers. I say that, "supporting in significant numbers," because let's be clear here, the Democrat leader might like people to think Democrats are holding up all these nominees because they are, in his words, "historically bad," but, in fact, at least some Democrats have ultimately voted in favor of many of these nominations. Mr. President, 61 out of the 135 civilian nominees confirmed received at least one Democrat vote on the final confirmation, and fully half of the civilian nominees currently on the calendar were reported out of committee with bipartisan support. Democrats aren't holding up nominations to minor administration positions out of principled opposition; they are holding them up because they don't like President Trump. That is not a good reason.

Democrats' obstruction is not only preventing voters from getting the ad-

ministration they elected, it is also slowing down the essential business of the U.S. Senate. Over August, my colleagues and I discussed various ways of addressing this problem and expediting confirmations. There are a lot of options on the table, none of which, I might add, would be necessary if the Senate Democrats treated this President the way that Republican and Democrat Senates have treated Republican and Democrat Presidents for all of American history. In fact, you have to go back a long way in the annals of history to find a time—in fact, moving back as far as the Hoover administration—as far back as I think we can find records and data, to find a President who didn't have at least one of his nominees confirmed here in the Senate by voice vote or unanimous consent at this point in their administration.

In fact, the majority of Presidential confirmations were conducted on a bipartisan basis for a long time here in the Senate, and there is no reason we couldn't go back to that right now. All it takes is a little behavioral change and a willingness to acknowledge President Trump won an election. The American people voted for him, and they expect him to be able to populate his administration with the people that he wants to serve in many of these positions.

But if Democrats continue to obstruct, if they continue to drag out the confirmation of every single one of the nominations of the duly elected President, if they continue to slow the Senate's business to such a drastic degree, then we are going to have to take steps to get this process back on a reasonable footing.

This is not sustainable. You can't run a government this way. It has never been done before ever—ever—in history. This is not a sustainable business model. In one way or the other, it is going to have to get fixed.

The Democrats can play ball the way every Democrat and Republican Senate has, going back as far as we can find in the annals of history, or things are going to have to change around here. It is as simple as that. The ball, I would say, Mr. President, is in the Democrat's court.

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. 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.

#### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Well, Mr. President, today, we are starting an important work period in the Senate. Every work period is important but this one especially so because this month, Congress

needs to step up and fix all of the disasters that Donald Trump has created since he became President.

Donald Trump has been President for 225 days, and each one has been worse than the last. Every time Trump creates a new crisis, each new controversy, each new lie, every time he sends armed troops to U.S. cities, each new attack on the courts, on the rule of law, on the Constitution is a disgrace—a disgrace—to the Presidency. That is what Donald Trump's Presidency has been—a disgrace, a failure, an exercise in pathetic leadership.

I just spent a month traveling from one corner of New York to the other, talking to families, businesspeople—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—and the trend is clear: American families are poorer because of President Trump, American businesses are less optimistic because of President Trump, and American communities are less safe because of President Trump. America is more isolated, less respected, and wields less influence over world affairs because of President Trump. The picture of Modi and Putin and Xi standing there together as allies—it was Donald Trump who ended up making that happen.

A recent survey showed that the United States is now the only country—we are the only country—among 184 that shows a drop in international visitors. People don't want to come to America anymore because Donald Trump has so tarnished what our country is all about and what has made our country so great. And it is not just about reputation; it is going to cost our economy billions that come from tourism and kill jobs.

It will freeze entire communities. I was just in Niagara Falls, in the Finger Lakes. Twenty to twenty-five percent of our tourists each summer are usually Canadian but not this year. Canadians don't want to come here. And they are angry. The people—not just the government but the people are angry about what Trump is saying about their country and saying about them. When folks as friendly as the Canadian people suddenly don't want to have anything to do with America, that is when you know that Donald Trump is like a disease to America's greatness.

It is incumbent upon Republicans in Congress to join us to fix these disasters through the appropriations process, through commonsense legislation.

The question still is, Will Senate Republicans keep bowing to Donald Trump and enabling his lies every step of the way? When will they have the guts to stand up to him? Because they know he is lying because that is what Donald Trump is. Donald Trump is a liar through and through. It has been his MO his whole life. I have seen that in New York. He has lied to the American people, lied about the economy, about fixing inflation, about peace in Europe and the Middle East. He lied about Epstein and the Epstein files. He

lied about elections. He lied about Social Security and Medicaid. One lie—one lie—after another and another.

Let's start with the economy and Donald Trump's tariffs. Donald Trump said his tariffs would bring liberation to America. This has turned out to be one big, fat lie. Companies are losing revenue, shedding jobs, and raising costs.

Just look at companies—great American companies—like John Deere and Caterpillar. They are strong; they are solid; they have always been a rock of America. But last month, they reported losses in the hundreds of millions and layoffs in the hundreds. Why? Donald Trump did it—nothing to do with farm conditions; the tariffs did it. Look at retailers like Target and Walmart, not to mention every grocery store chain in America. They are all raising prices. Hormel? They are raising the price of pork and beef. J.M. Smucker, which owns Folgers and Dunkin' Donuts and other coffee brands, said prices for its products will keep going up. Why? Trump's tariffs, plain and simple—no ands, ifs, or buts.

But, of course, Donald Trump will lie to the American people about his failures. As we have said, that has been his MO all along. Here is what he said on Monday. He said on Monday—he tweeted—that prices are way down in the United States, with virtually no inflation. Every single person in America knows that is a lie. Anyone who buys anything knows it is a lie. Every one of the 77 million Americans who voted for Trump knows he is lying. They know it when they go to the supermarket or try to buy something. They see higher prices at the grocery store, when paying their electric bills, and higher prices when buying school supplies. Yet the MAGA bots and FOX News propagandists, who always seem to want to cover up for Donald Trump, will pretend he is right just so they can keep on sucking up to him. It is pathological. It is delusional. It is more lies.

Nowhere is the Trump psychosis more evident than in gas prices. Listen to this: President Trump claims that gas prices are under \$2 when every single American driver knows that is a lie. Maybe for the MAGA extremists, this is the point, unfortunately. Maybe this is their idea of success. Maybe MAGA radicals are perfectly fine having Americans pay more for produce, for meat, for gas so long as masked agents can arrest Uber drivers right off our streets, so long as billionaires get their tax cuts, so long as Medicaid recipients lose their coverage and Social Security gets privatized. Maybe that is MAGA's idea of a golden age, but for the rest of America, this is chaos.

When Donald Trump is not running America's economy into the ground, he has been busy incinerating America's reputation on the world stage. He is rolling out the red carpet for Vladimir Putin. He brags about stopping wars that still rage on. He has failed to stop the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, failed

to end the war, and failed to bring the hostages held by Hamas home.

He creates problems so he can pretend to solve them. That is what he does. He creates a problem, he creates a real mess, and then he says "Oh, I have solved it," when nothing like that has ever happened in so many areas.

The only foreign policy accomplishment Donald Trump has under his belt is bringing India, China, and Russia closer together thanks to his unbelievable, stupid tariffs and his lack of understanding of how diplomacy works and how to get along with people in countries.

Listen to this: He is even obsessed, for some strange reason, with winning the Nobel prize, and he has even phoned foreign leaders, asking them to recommend him for the award. Have we ever had a President so pathetic? so pathetic?

Frankly, does this sound like someone who is firing on all cylinders? I think we know the answer to that. Everyone listening today knows the answer to that deep down in their hearts, including my colleagues on the other side of the aisle even if they won't dare say it aloud. They are afraid of him. They know he threatens them and brandishes everything over them.

Egos are often part of the territory in politics, but I have never seen a bully in the Oval Office with such a nakedly fragile ego. Earlier today, I got to see that ego in all its ugly glory while I was driving to the Capitol. In driving past the Department of Labor, I got to see, as many others have, the massive banners that have Donald Trump's face airbrushed on them. A number of these banners are going up all across Washington. For generations, Americans have looked at these kinds of images and laughed at them, snickered at them, because they are such obvious signs of deep insecurity.

Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Putin, Kim Jong Un, and other bullies throughout history have depended on these images because they were desperate to seem powerful and important and untouchable. Yet here we are in 2025 America, and we have an insecure bully in the Oval Office who orders his sycophantic Cabinet Secretaries to grovel to him at Cabinet meetings. Have you ever watched one of these meetings? It is embarrassing. Who can suck up more to Donald Trump, as he beams, even though what they are saying has very little truth?

How about adorning the faces of buildings in our city with his picture? It is laughable that Donald Trump says he wants to make Washington more beautiful; yet, at the same time, he plasters his face all over our buildings, these beautiful buildings that have been built for so long and have stood for so much to so many.

Do you know what else is even more pathetic about this President? Pulling a power grab in red States and trying to redraw maps. And why is he doing it? Because he knows the American

people reject his agenda. He knows that the American people are ready to punish his party at the ballot box because his proposals are so harmful to people. No President—no President—who thinks he can win by virtue of his ideas alone would feel like he must rig the rules and pick his own voters instead of the other way around—the voters picking him. Yet that is what Donald Trump is doing right now—pushing Republicans in Texas and in other red States across the country to gerrymander their way into power, to rig the game because they can't win the game fair and square.

I ask again: Have we ever had a President so pathetic, so pathological as Donald Trump?

Finally, no discussion of Donald Trump's incompetence and lies would be complete without talking about healthcare.

Now, what is Donald Trump's signature domestic accomplishment? Tell me. What is it? He would say it is, undoubtedly, the so-called Big Beautiful Bill, but Americans are learning—every day, more and more Americans learn that it is nothing more than a big betrayal—a big betrayal—the biggest cuts to healthcare and food assistance and good-paying jobs in American history.

Donald Trump's signature feat in office is throwing people off Medicaid—can you imagine?—to make life better for those at the very, very top. He is destroying the ACA marketplace and sending costs skyrocketing for millions of Americans. They are going to learn about this as early as next month. And who are we kidding? We know that Medicare is next. We all know his Treasury Secretary gloated that they found a way to hurt Medicare in the so-called Big Beautiful Bill.

I was in New York last month, and I spoke with countless New York doctors and hospital managers and nurses and parents and patients who are frustrated and worried that hospitals will close, that costs will go up, that people who need coverage won't be able to get it—the mom who has a daughter with cancer and can no longer get help and watches that child suffer, and the mom suffers too.

Thanks to Donald Trump and Senate Republicans, healthcare costs are going to increase for every American in the country, and it is not just—you know, you say: Well, I am not on Medicaid. I am not on Medicare and the ACA.

Even people with private insurance will see their costs go up and go up significantly. Rural Americans will see their hospitals close. It is happening already in States like Nebraska and Maine. And this isn't theoretical; it is real.

Meanwhile, while all this devastation is going on, we have an HHS Secretary—instead of looking out for the healthcare of the American people, he is firing thousands of Federal workers, he is canceling medical research, and he is promoting cod liver oil supple-

ments to treat diseases like measles. This is crackpot nonsense.

My Senate colleagues know that what R.F.K., Jr., is doing is dangerous. The damage R.F.K., Jr., is causing right now will be felt for generations, and so many of our kids and grandkids will suffer. More of our kids will die from preventable diseases. The damage will be long-lasting. Donald Trump should fire R.F.K., Jr., immediately. Republicans should come out of hiding and demand Trump fire R.F.K. too. They see the damage. They read the insane things he says day after day after day after day. They know the immense harm R.F.K. poses to our kids the longer he stays in place.

Every second that R.F.K. is running our healthcare system is a healthcare crisis of its own, and he cannot be allowed to continue to lead this Agency.

So, in conclusion, the challenges I have mentioned today are just a few that plague America. They are a result of Donald Trump's pathetic leadership and his incessant lies.

I lay all of this at the feet of my Republican colleagues. They could stop it. I ask my Republican colleagues: Will you join us in making things right, in putting a stop to Donald Trump's madness, in protecting our kids, in lowering costs, in setting America back on the right track, and making our neighborhoods safe, or will you keep bowing down before the throne of Donald Trump?

We ask you not to turn your back on the vision of our Founders, not to let America slide down the road to autocracy—and that is an expensive autocracy for that matter—where Americans pay more and more for rent, electricity, groceries, and things like that. Senate Republicans can't pretend they are helpless against Donald Trump. The majority in this Chamber—the majority—could very easily undo what he does. They have the power to rein in his worst impulses. Republicans just need to make the decision for themselves to act, to stand up, to put the needs of people back home ahead of Donald Trump's narcissistic wishes.

We have an opportunity this month—this month—to start setting things right by advancing commonsense legislation to protect our healthcare, to hold the line against Trump's abuses, and to reverse the immense, harmful Medicaid cuts that Trump and Republicans pushed in the summer.

Will Senate Republicans continue to kowtow to a leader they know is dragging the country down, they know is a pathological liar, or will they—as the Founding Fathers intended—stand up to him? Will they help us fight America's slide into authoritarianism? Will they help us give the American people some hope in the future and prevent their costs from continuing to rise? This month—this month—will tell us in which direction they choose.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

#### NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened carefully to my friend JOHN THUNE, the Republican leader. We have known one another and served together for many years. We have worked on issues together, and I think we will continue to, but we disagree on many political things. I respect him, and I hope he respects me.

He made a plea to the Senate that we have more voice votes, more unanimous consent requests for nominations. He went through the history of this Chamber. And, certainly, it bears repeating, and it is certainly true, that in the past there were many more voice votes than there are today.

What is the difference between a record vote and a voice vote? Time. Time is so precious here. We only meet for a few days each week and a few hours each day. We need more time if there are more rollcall votes. It takes up anywhere from 20 minutes to 2 hours to complete a vote. A voice vote, of course, is instantaneous.

So the Republican leader, Mr. THUNE, is asking for more and more voice votes. And he recounts the history in this Chamber to make his case. There is one chapter that he failed to admit and failed to concede; that is, what happened in the last year of the Biden administration.

I was then chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and I am a member of that committee to this day. One of the most important responsibilities of a President is to fill the 90-plus U.S. attorney spots all across the United States that represent the Department of Justice. These are men and women who are on the firing line in the enforcement of law, and it is critical that these appointments be confirmed as quickly as possible.

Under the administration of President Donald Trump in his first term, all 90-plus U.S. attorneys were approved by voice vote, all of them. There was one that became controversial and was later reconsidered and removed. But all of the 90-plus U.S. attorneys in Trump's first term, voice vote.

What happened when Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump—and he did defeat him—and became President of the United States and tried to do the same thing to fill up the spots of U.S. attorneys? We were doing quite well following the precedent that had been around for years under leaders of both parties, following the precedent of President Trump's first term. We were doing quite well until one Senator objected. In the Senate, that can stop the train.

That Senator was JD VANCE of Ohio. He came to the floor and made it clear that he would no longer allow us to have unanimous consent to move to a voice vote on U.S. attorneys. The vacancies and positions for a U.S. attorney had to be filled by a record vote—just what Senator THUNE is objecting to these days. He insisted—JD VANCE

of Ohio, U.S. Senator, insisted that no voice votes for U.S. attorneys from that point forward would take place.

I went to the floor on six or seven different occasions begging him to reconsider that position, saying to him: A day may come when your party, the Republican Party, has a President who wants to fill U.S. attorney slots by a voice vote and we will have the JD VANCE precedent that says you can't do it.

He didn't care. He wouldn't budge. He stuck to that position. As a consequence, almost 30 U.S. attorneys under President Joe Biden were not approved.

So I say to Leader THUNE, be honest about the analysis of this situation. If we are going to do something by way of reform, I would like to be at the table—particularly when it applies to U.S. attorneys and judges—but we should do this in a fashion that is fair to both political parties.

I might also say that though the U.S. attorneys are virtually subject to a blue slip, it means that some of them will receive the approval of Democrats. We have that case right now. I can point to States, specific States, where Democratic attorneys have given blue slip approval of U.S. attorney nominees. That, to me, is an important factor that should be brought into this conversation.

I might also say that from the Republican side, if they will sit down and be fair with us in terms of Democratic appointments, we need to be fair back to them. That, I think, would mean turning our back on the JD VANCE precedent that we have been living under ever since. So I hope we can do something positive for the good of the Senate.

#### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, back home in Illinois, there is one item of news when it comes to Washington, DC: When or if Donald Trump is going to send in the troops.

In June, President Trump deployed the military against American citizens when he sent National Guard troops and 700 Active-Duty marines to Los Angeles in an attempt to crush protests against his administration's cruel immigration raids.

Last month, the President took the unwarranted step of federalizing Washington, DC's police force and sending thousands of National Guardsmen to patrol our Nation's Capital.

For months now, President Trump has been looking for any excuse to send National Guard troops and Active-Duty Forces into American communities. And over the past few weeks, he has boasted "Chicago will be" next.

Let me be clear: This would be yet another dangerous, illegal, and unconstitutional abuse of power by President Donald Trump. The President claims his actions are meant to drive down crime and restore order, but all they have done is created a political spectacle, a political theater.

He ignores the reality that violent crime is down in the District of Columbia and in Chicago. And he ignores the fact that under our Constitution, the part to maintain law and order belongs to the States. That doesn't matter to Donald Trump. The only thing that matters to him are the optics, continuing to push the limits of our Constitution and the rule of law as he abuses his office.

Using the military to "occupy" an American city in the absence of an emergency politicizes the institution, erodes civilian control of the Armed Forces, and places unnecessary burdens on the servicemembers, families, and employers.

There are also troubling reports that Federal law enforcement officers could operate out of Naval Station Great Lakes, where the Navy trains thousands of new recruits a year.

We are so proud of the Great Lakes Naval Training Station. Every single member of the U.S. Navy on the enlisted side goes through basic training in our State in the Great Lakes Naval Training Station. My brother who was a volunteer serving in the Navy in the Korean war went through that training in his day. It is a magnificent facility, and over the time I have served in Congress in the House and the Senate, it has been my honor to make sure that it is the very best training center in the world.

Supporting law enforcement is not the core mission of the U.S. Navy or the National Guard, and it distracts our troops from preparing to respond to real threats from our adversaries around the world.

We were just notified recently that there have been secret plans underway for a long period of time. The Pentagon has been developing plans for military deployment for weeks. The plans reportedly include several options, including mobilizing thousands of National Guard troops this month to restore law and order, so to speak, in areas where they are cracking down on crime, homelessness, and undocumented immigration. But in most instances—legal and constitutional instances—the use of federalized troops or the use of Federal troops requires the approval and consent of the Governor of the State. That is not the case, certainly, in Illinois. It also takes a financial toll on our readiness.

We are going to start to consider the National Defense Authorization Act this evening here in the U.S. Senate. It is an important bill—one of the most important—and it has the history of always being passed every single year. And I hope we can maintain that kind of commitment.

But that bill is passed in a popular and bipartisan basis because it does something that is critical. It authorizes the funding for the troops that defend our Nation. We worked long and hard on it.

I am not a member of the committee, but I know they spend hours of debate

on each and every provision of the bill, and then it comes to the floor and is subject, many times, to amendments on the floor. It takes a week or sometimes 2 or more to get it done, but it is that important.

Why do we spend so much time? To make sure that our military has the money that they need to keep America safe—our first responsibility. And now we have this prospect that even if we pass this bill, that some other Agencies in this government, for some other political reason—in this case, massive deportation—are going to be using the Department of Defense funds.

I offered an amendment in the Appropriations Committee where I serve that said if any other Agency of government takes money away from the Department of Defense for another purpose, it has to be reimbursed. If we are going to stand by our men and women in uniform and make sure that they are adequately financed, we cannot allow these raids that are being considered by the Trump administration.

For example, the cost of Donald Trump's deployment of troops to Los Angeles was estimated at \$134 million, and some experts calculate the mission in the District of Columbia costs the Department of Defense and taxpayers \$1 million a day—\$1 million a day.

While the National Guard is meant to serve American communities in true emergencies, like pandemics and natural disasters, what is it doing in DC at the President's request? Patrolling neighborhoods for political theater: picking up trash and spreading mulch. Give me a break. These men and women who are being trained to defend our country are being used by this President for political purposes in the District of Columbia.

In Chicago, crime rates may be unacceptably high—and I don't doubt that in some categories—but they have been on a steady decline for years, and we are already pursuing successful community-based strategies to deter crime. We are reaching out to the most vulnerable members of our communities directly and personally, working with trusted and trained leaders who understand the impact that trauma can have on communities.

We can work together, but it doesn't mean that Donald Trump shoves it down our throats. We want to cooperate with him. We have programs that he failed to fund in this budget cycle that we believe are critical for the maintenance of the diminishment of criminal experiences. This is being accomplished through the Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative, which represents a historic Federal investment in programs designed to help prevent and reduce violent crime.

But these programs have been cut by the Trump administration. The initiative supports evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs based on partnerships. It combats crime by collecting data, identifying

trends, developing strategies, and sharing these practices.

Ask professional law enforcement and they will tell you in virtually every conversation on the subject that you can't arrest your way out of a crime wave; you have got to analyze the basic causes of crime and what to do about it. Of course, dangerous people should be arrested and should pay the price for their wrongdoing, but a strategy that reduces violent crime over any long period of time takes more than that.

Replacing these efforts with troops not trained for urban policing risks alienating residents, destabilizing neighborhoods, and harming the National Guard's reputation. And I can tell you, over the years, I have come to be a big fan of the National Guard. They are there when we need them. We shouldn't overuse them. We shouldn't abuse them. We shouldn't put them in jobs they are not trained for. That is exactly what the Trump administration is doing in the District of Columbia and threatening to do in Illinois.

Incidentally, there is one common fact that belies any objectivity in this effort. You would think if the President were setting out to eliminate crime across America, he could find many examples in red States and blue States, States that supported him and States that didn't. All he has found are in the areas that were voting for Joseph Biden in the election of 2020, and those States are the State of California, the State of Illinois, the District of Columbia, and now he is threatening to move into Maryland.

So if he is going after crime, why is he ignoring the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, or Texas? Why? Because they voted for him for President. He doesn't see crime in those States. And there is just as much, if not more, as there is in the State of Illinois. Yet he focuses his attention only on blue States. All of these States that I have mentioned have high violent crime rates. President Trump doesn't target them because they are led by Republican officials. That is it. It is a political decision.

Trump's power grab sets a precedent that any President could invoke to deploy troops anywhere without an actual emergency. He was called to task by a judge in California on that just this week, and I am sure that will be contested. He is reinforcing a pattern of targeting large cities with significant Black and Latino populations, undermining trust between law enforcement and the community.

The Founders of this Nation understood that an unchecked power to turn the military on the American people themselves poses a grave threat to democracy and individual liberty. Trump's decision to deploy the military in American cities is more fitting for an authoritarian regime than the democracy that our Nation's Founding Fathers fought for.

These tactics are all smoke and mirrors to distract from the real issues facing us. Trump is hoping the American people will forget about his so-called "Big Beautiful" budget that rips away healthcare and food aid for millions across America—all to give tax breaks to the wealthiest—or forget how his reckless tariff policies are increasing the costs on everyday goods and essentials that working people rely on, or forget about the Epstein coverup being orchestrated by this White House.

Well, America won't forget, and we will continue to hold Donald Trump's feet to the fire where it counts. As the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary and a Senator from the State of Illinois, I will not sit idly by while this President tramples over the Constitution. I will use every tool at my disposal to protect our constitutional system of checks and balances and individual liberties that define us as Americans—from Los Angeles, to Chicago, to the District of Columbia, and everywhere in between. We will continue to put pressure on this administration to explain to the American people why we would waste millions of dollars appropriated for the defense of this country on a political stunt by this President that applies only to blue States that went for Joe Biden in the 2020 election.

The bottom line is the American people want to be safe in their homes and in their neighborhoods and safe as a Nation. This strategy by Donald Trump is not going to achieve that goal.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 262.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Maria A. Lanahan, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative 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. 262, Maria A. Lanahan, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri.

John Thune, David McCormick, Tom Cotton, Thom Tillis, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Eric Schmitt, Roger Marshall, Ron Johnson, Kevin Cramer, Jim Banks, Pete Ricketts, Rick Scott of Florida, Ted Budd, Josh Hawley, Jim Justice.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 291.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Edward L. Artau, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative 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. 291, Edward L. Artau, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

John Thune, Lindsey Graham, Mike Lee, Eric Schmitt, Katie Boyd Britt, John Barrasso, Marsha Blackburn, Chuck Grassley, Pete Ricketts, Shelley Moore Capito, Todd Young, John R. Curtis, Steve Daines, John Cornyn, James Lankford, Rick Scott of Florida, Jim Banks.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. I ask consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

#### WAIVING QUORUM CALL

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