



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2025

No. 149

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Gracious God, high and lifted up, hallowed be Your Name. Lord, as we observe the 24th anniversary of 9/11, we continue to thank You for Your sustaining grace. We give thanks at the remembrance of Your holy Name, for You are our hope for the years to come.

Today, as flags around the Nation fly at half-staff, we mourn the assassination of Charlie Kirk. We ask that You would comfort his family and loved ones and all who appreciated Charlie's love of country. Use our lawmakers today to make our Nation and world better. Lord, teach all of us to number our days, that we may have hearts of wisdom.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The assistant bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 11, 2025.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARKWAYNE MULLIN,

a Senator from the State of Oklahoma, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MULLIN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2296, which the clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2296) 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.

Pending:

Wicker/Reed Amendment Modified No. 3748, in the nature of a substitute.

Wicker (for Ernst) Amendment No. 3427 (to Amendment No. 3748), to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on casualty assistance and long-term care programs.

Thune Amendment No. 3863 (to Amendment No. 3427), relating to the enactment date.

Thune Amendment No. 3864 (to the language proposed to be stricken by Amendment No. 3748), relating to the enactment date.

Thune Amendment No. 3865 (to Amendment No. 3864), relating to the enactment date.

Motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Thune Amendment No. 3866, relating to the enactment date.

Thune Amendment No. 3867 (to (the instructions) Amendment No. 3866), relating to the enactment date.

Thune Amendment No. 3868 (to Amendment No. 3867), relating to the enactment date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, ATTACKS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, 24 years ago, on a bright September day whose blue sky I still remember, terrorists hijacked four planes and flew three of them into the Twin Towers in New York City and into the Pentagon. The fourth plane, possibly headed for this building, was brought down in a field in Pennsylvania after heroic passengers rose up to stop the terrorists.

No one who lived through that day will ever forget the shock, the terror, and the tremendous wave of resolve. We saw the worst of which humanity is capable in the attacks, but we saw the very best of America in the aftermath—the heroic passengers on Flight 93; the firemen who walked up the stairs, into the towers, as civilians were running down; the ordinary Americans who rushed to help; the lines to donate blood; the vast donations raised; the renewed sense of patriotism and national unity.

Twenty-four years on, most of the visible scars of the attacks are gone. The Pentagon and One World Trade Center stand proudly. But my thoughts and prayers on this anniversary remain with those who still bear the invisible scars of that day—with them and with all those in the years since who have stood between our country and terror.

RULES CHANGE

Mr. President, later today, the Senate will move forward on amending the

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



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S6561

Senate rules to restore the Senate precedent of the en bloc confirmation of Presidential nominees.

I have spent plenty of time here on the floor explaining why we are having to take this step. The longtime practice of the Senate was expeditious confirmation of Presidential nominations, often in blocks, using the procedural mechanism of voice vote or unanimous consent. That didn't mean rubberstamping every nominee, but it did mean that the Senate allowed the President to assemble his team so that he could carry out the job for which he was elected.

But over the years, Democrats have steadily eroded that bipartisan tradition—first during President George W. Bush's administration, then dramatically during the first Trump administration, and finally to where we are today. And where we are today is beyond erosion. Democrats have flat-out broken the Senate confirmation process.

We are more than 7 months into President Trump's current term, and the Senate has yet to confirm one single civilian nominee by unanimous consent or voice vote. To put that into perspective, by this point in his administration, President Biden had had 76 civilian nominees confirmed by voice vote—76. President Trump has not had one—the first President on record to be in this position—the first President on record.

Democrats have dragged out the process on every single civilian nominee, including on nominees they ended up supporting on final passage. Sixty-two out of the one hundred thirty-nine nominees we have confirmed have been confirmed with Democrat support. Democrats have refused to voice-vote any of them. Why? Petty partisanship—nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

The Democrat leader, of course, would claim that it is because we are dealing with historically bad nominees, but I won't waste time today debunking that. I don't need to. It has been debunked for me by the fact that close to half of President Trump's nominees have received Democrat support on final passage and by the scores of Trump nominees who have emerged from committee with bipartisan support.

No, this isn't about historically bad nominees; this is about petty partisanship. Democrats and their political base cannot deal with the fact that the American people elected President Trump, and so they are dragging out every confirmation in retaliation.

It would be fine if this Democrat temper tantrum didn't affect anyone else, but Democrats' historic obstruction is having serious consequences. In addition to the obvious problem of delays in filling important positions in the administration, having to engage in the time-consuming cloture process on every nominee ties up the Senate floor, preventing us from considering important legislation.

Advice and consent on Presidential nominations is part of our job as Senators, but it is not the only part of our job. The Senate is first and foremost a legislative body, but that primary role is getting crowded out by the need to be constantly considering nominations.

Now, when I became majority leader, I made it clear that one of my priorities was to get the Senate functioning again, and the Senate can't function effectively as a legislative body with the confirmation process in the state that it is in right now. So today, the Senate will move forward on amending the rules to restore the longstanding precedent of confirming Presidential nominees expeditiously.

It would have been nice not to have to go through this process. I think there are a lot of Democrats who are aware that they have created an untenable situation, and it would have been nice to see them acknowledge that and move to return to longtime Senate precedent. But despite extended efforts to engage Democrats, we still haven't gotten to a solution to the problem that they created, and time is about to run out. One way or the other, we are going to fix this today—fix it and restore the longtime Senate precedent of expeditious confirmation and the Senate's role as first and foremost a legislative body. It is not too late for my Democrat colleagues to join us. I invite them to do so.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 366.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stephen Miran, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2012.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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. 366, Stephen Miran, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2012.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, John R. Curtis, Kevin Cramer, Mike Rounds, Bernie Moreno, Eric Schmitt, James E. Risch, David McCormick, Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, Cynthia M. Lummis, Ted Budd, Jim Banks, John Boozman, Tim Scott of South Carolina, John Barrasso.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, ATTACKS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 24 years ago today, September 11, 2001, started off like any other day in New York City. The weather was beautiful. People were out and about. It was primary day, and people were lining up to vote. Then, in an instant, everything changed.

At 8:46 a.m., Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. There was chaos and confusion. Seventeen minutes later, flight 175 crashed into the South Tower. The reality of what was happening became clear: This wasn't a horrific accident. America was under attack. New York City was Ground Zero.

The course of American history was changed forever. Twenty-four years later, not a day has passed that I haven't thought about the people we lost that day, including three friends of mine: a guy I played basketball with in high school, a businessman who helped me on the way up, a firefighter I did blood drives with around the city. May their memories be a blessing.

I still think about the scenes when I arrived at Ground Zero in the aftermath of the attack the day after. The putrid smell of dead, burned flesh was in the air. I remember the rows upon rows of people holding up makeshift signs with photos of their missing loved ones because no one knew who was alive and who wasn't: Have you seen my brother Bill? Have you seen my daughter Mary? The anguish on their faces stays in my mind to this day. They are the kind of heart-wrenching images that will stay with me for a lifetime.

While 9/11 was America's darkest hour, I also saw New Yorkers in our finest moments. There were countless acts of kindness by strangers to help each other. In the midst of the tragedy that the world saw, the true strength of America and New York came through. The next day, I called on every American to display the flag on their clothes, outside their homes as a sign of solidarity. And ever since that