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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.

O God of our salvation, in spite of the challenges of today and tomorrow, we continue to look to You, our help in ages past and our hope for the seasons to come. May our lawmakers continually remember how You have led this Nation in the past as You give them inspiration and faith that You will also guide this land in all the days to come.

Lord, give our Senators strength, power, and wisdom for these grand and challenging times, empowering them to carve tunnels of hope through mountains of despair. Use them to defend our liberties and to unify our Nation and world until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

We pray in Your amazing 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. BUDD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026—Resumed

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

The legislative 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### AGRICULTURE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, there is a not-so-perfect storm brewing for farmers in my State of Iowa and in agricultural States generally. Many factors are coming together—and all at once—like low grain prices, high input costs, consolidation in the industry, and uncertainty from trade and tariffs. It is beginning to look more and more like the 1980s to me.

One thing that concerns me is the lowering of land values in Iowa. Land value has gone down 3 percent since last year and down 5.4 percent since the same time in 2023. That is not as bad as it was in the 1980s. There was a very catastrophic drop in prices compared to what I just quoted you for now. And in the 1980s, that didn't happen overnight; it kind of crept up on us very slowly. We don't want to let that happen again, so we need to be vigilant today.

When it comes to land prices, as you know, if farmers lose too much land value, they won't be able to leverage against it for debt to cover their expenses. That happened in the 1980s, and as I said, it kind of crept up on us at that particular time, and Congress didn't see it coming soon enough. Congress waited too long to act. Farmers had been pleading with Congress for 2 or 3 years in the 1980s before Congress was able to pass some help for the farmers. In the meantime, farmers went bankrupt, and a lot of farmers were lost due to suicide.

Now, that may sound like everyday business, but if you have been operating a family farm and you were the fifth or sixth generation doing that and you lost it because of bankruptcy, low prices, land values going down, you become depressed and ashamed, and I am sure that is why a lot of people committed suicide.

Now we have a farm safety net in place. We have tried to be on top of farmers' mental health to a greater extent than in the past. So hopefully all these bad things that happened in the 1980s won't happen again. But I am here saying I don't want to see it happen again. We can't be complacent, knowing the history of Congress being too slow to act. So Congress ought to act now, before it is too late.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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



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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.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we are now in day 6 of the Democrats' government shutdown—day 6—and I am wondering just what exactly Democrats think they are gaining from all of this. I guess they are getting points from the far-left interest groups that they have been coordinating their shutdown strategy with, but I highly doubt they are earning a lot of points with everyday, hard-working Americans, like the voters they lost in the last election.

A Reuters headline from Thursday noted "US government shutdown threatens food-aid program for low-income Americans."

Let me just read that again: "US government shutdown threatens food-aid program for low-income Americans."

The article noted that while the Trump Agriculture Department is doing its best to continue administering the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children—more commonly known as WIC—the program is "critically low on funds." And it won't get new funds until Democrats agree to reopen the government.

Democrats own this. They own any lapse in funding for critical food aid programs, just as they own every other negative effect of the shutdown because—let's remember—the only reason the government is shut down is because Democrats refuse to accept a clean, nonpartisan funding extension—a clean, nonpartisan funding extension.

We didn't ask Democrats to swallow any new Republican policies. We didn't ask them to swallow any partisan riders. We simply asked them to agree to a clean, nonpartisan bill.

The same kind of bill, I might add, that they voted for 13 times—13 times—during the Biden administration. But Democrats said: No. And I should note that you don't have to take my word for it on the facts of the bill. Republicans aren't the only ones pointing out that this is a clean CR.

Here is what the president of the Teamsters Union had to say the other day:

A shutdown will hurt working people. Period. . . . Senators should . . . pass the House-passed clean, short-term funding bill.

"Senators should pass the House-passed clean short-term funding bill."

Again, that was the president of the Teamsters Union.

Or, you know, you could take the word of a mainstream journalist who recently noted:

In a vacuum, this CR would get almost every Democratic vote. It just would. This is

a clean CR that has no partisan riders, extends a bunch of programs that are Democratic priorities . . . it's clean.

"It's clean."

So to summarize, Democrats have shut down the government because they refuse to accept a clean, nonpartisan bill. And why are they refusing to accept it? After all, as I mentioned, they supported similar bills 13 times during the Biden administration.

The reason that they refuse to accept it is that Democrats still cannot get over the fact that the American people elected President Trump. And when their far-left base demanded a showdown with the President, the Democrats fell in line. And now it is the American people who are suffering the consequences.

I quote again. "U.S. government shutdown threatens food-aid program for low-income Americans."

"[T]hreatens food aid program for low-income Americans."

Three Democrats have rejected their party's shutdown politics and voted with Republicans to reopen the government. All Democrats will get another chance to vote to reopen the government later today, and for the sake of the American people, I hope at least a few more Democrats will join us to pass this clean, nonpartisan CR and let the Senate get back to work.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 459.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Jennifer Lee Mascott, of Delaware, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

#### 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 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. 459, Jennifer Lee Mascott, of Delaware, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

John Thune, Jim Justice, Ashley B. Moody, Steve Daines, Thom Tillis, Rick Scott of Florida, Roger Marshall, David McCormick, Tom Cotton, Kevin Cramer, John R. Curtis, Marsha Blackburn, Lindsey Graham, Pete Ricketts, Mike Lee, Ron Johnson, Mike Rounds.

### 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.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, 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.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today is the sixth day—the sixth day—of Donald Trump's government shutdown. Senate Democrats returned to Washington ready to negotiate. We are ready to work with Republicans to reopen the government and end the healthcare crisis that faces tens of millions of Americans.

But it takes two sides to have a negotiation. We need the Senate Republicans and the House Republicans and the President to come to the table. And, meanwhile, Donald Trump and Speaker JOHNSON seem to be on another planet.

Instead of trying to solve this shutdown crisis, Donald Trump spent the weekend golfing and posting memes and deepfakes on the internet. He seems to think this shutdown is some big joke.

He is wrong. People will lose their paychecks; seniors will see Social Security support services slow down; there will be chaos for travelers. This shutdown is all on Donald Trump's shoulders, and Americans agree, according to the polls.

Poll after poll after poll, from CBS to the Washington Post, to Marist, to Morning Consult, and many others, consistently showed that the public sees the President as most responsible for the shutdown. He is in charge. His party holds majorities across the government.

So Americans naturally and correctly believe the burden is on him to fix this mess. Speaker JOHNSON, meanwhile, has canceled yet another week of session for the House. Why? Because the Speaker knows House Republicans are bitterly divided on healthcare. He knows a large chunk of his conference doesn't want to fix people's premiums at all—the rightwing MAGA folks.

Meanwhile, some of his less-extreme Members feel a necessity to fix this mess. The Speaker knows these divisions in his conference are serious and deep.

So what does the Speaker do with these divisions in his conference, almost irreconcilable? He ducks. He chooses the politically expedient way out. He keeps the Congress out of session for weeks at a time, passes to the Senate a partisan bill with no Democratic input.

That is not leadership. That is derelict.