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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, October 10, 2025, at 12:30 p.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

Almighty and eternal God, You shine in the darkness. The whole Earth is bathed in Your light, and for that, we are grateful.

Today, be near to our lawmakers. Penetrate the springs of their being, bringing cleansing, healing, and unity. Drive them away from the shadows of a stalemate with our government shutdown, enabling them to find common ground. In times of challenges and trials, may they remember they are serving You.

Lord, as we all trust in Your mercies, surround our Nation and world with the shield of Your favor and protection.

And Lord, we thank You for the progress we are seeing in the Middle East.

We pray in Your great 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. MORENO). 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 senior assistant executive 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.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, once again, in the Chaplain's prayer, he brought up the issue before the U.S. Senate and presented it to the Lord about the problems created by the shutdown of the government. Not only are the employees of the U.S. Senate not being paid and 750,000 civil servants are furloughed without pay, but we are also beginning to read in business pages of the newspapers about the impact on the economy. For the State of Iowa, the White House Office of Economic Policy said that, weekly, it was doing damage to the economy of my State of Iowa of \$137 million.

So we have to get the government back to work because it costs money to shut the government down, and it costs money to open the government up. The government is supposed to be a service to the American people, besides protecting the American people, and quite frankly, none of that can be done when it is shut down.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak about some information that I got from whistleblowers the first time on September 23 of last year. At that time, I spoke to my fellow Senators, making public very concerning whistleblower allegations.

The whistleblower alleged to my office that the Postal Service, which is an independent government Agency, had hired registered sex offenders as

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



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mail carriers. So I investigated to find out how bad this problem was at that Agency.

To date, the Postal Service has refused to provide a list of names of registered sex offenders. The Postal Service has provided some information about the number of sex offenders working at the Postal Service.

On July 7, 2025, the Postal Service confirmed that in 2024, the Agency employed 150 registered sex offenders. The letter said that of the 150, 102 had “access to the public.” Of the 102, 77 were mail carriers.

News even more alarming in that letter: The Postal Service doesn’t track the routes used by employees who are registered sex offenders. We don’t even know the locations where these carriers deliver their mail. The Postal Service also doesn’t track the crimes that led to an employee’s registration on the sex offender register.

On August 7, 2025, I wrote the Postal Service requesting additional information. So this is what I want to know about how the Postal Service ensures our communities are safe and what the crimes were, and that is just among other questions I have. To date, I have received no response.

When it comes to this matter, our communities deserve much better than what they are getting from the Postal Service, and we have to make sure that the Postal Service is as protective of people’s safety as any other Agency of government.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

ISRAEL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to mention the very welcome news that the first phase of the historic Israel-Gaza peace plan brokered by President Trump and his administration, working with allies and partners in the region, has been agreed to. This will finally mean the release of all remaining hostages, living and dead, who have been held by Hamas since its October 7, 2023, attack.

It is vital that Israel and especially Hamas implement the terms of this agreement as quickly as possible so that this can truly mark the beginning of an end to the bloodshed. I hope a lasting peace for this most war-torn of regions.

In addition to both sides adhering to all agreed-upon terms, true peace will also require that there is never again a threat to Israel emanating from Gaza.

This means that Hamas must disarm and relinquish any role in governance in the Gaza Strip, and I know the President and Secretary Rubio continue to work relentlessly to pursue peace and make this a reality.

I am grateful for this news, and my prayers today are for the successful release of all hostages, the success of this agreement, and the protection of all innocents in harm’s way.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, we are now 9 days into the Democrats’ government shutdown—9 days in which Democrats have had multiple opportunities to support a clean, nonpartisan CR—sitting right here at the Senate desk—to reopen the government; something that has been passed by our colleagues in the House of Representatives, that has achieved 55 Senators, a Senate majority. Out of 100 Senators, 55 Senators support this 24-page resolution sitting at the desk, which could open up the government today because as soon as the Senate passes it, the President will sign it into law.

This is the same nonpartisan measure that, as I said, passed the House 3 weeks ago, no partisan riders, no gimmicks, no partisan policies, Republican policies, anything like that—a simple resolution, 24 pages long, to open up our government and make sure that the Federal employees and the American people who depend upon them get paid.

The President is ready to sign it. All it takes is a handful of Democrats. There are three Democrats who have already supported this clean continuing resolution. Just a handful more, and we can end this shutdown in a matter of hours.

Fifty-five Senators, a Senate majority—a majority of the 100 U.S. Senators, a majority of the House of Representatives, the President of the United States is prepared to sign it. That is how straightforward this proposition is.

We have already seen plenty of negative impacts from the Democrat shutdown. A whole new wave of pain begins tomorrow if Democrats don’t act because if we fail to fund the government by the end of day today, American servicemembers begin going without their paychecks starting tomorrow.

That is right. If Democrats can’t bring themselves to reopen the government by the end of the day, our troops—the people who protect and defend this country—will start missing their paychecks. To say that that is unacceptable is an understatement.

Many of our servicemembers are serving in harm’s way at this moment. All of them stand ready to rush into danger at a moment’s notice to protect the rest of us. They and their families make numerous sacrifices to serve our country. The idea—the very idea—that they won’t get a paycheck because Democrats can’t bring themselves to accept a clean, nonpartisan CR is beyond the pale.

If the government remains shut down after today, instead of getting our troops paid, they are going to have to continue stretching what money they have saved. Unfortunately, sometimes that is not very much.

As one advocate for military families put it, “This isn’t just a financial hardship—it’s destabilizing for households and military readiness alike.”

“Military readiness.”

Many families have already begun to visit food banks near bases, and it is even harder on families with a loved one who is deployed. Amy Palmer, who runs an organization that helps military families in Colorado, said families of the deployed “are having to navigate this alone. They’re used to getting the paycheck . . . and paying bills on behalf of their entire family, and with that servicemember deployed and not really having that support system from them . . . it is really hard.”

It is not just our troops who are going to be missing a paycheck. Civilian workers will also be missing part of their pay starting this Friday, including law enforcement officers like the members of our very own Capitol Police. Food banks and other nonprofits around the country are bracing for increased demand from Federal employees, especially here in the national Capitol region.

I remember when the Democrat leader was a passionate opponent of government shutdowns because of their impact on Federal workers. I am pretty sure that was just 6 months ago.

Other Democrats used to be concerned about the impact on Federal workers as well. A few years ago, our Democrat colleague from New Jersey—himself, a former career Federal worker—had this to say:

I worked through multiple shutdowns, including, you know, having to work and show up every day without getting paid. . . . I mean, it’s just so scary to think of the fact that this is going to hurt people.

Yet Democrats aren’t showing the slightest interest in reopening the government to ensure troops and Federal employees get paid.

Later today, we are going to have another vote on the clean continuing resolution to open up the government. As I said, we are a handful of Democrats away from passing this continuing resolution and reopening the government, a handful of votes away from paying our troops, and we are going to see if that matters to Democrats.

We will see if Democrats choose to pay America’s troops or if they, once again, bow to the demands of their far-left base, which is telling them to hold out, or their strategists who are telling them that they are “winning” the shutdown.

Well, based on the reporting this morning, Democrats couldn’t care less whether military families miss a paycheck tomorrow.

In an interview posted this morning, the Democrat leader said:

Every day gets better for us.

“Every day gets better for us.”

This isn’t a political game. Democrats might feel that way, but I don’t know of anybody else that does. The longer this goes on, the more the American people realize the Democrats own this shutdown.

A Morning Consult poll finds that “voters increasingly blame Democrats for the government shutdown.”

In the latest Harvard-Harris poll, 65 percent of voters think Democrats

should reopen the government instead of holding out for their partisan demands.

But Democrats are apparently being told to hold the line by their far-left base, and so this shutdown drags on.

We can solve the issue of troop pay and every other problem we are seeing today—today—by passing this clean, nonpartisan CR and sending it to the President. He is ready to sign it. If Democrats would only agree, we could reopen the government in just a few hours, literally, pay our troops, pay our Federal workers, and stop this madness.

And this notion that somehow in this political game, the Democrats believe, according to their leader, that “every day gets better for us,” that is not the experience of the American people. It is time to end this shutdown and reopen this government. Let’s pass this CR today.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ISRAEL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, nearly 2 years to the day of Hamas’s vicious attack on October 7, after nearly 2 long years of devastating war in Gaza, it appears that a ceasefire and hostage agreement has been reached. If this agreement is implemented, then, finally, after 2 years of immense suffering, the hostages could soon be free, there could be a ceasefire, and the victims of this painful conflict can start to rebuild their lives. This brings a huge sigh of relief to the hostage families, to all of Israel, and to Palestinians who have suffered for so long in this horrific humanitarian catastrophe.

Now, we await details and final acceptance and implementation from all parties of the first phase, and we must begin the even harder work of closing negotiations to end the war, to start building the day after in Gaza without Hamas, to surge humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza, and to build a lasting peace—a lasting peace—that ensures security and dignity for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

This morning, I hope and pray that all of the hostages are released, including the deceased hostages. I will never give up until all of the hostages are home, including the remains of my constituents Omer Neutra and Itay Chen. I have gotten to know their families well over the last 2 years, and I share their desperation to bring them home for proper burial and closure.

The work is not over, but any step to end this nightmare is one that should be celebrated and carefully implemented.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, now, on the shutdown and the Trump administration, the Federal Government has now been shut down for more than a week, but Donald Trump, Speaker JOHNSON, and Repub-

licans in Congress are nowhere to be found. Instead of playing with people’s lives, Donald Trump and Republican leaders in Congress need to sit down with Democrats and have a serious negotiation to fix healthcare and reopen the government at once.

Workers are starting to miss out on paychecks. Seniors are worried about delays at the Social Security Administration. Small businesses with government contracts are in the dark.

We need to end this shutdown as soon as possible. Every day that Republicans refuse to negotiate to end this shutdown, the worse it gets for Americans, and the clearer it becomes who is fighting for them.

Each day, our case to fix healthcare and end the shutdown gets better and better, stronger and stronger, because families are opening their letters showing how high their premiums will climb if Republicans get their way. They are seeing why this fight matters. It is about protecting their healthcare, their bank accounts, their futures.

But Republicans are absent. The House is literally on vacation. And Donald Trump, meanwhile, continues to play with people’s lives and threaten mass layoffs for Federal workers.

Yesterday, the Wall Street Journal reported that Republican leaders in Congress have been urging the administration not to follow through with their threats of mass layoffs and no back pay for furloughed Federal workers. The Journal wrote that “far-reaching government cuts and firings could backfire with the public.” And aides have been “warning that such moves could cause voters to blame Republicans for the shutdown.” That is the Wall Street Journal.

Well, this is spot-on. If Donald Trump thinks that punishing Federal workers and treating the American public as pawns is going to help him politically, he is making a terrible mistake, because the American people are smart. They see what Trump and the Republicans are doing. They know Republicans are the ones in charge. They have the Presidency, the House, and the Senate—not Democrats.

We Democrats want to end this shutdown as quickly as we can, but Donald Trump and Republicans need to negotiate with us in a serious way to fix the healthcare premiums crisis. We can and should do both. It is not either-or, like Republicans think.

President Trump, meanwhile, is simply not taking this shutdown seriously, because, as we speak, the Trump administration continues to negotiate a \$20 billion bailout for Argentina to prop up a MAGA ally. Apparently, Donald Trump thinks that \$20 billion for a MAGA-friendly government in Argentina is fine, but fixing healthcare premiums here at home is not.

Meanwhile, thanks to Trump’s bungled trade war with China, American soybean farmers have been shut out of foreign markets and are facing mass bankruptcies. With American farmers

cut out, farmers in countries like Argentina are taking advantage, selling a record number of soybeans to China. But instead of helping American farms now in the middle of a shutdown, Donald Trump wants to send \$20 billion to Argentina to help them compete against American farmers, all while hungry Americans face higher grocery prices and the largest cuts ever to nutrition aid, thanks to Donald Trump and the Republicans’ “Big Ugly Bill.”

It is utter lunacy. Whose side is Donald Trump on?

And the situation is no better here in Congress. In the middle of a shutdown crisis, Speaker JOHNSON has shut the lights off to the Halls of Congress. We Democrats have made clear that Republicans need to engage with us in serious negotiation to end this destructive shutdown and fix healthcare premiums as soon as we can, but Speaker JOHNSON has sent the House on vacation. He has sent Members home now for 3 weeks, and it sounds like he will keep them away for at least another week more. The House of Representatives has not held a vote—a single vote—since September 19, 20 days ago.

In fact, would you care to guess how many days the House has been in town since the end of July? Twelve days. That is it. Since the summer, the House of Representatives has held votes for only 12 days.

If you are someone who works two jobs or works weekends or overtime to make ends meet, what on Earth are you supposed to think when House Republicans can’t even be bothered to show up to reopen the government?

House Republicans are getting paid and not working, and they are asking Federal workers to work and not get paid. If your electricity prices are skyrocketing, if your premiums are going up by thousands of dollars, if you are getting charged more for a cup of coffee or your groceries, and you see Republicans on vacation for 3 weeks straight, that is basically a middle finger to hard-working Americans.

And let’s be clear. The Speaker’s dig-in-at-all-costs approach is not sitting well with some Members of his own party.

Yesterday, MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE said the following:

The House has so much work to do, why aren’t we coming back in session? We could be doing appropriations, passing important bills, and more.

Representative MASSIE of Kentucky tweeted something similar:

The government is shut down, but the House refuses to go back in session. Why are we in recess?

Said Republican MASSIE.

Because the day we go back into session, I have 218 votes for the discharge petition to force a vote on releasing the Epstein files.

Representative KEVIN KILEY of California, Republican, meanwhile, posted this:

The Speaker shouldn’t even think about cancelling session for a third straight week.

So the cracks are showing on the Republican side because they know

Speaker JOHNSON's position of not budging on healthcare fixes is untenable.

And in Louisiana, in fact, I would have thought that of all people interested in fixing ACA premiums, it would have been a Representative from the State of Louisiana. Yesterday, I read a sobering report from the Times-Picayune saying that "Louisiana stands to lose the most" if the ACA premium tax credits expire.

According to that report, 85,000 Louisiana residents will lose health insurance. Many will see their premiums skyrocket. The average 60-year-old Louisiana couple making \$85,000 a year would see insurance costs rise from \$600 a month to \$2,000 a month.

Hear that, Mr. Speaker? That is your constituents. Good Americans in your own State will suffer the most if the ACA premiums expire.

People will go bankrupt, people will get sick, people will die—all because the Speaker chose to keep the House on vacation, rather than come to work, negotiate with Democrats to fix this healthcare crisis, and end their Trump shutdown. Shameful.

We urge the Republicans to back away from their corner and have serious negotiations that the American people deserve and expect before people get sick and go bankrupt.

REMEMBERING KEVIN McDONALD

Mr. President, now, finally, on a different, more somber but grateful note, last month, the Senate lost a beloved member of our family: Kevin McDonald.

Kevin served as the scheduler for our former colleague Senator Patrick Leahy for over 30 years, and I know Patrick would be the first to admit that he wouldn't have had the great career he did without Kevin by his side.

I am sure there were many days when I called Patrick 10 or 20 times—I still remember his phone number—or asked him to rush to my office in the middle of something else, and made Kevin's life hell trying to keep his schedule. But Kevin, the consummate professional he was, always found a way to make it work.

He made the hardest days feel easier. He made the busiest days feel smoother. And everyone who knew him, whether you were a Senator, a staffer, a parking attendant, or a police officer—everyone—just loved to be around him. He was the life of every party. He lit up every room he walked into and had an innate ability to turn friends into family.

We will all miss Kevin. We thank him for his service to the Senate, the State of Vermont, and the country. Our prayers are with his family, his friends, and his loved ones.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor having just listened to the minority leader talk, and I read

in Punchbowl News, this morning, the minority leader making a statement to Punchbowl.

He thinks the Democrats have momentum. His statement is:

Every day gets better for us.

That is what he said in an interview from his office, yesterday, when he was interviewed by the news. He said:

Every day gets better for us.

Who is us? Not better for the American people. Who does he mean by us? Not the military who is not getting paid, not the Border Patrol that is not getting paid, not the air traffic controllers who aren't getting paid. Who is us?

He is playing a game. The Washington Post talked about it, just yesterday, in that headline in their editorial page: Democrat "leaders play a dangerous game."

That is what we have here. And what does the minority leader say? "Every day gets better for us." Who in the world is "us"? Is it this group that has organized the shutdown? They have talked about having an orchestrated group of the far-left wing, the terrorist wing of the Democratic Party organizing and orchestrating the shutdown, planning for weeks in the minority leader's office, closely coordinated. It is hurting the American people, but the minority leader has said it is getting better for them.

Look, how can they brag about the damage that they are doing to the American people, whether it is women on the Women, Infants, and Children Program needing food; whether it is small businesses applying for loans through the Small Business Administration; our troops; our Border Patrol. But, boy, from what I see from the minority leader and where he is trying to lead this country, it is a perfect quote for the shutdown: It gets better for them every day. I will tell you, it is rubbish, and it is hurting our country.

Thirteen times we have voted to open the government, keep it open with a continuing resolution, in Joe Biden's term, and now they are not going to do it because Donald Trump is in the White House. That is what we have in this country today—a political game being played by the Democrats because they think that every day gets better for them.

This isn't right versus left; this is right versus wrong. That is what we are facing in this country today. There are 1.3 million soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen—guardians on Active Duty to protect our Nation, protect our freedoms. They are going to miss their paychecks, but CHUCK SCHUMER says it is getting better for them.

For the brave men and women in uniform, one date looms large. It is October 15. Normally, October 15 is payday. This year, under the Schumer shutdown, where it is getting better for SCHUMER every day, it is going to be a day that paychecks don't arrive for every one of them.

Nine days ago, October 1, servicemembers of the ranks got their last paycheck, and it is going to be their last paycheck until the dangerous game, the political game that SCHUMER and the others are playing ends and government reopens. We could do it today with a vote. We are going to have an opportunity to do it.

And it is wrong. It is just wrong to do this as a game because it is getting better for them every day—or so they think.

This Friday, October 10, tomorrow, Border Patrol agents and other Federal workers will receive only half a paycheck. The Democrat leader says it is getting better for them.

Seventy-two percent of military families say their most pressing concern is missing a paycheck.

Half a million military families relocate to new duty stations each year. For them, costs can be crushing. Moving costs the families an average of \$8,000 out of pocket. Normally, this is reimbursed—may not be for a while.

CHUCK SCHUMER says it is getting better for them every day.

Under the Schumer shutdown, military families are going to be forced to stretch out the budgets, dip into savings, and take out loans. This adds to financial stress and strain.

At Fort Hood in Texas, the local food bank is seeing a 34-percent spike in demand just since the shutdown began. Military families are lining up for food, diapers, and baby formula. One employee there said the situation in Fort Hood had never happened, ever.

Maybe they are just stocking up because they know that, for the Democrats, they think it is getting better every day. That is what they are aiming for.

What in the heck are they thinking? Well, those people that have planned and organized all of this are thinking: Hey, we have a big rally coming to Washington, a "No Kings" rally coming up on the 18th. Getting better for them every day. Let's just hurt the military more; the Border Patrol more; the women, infants, and children more—hurt them because it is getting better for them every day.

Who is the "us"? It is the leftwing of the Democratic Party; it is not the American people.

That is what we are focused on here. I want to focus on opening the government up for the American people. We have offered a clean continuing resolution at current funding levels, at Biden's funding levels, current levels. It reopens the government, pays our servicemembers.

Republicans want to reopen the government. We have voted to not shut down the government. We want to make sure our troops don't miss the paycheck on October 15. Not the Democrats because they think it is getting better for them.

The date on their calendar is not the 15th, which is the date on the calendar of every military member; their date is

October 18. That is the date when the most radical, leftwing activists are going to descend upon Washington. They are coming to protest President Trump. And the Democrat leader and his leadership team are hoping they will actually receive cheers from that group because it is getting better for them every day. That is what they say.

This shutdown is all about politics. That is what it is all about. It has been planned and orchestrated and organized for months.

The Washington Post editorial said it best: The Democrats are playing “a dangerous game.” They are choosing politics over the paychecks of the American working men and women who protect our Nation. And this weakness defines today’s Democratic Party. They are radical. They are extreme. They are dangerous. They are scary. They are out of touch. But they think it is getting better for those people every day.

They are holding our military hostage. Why? Because they want to impress the leftwing activists. It is indefensible.

Servicemembers now have to worry about putting food on the table so that the Democrats and Senator SCHUMER can try to satisfy the far-left, liberal wing of the party, who will never be satisfied until this country is destroyed. That is what they want.

It is no surprise that 55 percent of Americans say Democrats are shutting down the government just to please their radical base.

The Senate can reopen the government today, but we need a handful of Democrats to join us. Democrats voted 13 times for a clean continuing resolution under Joe Biden. They know that the Schumer shutdown—it is reckless, it is radical, and it is wrong.

Democrats don’t seem to care because, according to CHUCK SCHUMER, “Every day gets better for us.” As a result, the Democrats are threatening America’s safety, our security, and our prosperity.

The American people don’t want the government closed. CHUCK SCHUMER does because every day gets better for him.

Two in three Americans demand Democrats accept the continuing resolution at current funding levels. It is the right thing to do. It is fair. It is reasonable. It is time Democrats listen to them. It is time to open the government so the troops can get paid.

That is what this is all about—a political game being played by the radical left. And they believe it is getting better for them each day, and CHUCK SCHUMER—this wasn’t some offhanded comment; this is exactly what he said yesterday in a sit-down interview with the press in his office. These were planned words and orchestrated to appeal to the people that he is trying to appeal to, who are not the average American who just wants to go to work, just wants to get paid a fair wage for a fair, full day’s work, and defend the country.

So I know who the “us” is when he says “us,” and it is not the American people; it is not the hard-working people of your State or my State who want to get up, go to work, get the kids to school, put food on the table, and live in this greatest country of all times.

That is what we are dealing with, and that is why I came to the floor this morning, because when I heard this comment by the minority leader, I could not let it stand, and the American people deserve better.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE SUBSIDIES

Mr. President, on a separate matter, I want to talk about something else.

In July, President Trump signed into law the working-families tax cut. That legislation stopped a \$4 trillion tax increase, it secured our border, it unleashed American energy, and it slashed wasteful Washington spending.

I thought one of the most egregious subsidies we eliminated was the electric vehicle tax credits. Under Joe Biden, Washington provided lucrative, luxury tax credits to prop up EV sales. The Biden car bribes forced working families to subsidize vehicles that people didn’t want, couldn’t afford, and weren’t very practical in my State.

I have fought against these costly EV handouts for years. I introduced bills to repeal them, and I was joined by my Republican colleagues. I especially want to recognize the senior Senator from Ohio, Senator BERNIE MORENO.

Hard-working families should not be forced to bankroll luxury vehicles for wealthy elites. Republicans in Congress acted decisively. We terminated the EV tax credits. We deliberately chose September 30 as the end date for the subsidies. This quick termination meant significant savings for taxpayers—\$200 billion in savings over the next 10 years.

But, as the saying goes, the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. In Washington, we have to follow up and fight to protect taxpayers and taxpayer dollars even when the intent of Congress is clear. That is where I really want to point out the hard work of Senator MORENO, because that is what the Republicans are doing.

In recent weeks, Senator MORENO and I read troubling news. There was a last-ditch effort to game the system in the final days before the cutoff date. We immediately wrote to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent to alert him about the issue and to address the problem. Senator TED CRUZ of Texas, who is chairman of the Commerce Committee, also raised his concern with the Treasury Department about the subsidies.

Major car companies responded to the letter, and they changed their policies, and I encourage all companies to follow their lead.

Republicans are going to continue to protect taxpayers and ensure these subsidies are gone for good. Here is the reality: The subsidies were never needed in the first place. Look at what has happened since Congress ended them.

Tesla has actually lowered its prices. They have done it by stripping out luxury features, like vegan leather seats and ambient lighting. Hyundai slashed nearly \$10,000 off of their Georgia-built model. This is precisely how fair market competition works.

Americans elected Republicans to end Washington wasteful spending. We are keeping our word.

So I am going to continue to work with my Senate colleagues and the Trump administration to keep this loophole closed, to enforce the law, and to protect hard-working taxpayers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Mississippi.

S. 2296

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, we are in an unfortunate period of hyperpartisanship that doesn’t look good from this angle, and I know it doesn’t look good to the general public. But I have some good, bipartisan news that might make us feel better about our national security. As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I come to the floor this morning and say that we are finally in a position to take up on the floor and vote on and pass the National Defense Authorization Act.

This is a very important act that we have managed, in times of majority and minority in Democratic and Republican administrations, to pass each year for over six decades.

My partner and colleague, the former chairman of the committee, JACK REED, and now ranking Democrat member, has worked with me, along with our Armed Services Committee members and our capable staffs, and we have built a strong, bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act.

It started this summer, when, earlier than usual, the committee approved our bill by an overwhelming majority of 26 to 1. Let me say that again. In this time when we can’t seem to muster a 60-vote majority to keep us in business as a Federal Government, we were able to pass the National Defense Authorization Act by a vote of 26 to 1. It is member-driven, and it is full of national security priorities from Senators across this body on both sides of the aisle. It is designed to make important changes to make our country stronger, to make our defenses better and more able to defend ourselves and, therefore, to prevent armed conflict.

Senator REED and I have worked with majority and minority Members to build a bipartisan package of 49 amendments to be offered on the floor, and we are within moments of a decision point. We can decide to bring this matter to the floor and get unanimous consent to lock in consideration or we can begin voting, which will take us into the afternoon. I have to say that based on experience, if we don’t get this locked in at this moment, then we will miss an opportunity to consider these amendments on the floor because we simply are going to run out of time if

we don't proceed before the weekend break.

The package was included in the substitute amendment, which we filed back before the August break.

Since that time, we worked closely to take the next step. We have 47 amendments for a second managers' package, and this has been agreed upon by the ranking member and by me and by our membership, split evenly between Republicans and Democrats. It contains numerous bipartisan items. We might not take all 17 votes, but we have teed up 17 votes—again, split evenly or split as evenly as possible between Republican bills and Democrat bills.

I say to you, Mr. President, and I say to the leadership of the Democratic minority in this Senate, we are ready to vote on the NDAA. We are ready to show on both sides of the aisle that the Senate can act in the interest of national security and get something done on a bipartisan basis.

For heaven's sake, we need to do that at this moment, even more importantly than at other times. We have a great product before us. It makes huge changes—significant changes—and we need to send the signal that we can do this, get it then coordinated with the House version, which has already been passed, and move it to the President of the United States for his early signature.

I, genuinely, thank my partner, Senator JACK REED, for his tireless work with me to get to this point. I was looking forward to locking in a unanimous consent request at this moment, but I have been told to hold off. It could be coming in just a few minutes. But we have to get that unanimous consent to avoid vote after vote after vote on cloture on these various proposals and amendments. We have to lock that in. We must do it this morning—in the next hour perhaps—between now and the first vote, which I believe begins in about 30 minutes.

We simply cannot delay this process any longer. Let me make it clear: If we do not bring this to the floor today, this matter will not have time for deliberation on the Senate floor, and we will have to basically pretend that we are having a conference between House and Senate Members, and a very small group of Senators will have to write this bill and bring it to the floor for final passage. That is not the way this ought to be done, and it can be avoided with a unanimous consent request in just a very few minutes.

The good news is, we are ready to proceed. The good news is, the committee is united, 26 to 1, and my ranking member and I are ready to proceed. We simply need a Democratic leader to come down here and agree to unanimous consent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

DISAPPROVAL OF THE CENTRAL YUKON RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, we have all talked about what the primary goal is right now in the Senate. It is to reopen the Federal Government, but that is not all we need to reopen right now.

As we focus on ending this shutdown, I have come to speak in support of a disapproval resolution that is now pending. This is H.J. Res. 106. This is the companion to the resolution that Senator SULLIVAN and I have introduced to reopen the Central Yukon resource management plan after BLM finalized it over our objection last fall.

The formal name of this rule is the Central Yukon Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan. The name is big, and it is a really big area, encompassing nearly 56 million acres, mostly in Northern and Interior Alaska, so the full State of Alaska.

But it is this central area here that is really quite substantial. Not all of that is Federal land. You will see the different colors here. In fact, most of it is not. This RMP is only supposed to affect 13.3 million acres managed by BLM. That is still a lot of land. To put it into perspective, it is more than twice the total acreage of Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Vermont. That is what you are looking at here within this region.

We do need an RMP, resource management plan, to guide management of the Central Yukon's Federal acres. This plan is meant to replace older regimes that were put in place back in 1981, 1986, and 1991, as well as some lands that are unplanned. This is a big undertaking. It has been going on for a long time. It started back in 2013, 12 years ago, costing taxpayers millions of dollars to complete.

I didn't want to have to overturn this RMP because I really do respect much of the work that was done—certainly, the people who worked really hard to do it. I also recognize that some Alaskans support pieces of last year's final plan and are concerned that their input could be lost if it is reopened.

But the problem we have here and why we are taking this resolution up today, is that the Biden administration, which was in office during the last few years of this 12-year process, really has left us with no choice here. They lost sight of the need for balanced management. They dropped any pretense of it from the final plan.

So despite objections from me, from Senator SULLIVAN, the State of Alaska, many Alaskan stakeholders, BLM kind of plowed ahead, and they finalized a plan that overwhelmingly prioritizes conservation but fails to reflect the principle of multiple use, multiple use that is required with our public lands and fails to honor the explicit requirements of a Federal law.

There are some very significant issues within this plan. There are further deficiencies based on what BLM pledged to do and then refused to do.

And that combination is what caused us to file this resolution and to seek a more balanced plan going forward.

Let's go through those problems in a little bit greater detail. I expect that one of the things you are going to hear today in opposition is that this is unprecedented; that Congress is now overturning 12 years of nonpolitical, legally sound Agency work. If that were true, I would not be standing here in opposition to this. I would be a no on the resolution, but that is not where we are.

In December of 2020 and BLM's eighth year of work on this RMP, the Agency released a draft plan with a pretty reasonable preferred alternative. This is a proposal that would have protected sensitive areas; it would have upheld subsistence and recreational uses; it would have provided opportunities for resource development and other legal uses on BLM land. Under that proposal, many outdated public land orders—we call them PLOs—would have been lifted, and the majority of BLM lands would have been accessible.

Just a few years later, we saw a very different preferred alternative emerge from BLM. This was in the middle of the Biden administration. The final Record of Decision issued last November is 362 pages long. There are multiple appendices that total another 1,428 pages. It is 1,800 pages. This is the stack of the maps and the pages of the final Record of Decision—1,800 pages showing those various designations and restrictions.

This is in not a user-friendly plan. It is not a printer-friendly plan, that is for sure. But it is also not a BLM employee-friendly plan. It is long and complex. And unless you are really superinvested in learning what was designated as visual resource management class II as opposed to class III or IV, you are probably not really going to enjoy reading it.

The differences between what the BLM proposed in 2020 and what BLM finalized in 2024 show how this process went off the rails. I will give you a couple of examples here. In 2020, BLM proposed one area of critical environmental concern—we call them ACECs—and research natural area. These are administrative withdrawals for conservation and restrict other uses. This covered 77,000 acres.

Then, last year, BLM's final RMP ballooned this to include 21 ACECs and RNAs, covering 3.6 million acres. This is imposing restrictions on nearly 47 times more land.

In 2020, BLM proposed 497,000 acres of special recreation management areas. In 2024, we saw that triple to 1.453 million acres. In 2020, BLM proposed a little over a million acres of utility and transportation corridors. In 2024, that fell by two-thirds to just 33,000 acres.

In 2020, BLM proposed to have almost 7.5 million acres open to fluid mineral leasing. Then, in 2024, it leaves just 845,000 acres, and that is 89 percent

less. So you can see the dramatic differences between the plan in 2020 and the plan in 2024.

There is a lot more I could go through, but the point is that restrictions exploded in the final plan while opportunities for economic development were severely curtailed. We saw it over and over in Alaska over the last 4 years. We don't think it was any accident. You have heard my colleague speak on the floor about this a great deal, but it was just, really, the last administration's goal to reduce and curtail many of these activities. BLM's treatment of public land orders, which have been obsolete in Alaska for decades, also backslid dramatically. These came to be in the 1970s when Alaska's land ownership was greatly unsettled, but they should have been revoked a long time ago.

In 2020, BLM proposed to revoke 5.863 million acres of so-called d-1 withdrawals, but then, in 2024, BLM zeroes that out. Instead, they have only lifted withdrawals for one narrow purpose. It is an important purpose, but it is very narrow, and that is allotments for eligible Alaska Vietnam veterans but no others. In 2020, BLM proposed to lift PLO 5150, reflecting State and Native selections around our Trans-Alaska Pipeline corridor, but then, in 2024, BLM reversed course. It refused to lift a single acre of PLO 5150 within the RMP process.

The problem is that BLM told us—they told me; they told my team—that they would address PLO 5150 through a separate process. They called it a tiered environmental assessment, and they said that that was going to begin immediately after the finalization of the Central Yukon RMP. They just had to get to that point, and they just needed us to back off so they could. Guess what never happened. The day after the State of Alaska's consistency review period for the Central Yukon RMP ended, BLM canceled its separate process for PLO 5150. It was an absurd decision.

BLM spent years—they spent years—telling us that they could only lift public land orders within the RMP process. And then, as the Central Yukon RMP nears completion, they then tell us that they could only lift one of the most visible PLOs in Alaska outside of it. And then as soon as we reach that point, they break their promise, immediately pulling the whole thing down.

My team was actually on the phone with BLM when this happened. They asked about the process, and they were told everything was on track. Everything was going just fine. Right after—probably not even more than 30 minutes after that—BLM calls State officials to tell them it is off and is never coming back. If that is not a bait and switch, you know, I don't know what is. This is where you can start to see how BLM's actions—both what it did and what it refused to do in this RMP—directly contradict multiple Federal laws.

The first is ANILCA, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. That was Alaska's grand bargain. This is where Congress withdrew and conserved tens of millions of acres in our State in exchange for reasonable opportunities for economic development, whether it be within the 1002 Area, the Ambler Road, but this was the deal back in 1980. And to confirm that Alaska had done its part for national conservation, ANILCA also includes several of what we call "no more" clauses, reflecting the fact that we were done and that no more wilderness needed to be designated in the State of Alaska.

It should be pretty apparent that the unilateral, administrative designation of 3.6 million acres of ACECs, dozens of other restrictions across millions of other acres, and the retention of virtually all land withdrawals, which were supposed to be lifted decades ago, are all directly contrary to ANILCA.

The Central Yukon plan also conflicts with a law that I wrote called the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act. Some people around here are still surprised that Alaska's land ownership is still not settled yet. Sixty-six years after statehood, neither our State nor our Native land entitlements have been fulfilled. We have got millions of acres remaining outstanding on both of these, and their settlement hinges on the Federal Government making available and then transferring selected lands.

Congress agreed to enact my Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act back in 2004. We set this goal that our land entitlements would be complete by 2009. That was the 50th anniversary of statehood. Well, that didn't happen, but some good did come from it. BLM surveyed its land withdrawals in Alaska. Then, in 2006, there was a report to Congress that recommended that 95 percent of them—covering 152 million acres—could be lifted consistent with the protection of the public's interest. The only caveat here was that BLM preferred to lift its orders through its land planning process.

So we worked with them. We pushed to make that happen. We have appropriated funding to make it happen. But when BLM undertakes a new RMP and decides that not a single acre of a single PLO can be lifted across 13.3 million acres for any other purpose other than Native allotments, you are going to see patience run out, and then it turns to frustration; it turns to opposition. Then it takes us to where we are today, which is to the congressional disapproval of a resource management plan.

I would also point out that the Central Yukon RMP conflicts with ANCSA, or the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The regional ANC in the Central Yukon area, Doyon, has rightly pointed out that BLM's actions in this RMP would make it difficult, if not impossible, to utilize its lands for the benefit of its people in line with congressional intent.

In a letter to Alaska's congressional delegation, Doyon explained how BLM's restrictive land designations will "complicate access to and use of Doyon lands and potentially prevent Doyon from fully realizing the economic and other benefits that Congress intended it would enjoy as a result of ANCSA's settlement of aboriginal land claims."

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD immediately following my remarks.

We also received a letter of support for this resolution from the North Slope Trilateral, which includes the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, the North Slope Borough, and the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, ASRC. Their letter lays out a series of fundamental flaws within the final Central Yukon plan, including its failure to account for North Slope priorities, the impact that it would have on Native lands, the barriers it creates to cooperative land management, the restrictions it imposes to foreclose the production of rare earth elements and other resources, as well as the lack of consultation with Alaska Natives who live on the North Slope during its development.

As the Trilateral writes, "The result is a plan that ignores congressional intent under both ANCSA and ANILCA, disregards the economic needs of North Slope communities, and creates unnecessary obstacles to infrastructure, energy, and community health across northern Alaska."

So, again, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter from the North Slope leaders be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my remarks.

The sad part is that what these Alaskans are pointing to—restrictions that encumber access to lands and opportunities—was largely the point of BLM's final RMP, and that again points to why we are here to disapprove this plan.

I should point out that there is a big misunderstanding about the effects of this resolution. There have been some false claims out there, and I think there has been some kind of sloppy reporting of them. But when the House passed this resolution, we saw over and over again in different articles that somehow or other the passage of that resolution had approved the Ambler Access Project, which is not the case. That project has been in permitting for a decade. Then, just on Monday, President Trump issued a determination reapproving it, which we appreciate, but nothing in this disapproval resolution approves that project. So that is just misinformation out there.

What is true is that, over the course of decades, Congress has ceded a lot of authority on Federal land management to the executive branch. We trust them to follow the laws that we have made and find a balance between competing uses and priorities. We know it is not

an easy job, especially in a State where you have more than 223 million Federal acres, but when the Agencies lose sight of that, it is our job here—it is our responsibility—to rein them in.

That is what we are doing. We are reminding BLM that these are public lands that are generally available for multiple use, not exclusively conserved lands with layer after layer of administrative restrictions heaped onto them.

Before I end here, I would like to briefly discuss what comes next if we are able to pass this disapproval resolution.

It should be very clear. Passage does not invalidate 12 years of Agency work. It does not overturn the environmental analysis that has been done or the public comments that have been received. We are simply reopening this plan, and we are telling BLM: Return. Come back with a new one that is more balanced. That shouldn't be hard, and it shouldn't take that long because the plan already exists. It was just abandoned once the Biden administration took office.

For 8 years, BLM was on the right track in this process. It has a ready-made plan in the form of its preferred alternative from 2020. The record of decision from last year even acknowledges that the 2020 preferred alternative features a "blend of resource protection and resource development." It is an actual balance between the two, and that is what we should be seeking. It is time to go back to that proposal, update it as needed based on the passage of time, and put into place a final Central Yukon plan that maintains access, respects multiple use, and conserves where necessary and appropriate.

It is entirely possible to serve the varied interests of this region, and through this resolution, that is exactly what we are telling BLM to do. When they do, we will have a final Central Yukon resource management plan that Alaska's delegation, the State of Alaska, the largest landowner in the region—Doyon—and a wide range of Alaska stakeholders can support. So I would urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JULY 21, 2025.

Hon. NICHOLAS J. BEGICH III,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BEGICH: Thank you for introducing H.J. Res. 106, to disapprove the November 12, 2024, Central Yukon Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (Central Yukon RMP). Doyon, Limited (Doyon) strongly supports this joint resolution and urges Congress's and the President's swift action to reject this misguided and harmful planning decision.

Doyon is a major stakeholder in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Central Yukon RMP planning process. Many large tracts of lands that were conveyed to Doyon under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) are surrounded by, or abut, BLM-managed public lands. Doyon owns sub-

stantial interests in the Central Yukon Planning Area, holding an ownership interest in approximately 4.65 million acres. In addition, it has selected an additional 127,000 acres in the Planning Area under ANCSA that have not yet been conveyed. Doyon's land base shares approximately 3,000 miles of border with BLM lands—potentially more than any other Indigenous landowner in the nation. Consistent with ANCSA's intent, much of the land that Doyon selected was selected for its economic developmental potential.

As Doyon explained to BLM throughout the Central Yukon RMP planning process, further enveloping Doyon's lands within new or expanded Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and other restrictive land designations, and otherwise imposing restrictions on use of surrounding lands, will further complicate access to and use of Doyon lands, and potentially prevent Doyon from fully realizing the economic and other benefits that Congress intended it would enjoy as a result of ANCSA's settlement of aboriginal land claims. In addition, because oil and gas, mineral, and other resource prospects often straddle federal, state, and/or private lands, the more that BLM planning processes place lands off limits to multiple uses, the more likely resource development opportunities will be unavailable on Doyon (and other non-federal) lands in the vicinity, impeding Doyon's ability to make economically productive use of its lands as Congress intended when it settled aboriginal land claims in Alaska. The management decisions made in the 2024 Central Yukon RMP also will have long-term implications for communications, electric transmission, and other infrastructure activities in the region, adding further obstacles to what already are extraordinary challenges to connecting rural communities in Alaska.

Doyon devoted significant resources to engaging with BLM over the course of the Central Yukon RMP planning process to ensure that the result of that process reflects the principles of multiple use and sustained yield established under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, as well as the unique framework that Congress established in Alaska under ANCSA and Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Unfortunately, despite these concerted efforts of Doyon and others, the 2024 plan fails to do that.

Key flaws justifying congressional disapproval of the 2024 Central Yukon RMP—as further detailed in the protest that Doyon submitted in response to the Central Yukon Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement released by BLM on April 19, 2024—include the following:

The 2024 Central Yukon RMP improperly designates certain ACECs/Research Natural Areas by including areas that do not meet applicable requirements for designation and management of ACECs and improperly determines special management attention is required. It also improperly designates ACECs that effectively surround or restrict access to Doyon-conveyed lands, as well as that include Doyon-selected lands.

The 2024 Central Yukon RMP fails to appropriately address impacts of right-of-way exclusion and avoidance areas on access and other activities.

The 2024 Central Yukon RMP fails to adequately and appropriately address access rights guaranteed under Section 1323(b) and Title XI of ANILCA.

The 2024 Central Yukon RMP inappropriately concludes that hypothetical future development of mineral deposits in the Amber Mining District, Wiseman East and West deposits, and the Ray Mountains could "sig-

nificantly restrict subsistence uses and have a disproportionate negative impact" on certain "environmental justice communities" as well as "significantly restrict subsistence uses for" certain communities.

The 2024 Central Yukon RMP fails to fully consider potential impacts of designating certain lands as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II and redesignate them as VRM Class III or IV.

The 2024 Central Yukon RMP improperly ignores the long history of BLM's calling for the lifting of the ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals and fails to provide a rational explanation for retaining those withdrawals other than for the limited purposes of selection by Alaska Native Vietnam-era veterans.

The 2024 Central Yukon RMP violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in adopting a new alternative not made available to the public for review and comment and in not providing the public an opportunity to provide informed comment after correction of an error in stated ANCSA 17(d)(1) acreages.

We appreciate your efforts to move forward with disapproval of the 2024 Central Yukon RMP and we urge Congress and the President to move quickly to enact this joint resolution.

Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

SARAH E. OBED,
SVP External Affairs,
Doyon, Limited.

OCTOBER 3, 2025.

Re Support for H.J. Res. 106 and the Senate Companion—Disapproval of the 2024 Central Yukon RMP.

Hon. LISA MURKOWSKI,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. DAN SULLIVAN,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. NICHOLAS BEGICH III,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS MURKOWSKI, SULLIVAN AND REPRESENTATIVE BEGICH: We write in strong support of H.J. Res. 106 and the Senate companion resolution disapproving the November 12, 2024, Central Yukon Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (Central Yukon RMP) and urge swift congressional and presidential action to reject this harmful and unlawful planning decision.

The Central Yukon RMP, if allowed to stand, would have significant and far-reaching consequences for Alaska Native landowners, critical transportation and infrastructure, economic development opportunities, and the ability of our people to exercise the selfdetermination guaranteed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Like our neighbors in Interior Region of Alaska and Doyon, Limited, whose lands are directly impacted, we have consistently raised concerns about how the 2024 plan undermines ANCSA's framework, disregards the principles of multiple use and sustained yield under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and violates key provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

BACKGROUND

The North Slope Iñupiat have lived in the Arctic for over 10,000 years. We are proud of our self-determination efforts to ensure future generations of Iñupiat continue to reside in our communities and have access to essential services. Without a stable economy, our communities will suffer and so too will our ability to engage in our Iñupiat cultural traditions, including a subsistence way of life.

The North Slope of Alaska spans an area nearly the size of the state of Minnesota and, within that expansive area, there are eight Iñupiaq communities—Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Point Hope, Point Lay, Utqiagvik, and Wainwright. None of our communities are connected by a permanent road system; all supplies must be flown or barged in, making the cost of living extremely high and economic opportunities generally low.

Fifty years ago, the Federal Government directed Alaska Native people to organize in a new structure of indigenous representation. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA) was a dramatically different approach by the Federal Government to federal Indian policy. The fact that our ancestral lands were claimed by the Federal Government before our people had a right to settle aboriginal land claims should inform every decision of the Federal Government in managing those lands.

Unlike the Lower 48 model of indigenous representation where tribal governments typically administer the delivery of services such as healthcare, public safety, education, land management, and economic development, the passage of ANCSA created a shared system of Alaska Native representation and delivery of services. Our region has a multitude of Alaska Native entities that work together to effectively serve, provide for, and enrich the lives of the North Slope Iñupiat we represent. Our three regional entities, the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS), the North Slope Borough (Borough), and Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC) are three of those entities. While our roles differ, our constituencies overlap, which is why we work closely together to protect the cultural and economic interests of the North Slope Iñupiat.

While our leaders over fifty years ago were initially wary of any development on our lands, our Iñupiaq leaders have spent decades focused on open communication and transparency in planning with industry. We have exercised true self-determination through a unique framework of Alaska Native governance—a framework that relies on our tribal governments, municipal governments, and Alaska Native corporations established by Congress to serve our indigenous constituents. For millennia Iñupiaq ingenuity has transformed our relationship with industry into a partnership that has both protected our environment and our way of life and has brought significant economic benefits to the region that would have otherwise been absent. Our North Slope residents are keenly aware that advances in our communities—running water, local schools, health care, public safety, electricity, and more—have come because of the coordination and cooperation of Alaska Native leaders and entities across the region.

ICAS

Established in 1971, the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope is the federally recognized regional tribal government for the North Slope and represents over 13,000 Iñupiaq tribal members. The mission of ICAS is to exercise its sovereign rights and powers for the benefit of tribal members, to conserve and retain tribal lands and resources including subsistence. For millennia Iñupiaq ingenuity has transformed our relationship with industry into a partnership that has both protected our environment and our way of life and has brought significant economic benefits to the region that would have otherwise been absent. Our North Slope residents are keenly aware that advances in our communities—running water, local schools, health care, public safety, electricity, and more—have come because of the coordina-

tion and cooperation of Alaska Native leaders and entities across the region.

NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH

The Borough is a home rule government located above the Arctic Circle that represents roughly 10,000 residents. The Borough's jurisdiction includes the entire NPR-A and the eight villages within it. In 1972, the North Slope Iñupiat formed the Borough, in part, to ensure our communities would benefit from oil and gas development on their ancestral homelands. It was the first time Alaska Natives took control of their destiny using a regional municipal government. The Borough exercises its powers of taxation, property assessment, education, and planning and zoning services to serve our communities. Taxes levied on oil and gas infrastructure have enabled the Borough to invest in public infrastructure and utilities, support education, and provide police, fire, emergency, health, and other services. Elsewhere in rural Alaska, these services are typically provided primarily by the State or Federal Government, or both.

ASRC

ASRC is a for profit, land-owning Alaska Native regional corporation formed pursuant to ANCSA. ASRC represents the same region as the Borough and ICAS, and the same eight villages whose residents are predominantly Iñupiat, and who comprise many of our approximately 14,000 Alaska Native shareholders. ASRC holds the title to approximately five million acres of land on the North Slope, including both surface and subsurface lands. These lands—the ancestral lands of the North Slope Iñupiat—were conveyed to ASRC by the United States pursuant to ANCSA to provide for the economic and cultural wellbeing of our Iñupiaq shareholders.

ASRC is committed both to providing sound financial returns to our shareholders, in the form of jobs and dividends, and to preserving our Iñupiaq way of life, culture, and traditions, including the ability to maintain a subsistence lifestyle to provide for our communities. In furtherance of this congressionally mandated mission to provide benefits to our shareholders, ASRC conducts and will continue to invest in a variety of activities related to infrastructure and natural resource development and other economic initiatives.

ASRC's perspective is based on the dual realities that our Iñupiaq culture and communities depend on a healthy ecosystem and subsistence resources, as well as infrastructure and resource development as the foundation of sustainable North Slope communities.

DISAPPROVAL OF THE 2024 CENTRAL YUKON RMP

Several fundamental flaws justify disapproval of this plan:

Access and Infrastructure: The RMP fails to account for the North Slope Borough's Community Winter Access Trails (CWAT) project and the Arctic Strategic Transportation and Resources (ASTAR) initiative, both of which are vital to lowering costs and connecting isolated communities. The plan also misrepresents existing rights-of-way and ignores the mandates of Section 1323(b) and Title XI of ANILCA, which guarantee reasonable access to Native-owned inholdings.

Impact on Native Lands: The RMP designates 21 ACECs and other restrictive areas that surround ASRC lands, devaluing them by blocking development potential and preventing reasonable use. These decisions not only harm ASRC's economic viability but also diminish potential revenue-sharing distributions under ANCSA Section 7(i), reducing benefits for Alaska Natives statewide.

Allotments and Alaska Native Veterans: By restricting surrounding BLM lands, the plan cuts off opportunities for individual Alaska Native allotment owners—including veterans eligible for allotments under recent legislation—to pursue development and long-term economic benefits from their property.

Land Status Conflicts: The RMP disregards the unique patchwork of ownership in the Planning Area, where BLM manages only limited tracts compared to ASRC and the State. In several parcels, BLM manages only the surface estate while ASRC holds subsurface rights, yet the plan creates barriers to cooperative management and development.

Economic and Energy Development: The RMP forecloses future opportunities on the North Slope unnecessarily limits exploration for rare earth elements critical to U.S. energy security. At the same time, it fails to acknowledge that adjacent lands already provide extensive wilderness values under ANILCA, making additional restrictive designations duplicative and unjustified.

Procedural Failures: After a decade of consultation contrary to those consultations, the Central Yukon RMP was finalized through a flawed process that included adopting alternatives not subject to public review, retaining outdated ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals without justification, and failing to engage in meaningful government-to-government consultation with Alaska Native entities like ICAS and ASRC.

The result is a plan that ignores congressional intent under both ANCSA and ANILCA, disregards the economic needs of North Slope communities, and creates unnecessary obstacles to infrastructure, energy, and community health across northern Alaska.

Despite claims to the contrary, the Central Yukon Plan doesn't open the Armbrister Access Road and covers a planning area of fifty million acres of land which largely are unmanaged by the BLM while directly preventing our ability to exercise self-determination through our respective entities.

SUPPORT FOR H.J. RES 106 AND SENATE COMPANION

We therefore strongly support H.J. Res. 106 the Senate companion resolution and urge Congress and the President to act swiftly to disapprove the 2024 Central Yukon RMP. The North Slope Regional Trilateral stands ready to provide additional information and testimony as needed to ensure Alaska Native rights and priorities are upheld.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

NICOLE WOJCIECHOWSKI,
President, Iñupiat
Community of the
Arctic Slope.

JOSIAH PATKOTAK,
Mayor, North Slope
Borough.

REX A. ROCK SR.,
President and CEO,
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I yield the floor to my colleague from Alaska, who has worked very, very hard on this resolution, and I appreciate his leadership of the same.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes prior to the scheduled roll-call vote.

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALLS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum calls with respect to cloture on the motions to proceed to Calendar No. 167, S. 2882, and Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371.

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

DISAPPROVAL OF THE CENTRAL YUKON
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague Senator MURKOWSKI for her remarks on the vote that we are getting ready to take on the CRA that deals with the Central Yukon plan.

I am going to be a little bit more brief since she covered a lot of material and did a great job of doing it, but I want to give my colleagues just a little sense of the elements of why this plan—"plan"—needs to be repealed by the U.S. Senate as part of a CRA.

By the way, Mr. President, this is going to continue in the vein of what we did with your great State of Montana and North Dakota the last 2 days on the Senate floor with these CRAs.

What is going on here? We all know what is going on here both with regard to Montana and with regard to North Dakota and, of course, with regard to Alaska. The previous administration came in and said: Even though it is probably illegal, we are going to try to lock up these States because we don't want resource development in these States.

Imagine, Mr. President, as Senator MURKOWSKI mentioned, the Central Yukon plan that the Biden administration issued—we didn't want it. Nobody really wanted it in Alaska. It is almost 56 million acres. That is the size of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania combined, just that one plan. It gives you a sense of how big my State is. But can you imagine a President of the United States, if you are a Republican, telling the people of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania that they are going to be saddled with a plan they didn't want to large swaths of their land, destroying thousands of jobs, which is what this plan would do? Nobody would accept that.

This planned scheme of the Biden administration disregards local voices, ignores protections guaranteed under Federal law—ANCSA and ANILCA—and undermines the ability of Alaska Native corporations, which did not want it, to access and responsibly develop their lands, which Congress gave them in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971.

These are the key elements of why it is a problem. It is also part of a long pattern with the Biden administration that I never tire of reminding people.

This is the chart we call the last frontier lockup. The last administration issued 70 Executive orders and Executive actions singularly focused on Alaska—7-0. I confronted President Biden in the Oval Office respectfully when we were at 48. Here is the list of

them, by the way, of the 70. That is each one, 7-0—only against Alaska.

I said: Mr. President, why are you doing this? Why are you going to war with my people—working families, Americans? You are sanctioning Alaska more than you sanctioned Iran and Venezuela, and they are terrorist regimes.

He didn't know. I don't think he knew what was going on. But it was wrong.

This, by the way, this Central Yukon management plan, was one of the 70 that we didn't want; that the vast majority of the Native people didn't want; certainly that the Native corporation Doyon—most of their land—they didn't want it.

What we need to do instead, as opposed to locking up Alaska—I said to President Biden: It is not good for Alaska, sir, but it is also not good for America—is we need to do this: unleash Alaska's extraordinary resource potential.

By the way, thank you, President Trump.

This is a day-one Executive order, one of the first Executive orders President Trump issued when he came into office in January and said: We are not going to lock up Alaska; we are going to unleash it.

In his Executive order, we also have essentially getting rid of this Central Yukon management plan from the Biden administration.

So thank you, Mr. President.

Now, my colleagues—I am asking all of them, and I am particularly asking my Democratic colleagues, because I want you guys to show that you are not so anti-Alaska.

The Democratic Party at the national level has become the anti-Alaska party, and that is the anti-Alaska Native party. So many things that we care about in my State in the interest of the Native people—all of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle make it a point—a point—to try to crush us in our opportunity and cancel Native voices—yes, indigenous voices. They are always working to cancel them.

Here is your opportunity, Democrat colleagues, to vote yes on this CRA. Listen to me and Senator MURKOWSKI, the people who represent the people in the great State of Alaska. Listen to President Trump. That is what we want.

I am going to mention just one final thing on why this is so important, why I get really animated about this with all of my colleagues.

A lot of people have seen this chart, but I like showing it because it is a really important issue. This is a chart from the American Medical Association from 1980 to 2014. It has life expectancy in America. The places that are blue, darker blue, and purple, if you look at the chart, these people are living longer. Purple is 13 years. So in 24 years, in certain parts of America, the life expectancy of Americans increased by 13 years.

Unfortunately, in our great Nation—look at the yellow, orange, and red on this chart. That is actually life expectancy decreasing. Of course, nobody wants that. A lot of that was the opioid epidemic and things.

But guess which State had the greatest increase in life expectancy of any place in America from 1980 to 2014 according to the American Medical Association. Alaska—especially the North Slope region, interior Alaska, the Aleutian Island area, southeast Alaska.

So what happened from 1980 to 2014 in that part of Alaska? I will tell you what happened. Responsible resource development happened, and people started living longer. They got jobs. They got water and sewer, flushed toilets, gymnasiums, health clinics—things that the lower 48 just takes for granted that we didn't have in a lot of our State. Because we had responsible resource development—mining oil and gas on the North Slope, fishing out on the Aleutian Island chains—all because of laws we made here in Congress, the people of Alaska, particularly the Native people, started living longer—living longer.

I have asked my colleagues—and I have used this chart a lot—to give me an indicator of policy success more important than the people you represent living longer. There isn't one. That is the most important. The people you represent are living longer. Why? Because of responsible resource development. There is no doubt. Here is the chart. Alaskans are living up to 13 years longer.

Now, Native people in my State, unfortunately, started at a really low level—some of the lowest levels of life expectancy—but because we are developing our resources responsibly, my constituents are living longer.

So when you have these groups and you have the Biden administration and, no offense, you have a lot of my Senate Democratic colleagues trying to shut down my State, which they always do, do you know what you are doing? You are actually impacting people's lives and how long they live.

This is really important for me and the people I represent. This is a good opportunity to tell the Biden administration: Hey, you are not going to do this. You are not going to do it to Montana, you are not going to do it to North Dakota, and you certainly are not going to do it to Alaska because you are going to negatively impact people's lives.

I really hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and I really hope at least one or two Democrats have the courage to come and say: Do you know what, Dan, you have been talking about this for 10 years. I agree with you. I am going to vote to rescind this Biden CRA or this Biden Yukon management plan that nobody wanted, to help your State and help America.

One more thing. In this part of the State where that Central Yukon management plan is—like I said, 56 million

acres—51 of the 56 critical minerals that our country needs are in this area.

I was in an Armed Services hearing recently, and everybody, including a lot of my Democrat colleagues, said: Gosh, we are so reliant on China for critical minerals. What can we do?

I can tell you what you can do: Quit shutting down my State. Let us develop critical minerals in Alaska as opposed to relying on them from China.

That is another reason this is important—for the national security of our country.

With that, I ask all of my colleagues to support this CRA.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, and notwithstanding rule XXII, it be in order to call up the following amendments to Calendar No. 115, S. 2296: Paul, No. 3761; Cruz, No. 3274; Scott of Florida, No. 3535; Marshall, No. 3213; Moran, No. 3814; Curtis, No. 3697; Lee-Duckworth, No. 3288; Cotton-Gillibrand, No. 3759; Cornyn-Cortez Masto, No. 3926; Hagerty-Peters, No. 3841; Schumer, No. 3109; Van Hollen, No. 3872; Duckworth, No. 3210; Warnock, No. 3010; Kaine, No. 3337; Sanders, No. 3853; and Merkley, No. 3927; further, that with respect to the amendments listed above, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate vote on the amendments in the order listed, with no further amendments or motions in order and with 60 affirmative votes required for adoption and that there be 2 minutes equally divided prior to each vote; further, that upon disposition of the Merkley amendment, No. 3927, the following amendments be called up and made pending en bloc and that they be the only remaining amendments in order to S. 2296: Scott of South Carolina, No. 3340; Hassan, No. 2928; Grassley, No. 3355; Warnock, No. 2952; McCormick, No. 3376; Ossoff, No. 2971; Cornyn, No. 3405; Kaine, No. 3039; Capito, No. 3435; Gallego, No. 3136; Lankford, No. 3439; Duckworth, No. 3156; Blackburn, No. 3489; Shaheen, No. 3351; Kennedy, No. 3703; Booker, No. 3530; Daines, No. 3732; Slotkin, No. 3557; Ricketts, No. 3788; Peters, No. 3570; Hawley, No. 3799; Hickenlooper, No. 3601; Rounds, No. 3810; Coons, 3712; Tillis, No. 3811; Cortez Masto, No. 3724; Moran, No. 3813; Klobuchar, No. 3751; Grassley, No. 3823; Klobuchar, No. 3818; Kennedy, No. 3702; Durbin, No. 3825; Fischer, No. 3842; Padilla, No. 3834; Cruz, No. 3890; Hirono, No. 2979; Grassley-Durbin, No. 3272; Cruz-Cantwell, No. 3742; Scott of South Carolina-Warren, No. 3901; Risch-Shaheen, No. 3819; Graham, No. 3899; Sullivan-Whitehouse, No. 3888; Collins, No. 3880; Hirono, No. 3015; Peters, No. 3753; Shaheen-Risch, No. 3826; Coons, No. 3728;

Gallego, No. 3928; that the Senate vote on the amendments en bloc; that upon disposition of the amendments, the pending Thune amendments and motions be withdrawn, the Ernst amendment No. 3427 be agreed to, and the Wicker-Reed substitute amendment No. 3748, as modified, and as amended, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and that the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with 60 affirmative votes required for passage; and that if passed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the two leaders to enter motions to reconsider without being on the prevailing side with respect to the cloture votes on the motion to proceed to S. 2882 and H.R. 5371.

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

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 legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXIII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 167, S. 2882, a bill making a continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Gary C. Peters, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Durbin, Tammy Baldwin, Christopher Murphy, Tim Kaine, John Hickenlooper, Richard Blumenthal, Alex Padilla, Tammy Duckworth, Michael Bennet, Jack Reed, Brian Schatz, Mazie Hirono, Margaret Hassan.

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 motion to proceed to S. 2882, a bill making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes, 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 Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 47, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 557 Leg.]

YEAS—47

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

NAYS—50

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

NOT VOTING—3

| | | |
|------|--------|---------|
| Cruz | Hawley | Schmitt |
|------|--------|---------|

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). On this vote, the yeas are 47, the nays are 50.

Three-fifths of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, this motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

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 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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes.

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Bernie Moreno, Marsha Blackburn, Mike Rounds, Eric Schmitt, Tommy Tuberville, Todd Young, James Lankford, Roger F. Wicker, Rick Scott of Florida, Jim Justice, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.