

We are on day 15 of a government shutdown because the Democrats are unwilling to fund the Federal Government, unwilling to pass a clean continuing resolution.

By the way, every one of them, including the Senator from New Jersey, has given speeches about how it is reckless and irresponsible to shut the government down, not to pass a clean continuing resolution. Yet, earlier today, almost every single Democrat voted, for the ninth time in the last 2 weeks, to shut the government down, whereas Republicans are unified to reopen it.

This weekend, there will be a rally in DC of leftwing radicals, the so-called No Kings rally. Many, if not most, of us on the Republican side of the Chamber believe that the reason the government is still shut down is because Democrat Senators are terrified for that rally to occur and those leftwing radicals to see that the government is open because they have to demonstrate that they hate President Trump.

Just this week, President Trump announced a historic Middle East peace deal. Yet virtually zero Democrats could bring themselves even to say his name.

Bill Clinton praised President Trump for the Middle East peace deal. Hillary Clinton praised President Trump for the Middle East peace deal. I commend Bill and Hillary Clinton. I will say that in my time in the Senate, that is the first time that sentence has ever come out of my mouth: I commend Bill and Hillary Clinton. But why is it—indeed, Senator BOOKER put out a statement about the Middle East peace deal, but nowhere in it was President Trump's name to be found.

I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks that there is power in saying his name. Just as the Democrats are terrified of saying the name "Donald J. Trump" in any way connected to anything positive, so, too, are the Cuban communists terrified of saying the name "Oswaldo Paya."

I am hopeful that my friend the Senator from New Jersey will put aside the partisan rancor that characterizes the Democrats in this body and will say: Let's come together and stand for the Cuban people. Let's stand for Cuban-Americans in this country. Let's stand for freedom. Let's stand for democracy. Let's stand for human rights.

That ought to be bipartisan. Time will tell whether it continues to be at the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

PENTAGON AUDITS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak about the Pentagon's unending audit failures and to once again call for corrective action.

People who have been in the Senate a while know that I have been continually talking about this issue, many times—so many; I don't know how many—but I think it is something I need to keep beating the drum about.

The fact is that the Pentagon is the only Government Agency that can't get what is called a certified audit or sometimes referred to as a clean audit—the only Agency of the Federal Government.

I have been conducting oversight on this issue since the audit began in 1993 and have spoken about it many times. Today, I provide my colleagues with a new update.

Recent Government Accountability Office testimony may have pinpointed the root cause audit problem. It is called the universe of transactions. It is a special bucket of transactions manually transferred from several hundred systems. It should play a pivotal role in the audit process.

In theory, the universe of transactions is an accurate record of every transaction in financial statement balances. Auditors should be able to follow audit trails to verify samples taken from those balances.

In practice, it doesn't work. The data is inaccurate and incomplete. Transactions can't be matched. Audit trails don't exist, so audits fail.

I found essentially the same disconnect in the inspector general's first audits 30 years ago. Those audits contain these telling words: "No audit trail found." It is the same old problem—no controls over transactions then; none today.

The Marine Corps recently developed a workaround for the no-audit-trail. It is a predicament that needed attention, and they gave it some attention. As a result of giving it some attention, the Marine Corps earned two clean opinions, but they did it the hard way.

The marines had to create missing audit trails with labor-intensive, pick-and-shovel work. They dug up, ran down, matched, and verified each transaction. Obviously, the marines deserve credit for a job done well.

But manual audit trail reconstruction is not a very cost-efficient alternative to modern accounting systems. Fully integrated systems are the solution. They are called for in the Chief Financial Officers Act that mandated the audits that I am talking about.

Instead of investing in modern systems, Pentagon bureaucrats keep pouring millions year after year into ancient systems that belong in the junk heap.

Thirty-five years and billions of dollars down the rat hole, and the DOD is still scratching their heads, wondering how to control transactions. Surely, they know traders solved that problem thousands of years ago when records were first kept on clay tablets.

So why is the Pentagon still in the stone age? It is due to incompetence or deliberate bureaucratic foot-dragging or whatever.

Getting a handle on every transaction is the key to success, and therein lies the rub. Integrated systems are needed, but there is relentless resistance to acquiring them.

I call on Secretary of War Hegseth to create a team of independent system

experts to examine and resolve this problem. Controlling transactions is the heart and soul of every accounting system—except, as you see, at the Pentagon. Until that truth is accepted, clean opinions will remain nothing but a pipe dream.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING COLONEL JOHNNY BROOKS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to COL Johnny Brooks—a distinguished officer, a devoted servant of our Nation, and a remarkable friend and family man.

Johnny served the Army and our country with great distinction. The son of an Army officer, Johnny grew up moving from post to post and decided early on to commit his life to service. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and soon earned an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, a testament to his skill and determination.

Commissioned as an infantry officer, Johnny advanced through the ranks with remarkable success. During his career, he commanded the 4th Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment and deployed to Panama as part of Operation Just Cause, served as an exchange officer with the British 1st Parachute Regiment, led the infantry training brigade at Fort Benning, and later became chief of staff of the 82nd Airborne Division. He was, through and through, a soldier and a leader.

Throughout his distinguished service, Johnny inspired those around him with his professionalism, his courage, and his deep loyalty to his soldiers. His character, skill, and sense of duty made him a model officer and an example to all who served with him.

I was privileged to know Johnny personally. As West Point classmates, we shared the formative lessons of "Duty, Honor, and Country" that shaped his life and career. Johnny's steady presence, humility, and good humor were constants to those of us who knew him well.

After retiring from the Army, Johnny and his wife Christine made their home in Alabama, where they spent the past 25 years. His love for his country was surpassed only by his love for his family: his wife Christine; his children Heather and Matthew; his grandchildren; great-grandchildren; and sisters. To them, I offer my deepest condolences and my gratitude for sharing Johnny with our Nation for so many years.

Johnny Brooks was a selfless and inspiring person. He dedicated his life to leading and serving others, and his was a life well-lived. He will be missed by all who had the privilege to know him and to serve alongside him.

I am proud to honor the legacy of COL Johnny Brooks, and I know the Members of the Senate will join me in recognizing the remarkable contributions he made to our Army and our Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING LT FARMS

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to honor LT Farms of Ringgold County, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In the summer of 2022, 12-year-old Lane and 8-year-old Tyce Parish founded LT Farms with the encouragement of their parents Lincoln and Shawna. Growing up on their family farm caring for cattle, chickens, ducks, and show pigs, Lane and Tyce learned the value of hard work early on. Their first business venture was selling eggs from their family's farm at the local farmers market. Then, they saw an opportunity to build something bigger. After years of watching their mother make her Spicy Snack Mix and pack it for their dad's hunting trips or gift it to friends and family, Lane and Tyce decided it was the perfect product to add to the market. After selling out of the mix within a couple of hours at the farmers market, LT Farms was born.

Encouraged by community feedback, the boys began experimenting with their own flavors. Lane introduced his signature mix, followed by Tyce's Sweet and Salty Mix later that fall. To celebrate their dad's birthday the next year, the family created a new flavor in his honor, Dad's BBQ Cheddar Mix, which became an instant hit. Today, LT Farms remains a true family enterprise. Lane and Tyce handle product development, marketing, and everything in between with help from their parents. Their grandma, also known as the "Mix Machine," helps ensure production is running smoothly. Together, the family has expanded their presence online and sell wholesale in 23 stores throughout Iowa and Nebraska.

Lane and Tyce's favorite part of LT Farms is meeting new people, which they continue to do through deep involvement in their community. In February 2024, LT Farms was invited to the Iowa State Capitol for Iowa State University Day where they showcased their products and discussed how the Small Business Development Center supported their growth. Recently, LT Farms donated 100 mini snack mix bags for the Mount Ayr School District's

Hall of Fame banquet. Each month, they host themed giveaways celebrating local educators, fairgoers, as well as 4-H and FFA members. This month, they will recognize farmers. LT Farms has helped supply care packages for troops, provided free snack mix to golfers at the Annual Dallas Clark Foundation Golf Tournament, and sponsored the South Central Iowa Showdown and the Best of the Southwest Shootout. They are also exclusively partnered with Champion Steaks to offer "Sticks and Mix" for local fundraisers.

Over the past 3 years, LT Farms has earned a reputation for quality products and exceptional customer service. What began as two young boys selling eggs has grown into a thriving family business in Iowa and beyond. It is my honor to recognize Lane and Tyce Parish along with the entire LT Farms team for their outstanding work and dedication to their community. I look forward to their continued success and wish them the very best in the years ahead.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Hanley, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES DISCHARGED PETITION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, hereby direct that the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 69, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by United States Fish and Wildlife Service relating to "Record of Decision for the Barred Owl Management Strategy; Washington, Oregon, and California" and, further, that the joint resolution be immediately placed upon the Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

John Kennedy, Katie Boyd Britt, Rick Scott, Ron Johnson, Tommy Tuberville, Mike Rounds, Jon Husted, John R. Curtis, Kevin Cramer, Markwayne Mullin, Pete Ricketts, Eric Schmitt, John Cornyn, Ted Budd, Chuck Grassley, Mike Lee, James E. Risch, Tom Cotton, David McCormick, Jim Banks, Lindsey Graham, Roger F. Wicker, John Hoeven, Ted Cruz, Thom Tillis, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Jerry Moran, James Lankford, Rand Paul, Tim Scott.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following joint resolution was discharged from the Committee on Environment and Public Works by petition, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 802(c), and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 69. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service relating to "Record of Decision for the Barred Owl Management Strategy; Washington, Oregon, and California".

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2065. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Administration, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to action on a nomination, change in previously submitted reported information, and discontinuation of service in an acting role for a position covered by the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998 for the position of Under Secretary for Intellectual Property, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 9, 2025; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2066. A communication from the Agency Representative, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "International Trademark Classification Changes" (RIN0651-AD87) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 9, 2025; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-20. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to call a convention of states for the purpose of proposing amendments to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States House of Representatives and to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States Senate; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 2

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby proffer and endorse all of the following:

Section 1. The Legislature of Louisiana hereby makes an application to Congress, as provided by Article V of the Constitution of the United States of America, to call a convention limited to proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States House of Representatives and to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States Senate.

Section 2. The secretary of state is hereby directed to transmit copies of this application to the president and secretary of the Senate of the United States and to the