

dedicated, patriotic men and women of our Armed Forces. It shows our continuing commitment to their readiness, well-being, and mission success.

Let me commend the leadership—the outstanding leadership—of subcommittee chairman MITCH MCCONNELL and ranking member CHRIS COONS for their hard work on this bill. I also want to thank majority leader JOHN THUNE for his commitment to bringing fiscal year 2026 appropriations bills to the Senate floor.

This is such a welcomed change compared to last year when then-majority leader Senator SCHUMER refused to bring a single one of the 12 annual appropriations bills to the Senate floor for consideration.

I want to note for my colleagues that the Senate version of the Defense bill was put together with input from 94 of our Senate colleagues who submitted more than 5,800 requests to the committee for our careful consideration.

For all of these reasons, I urge my colleagues to allow us to proceed to the consideration of the fiscal year 2026 Defense funding bill. We want this to be an open process, with an opportunity to add additional bipartisan bills that address vital domestic priorities, including biomedical and scientific research and infrastructure, and we want Members to have a voice in the funding decisions that affect all of our States and constituents back home. That is the approach that we took in committee. That is the approach that we want to take on the Senate floor.

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 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. 136, H.R. 4016, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Jon Husted, Roger F. Wicker, Joni Ernst, Susan M. Collins, Rick Scott of Florida, Mike Crapo, Tim Sheehy, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tommy Tuberville, Marsha Blackburn, Tom Cotton, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, John Boozman.

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 H.R. 4016, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense 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 senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 44, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 575 Ex.)

YEAS—50

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hoeben	Paul
Capito	Husted	Ricketts
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cortez Masto	Johnson	Rounds
Cotton	Justice	Schmitt
Cramer	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Crapo	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Lee	Shaheen
Curtis	Lummis	Sheehy
Daines	Marshall	Sullivan
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker
Fetterman	McCormick	Young
Fischer	Moody	

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—6

Budd	Cornyn	Tillis
Cassidy	Duckworth	Tuberville

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 44. Three-fifths of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have a motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the Democrat party is the party that will not take yes for an answer. We offer Democrats a clean, nonpartisan CR, no Republican policies for them to swallow, nothing for them to object to; they said no. We offer to accommodate their healthcare demands by guaranteeing them a vote on their proposal if they vote to reopen the government; the answer is no.

OK. Fine. So we thought if they don't want to fund the government via con-

tinuing resolution, we will give them the chance to fund the government a different way, by attempting to move forward with regular-order appropriations bills. And, once again, the answer was no.

Democrats just voted to block the fiscal year 2026 Defense appropriations bill, a bill, I would add, that passed the Senate Appropriations Committee by a robust bipartisan margin—26 to 3 I think it was.

That is right. After voting last week for an authorization bill to increase troop pay, Democrats just voted against the bill that would actually pay the troops.

We have to ask the question, Why?

Because to quote a recent news story—this is a direct quote—“voting to proceed with the defense bill relinquishes some of the party's leverage.” Relinquishes some of the party's leverage? I mean, who really cares, right, if the troops are paid as long as the Democrats are able to get what they want.

Now, I offered up—and I had conversations with Democrats here on the floor—that if we could get on the Defense appropriations bill, the interest they have in adding other bills I would certainly accommodate. And I suggested that that was the business model that we adopted when we passed the first three-bill package. We got on the MILCON-VA appropriations bill, and then we worked collectively, both sides, to try and clear, adding the Agriculture appropriations bill, the leg branch appropriations bill, and we tried to add the CJS appropriations bill—which was objected to by one Member on the Democrat side—but that is how we fashioned getting these appropriations bills on the floor and getting them voted on.

Now, if anything should be clear by now—if anything should be clear by now—it is that I am interested in doing a normal appropriations process, unlike what happened when they had the majority, which was the Appropriations Committee will report bills out—11 of the 12 last year. Not a single one was brought to the floor of the Senate.

We have done three bills. We are trying to go to conference on them. They are blocking that.

So now we bring up the Defense appropriations bill, something that should get 80 votes on the floor of the Senate, that I said came out of the committee 26 to 3, and they are blocking it.

Now, there is a path forward here to do appropriations: Get on the bill. Then we will try to add other appropriations bills as we work both sides to clear up objections, concerns that people have.

The fact of the matter is, they didn't have to block us even moving to the bill because there are multiple opportunities—60-vote threshold opportunities—for them to block it later on if they don't like what happens.

This is politics. If anything was needed to demonstrate just how fundamentally uninterested Democrats are in

supporting our troops and defending our country, just take a look at this vote. Mere months ago—I say mere months ago—Democrats were complaining about all the damage shutdowns do to hard-working Americans. I literally could fill the rest of this hour with Democrat quotes from the past few years about the devastating impacts of shutdowns.

Now, Democrats couldn't care less. They are happy to sacrifice any American—evidently, any principle—to their political goals. Democrats like to position themselves as the party of the little guy and the defender of hard-working Americans. But, as this vote makes clear, whom do Democrats really care about? Democrats.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 294.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Anne-Leigh Gaylord Moe, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 294, Anne-Leigh Gaylord Moe, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, Markwayne Mullin, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Ted Budd, Bill Hagerty, Bernie Moreno, John R. Curtis, Jon A. Husted, Jim Justice, Ashley B. Moody, Roger Marshall, Joni Ernst, Roger F. Wicker, Ron Johnson, John Boozman.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 372.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of William W. Mercer, of Montana, to be United States District Judge for the District of Montana.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 372, William W. Mercer, of Montana, to be United States District Judge for the District of Montana.

John Thune, Bernie Moreno, Katie Boyd Britt, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, Pete Ricketts, Markwayne Mullin, Tim Sheehy, Jon A. Husted, Eric Schmitt, Jim Justice, James E. Risch, Tom Cotton, Steve Daines, Ted Budd, John R. Curtis, John Boozman.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 373.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Stephen Chad Meredith, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 373, Stephen Chad Meredith, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Pete Ricketts, Ted Budd, Bill Hagerty, Bernie Moreno, John R. Curtis, Jon A. Husted, Jim Justice, Ashley B. Moody, Roger Marshall, Joni Ernst, Ron Johnson, John Boozman, John Kennedy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, first of all, I would like to compliment the majority leader, the Senator from South Dakota, for his continued efforts to have the Senate return to the days in which we were the greatest deliberative legislative body, assuming that was ever true. It is hard to find evidence that it is true today. And, certainly, a basic function of the Congress is to do appropriations bills.

I have heard a number of my colleagues, particularly Democratic colleagues, complain about the appropriations efforts by the White House, by the administration. They remind us that the Constitution puts in the prerogative, it is the Congress that appropriates. Here we are trying to appropriate, to do our constitutional duties, and the vast majority of Democrats stand in the way on one of the most important appropriations bills that we could consider, the Defense appropriations bills.

Our adversaries, our allies, again, wait and watch for signals that the United States of America is the country it needs to be to defend freedom and liberty around the world. As of today, we are incapable of funding our Department of Defense.

I highlighted yesterday in remarks that those who had come to the floor and worried and complained about the