



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025

No. 173

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 2 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful Father of us all, today, remind our lawmakers of the judgment day story in Matthew 25. In that story, You asked six questions of humanity: Did you feed the hungry? Did you clothe the naked? Did you give water to the thirsty? Did you visit the sick? Did you minister to the incarcerated? Did you care for the strangers in your midst?

As our Senators, during this government shutdown, play the game of legislative tug-of-war, may they remember these six judgment day questions.

Lord, may we all hear in these judgment day questions the cries of the friendless, helpless, and powerless.

We pray in Your righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Iowa.

NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, since 1993, Congress has adopted a resolution to recognize this third week of October as National Character Counts Week, and, of course, we are in that week right now.

As Iowa's senior U.S. Senator, I am proud to sponsor the resolution and share that the global headquarters for the Character Counts organization is located in my home State. The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center is located at Drake University.

By the way, Bob Ray was Iowa's Governor for 14 years. So the location in Des Moines makes perfect sense to me because Iowa's values align with the six pillars of character promoted by the national Character Counts organization. These include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Throughout my public service, I have strived to improve civic engagement and bridge divisions through respectful dialogue. Part of that effort includes my annual 99 county meetings, where I meet with Iowans face to face. No topic is off limit, and Iowans set the agenda.

Each year, the Drake University Ray Center celebrates "Iowa Character

Awards" to recognize those who embody civic values. The people of Spencer, IA, will receive the "Community Character Award" of 2025 in recognition of their efforts to recover from devastating floods the summer of last year.

Like the courageous first responders from 9/11, emergency response teams from across Northwest Iowa pitched in to help the people of Spencer. They didn't stop to consider creed, race, gender, or political affiliation. They were only concerned about those who had the needs caused by the devastating flood. So they simply rolled up their sleeves, and they simply pulled together, neighbors helping neighbors. And, of course, that is the Iowa way.

History tells us how important it is for elected leaders to govern by virtue. At the Virginia ratifying convention, debating whether or not Virginia should ratify the new Constitution, James Madison said:

"To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea."

The American people who elected us are counting on us to live by those standards. National Character Counts Week is a good time to do what is right.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

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



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LEGISLATIVE SESSION

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS
AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, you have to give the Democrats credit for one thing, and that is a healthy dose of gall. Both the House and Senate Democrat leaders were out last week and claiming that they can't fund the government until—get this—we solve the "Republican healthcare crisis."

That is right—"the Republican healthcare crisis." It is truly amazing how a program Democrats created and tax credits that they chose to sunset have now become the Republicans' crisis. Republicans, in fact, never had anything to do with it. Democrats created Obamacare—alone. They implemented the enhanced tax credits—alone. And they chose a sunset date for those tax credits—alone.

Democrats are solely, solely responsible for the Obamacare tax credit cliff, and yet they are trying to pin this disaster on Republicans, while at the very same time, they are asking Republicans to bail them out. It is really kind of ironic. Democrats may not win a lot of points for truthfulness, but you have to give them credit for gall.

While Democrats may have created this healthcare situation, I have made it clear, from the beginning, that Republicans are willing to have a discussion about how to address it. In fact, I am perfectly willing to guarantee Democrats a vote. But none of that is going to happen until Democrats reopen the government.

We are not going to negotiate on anything until Democrats stop holding government funding hostage. And if they really want to address their Obamacare mess, they should stop running out the clock on a deal. All they are doing by that action is keeping the government shut down and enhancing—enhancing, believe it or not—the chances this situation doesn't get fixed because the clock is running.

Before I leave the subject of healthcare, I do have to mention the irony that, while Democrats claim they are defending Americans' healthcare, their shutdown has actually suspended valuable healthcare services for a lot of Americans. Medicare and rural patients are currently dealing with the elimination of telehealth services, thanks to the government shutdown.

Telehealth, of course, increases the accessibility of care and lets those who live far from medical treatment, or

who otherwise struggle to travel, to conduct prescription refill appointments or other visits from the comfort of their home. But that assistance is currently being denied to them thanks to the Democrats' shutdown.

But I am not sure why I am talking about shutdown costs. Democrats have made it very clear that they don't care about the costs of the shutdown—to anyone.

Democrats used to care, of course, or so they claimed. In fact, I could fill a book with Democrat quotes on how shutdowns harm hard-working Americans.

But over the past 3 weeks, it has become clear that Democrats' previous concerns had more to do with politics than with principle. Democrats were against shutdowns when it served their purposes, and now that it serves their purposes—or so they think—to keep the government closed, they are all for shutdowns, no matter how many Americans have to suffer in the process.

I have talked about healthcare today, and Democrats would definitely like Americans to think that that is what this shutdown is about. But, of course, the biggest driver of this shutdown is not healthcare or any other issue. It is the Democrats' far-left base.

Leftwing activists demanded a shutdown with President Trump, and Democrats fell in line. That is why you see the Democrat leader, who actually voted to fund the government in the spring, leading the shutdown brigade this time around.

Far-left groups were rallying this weekend, and the Democrat leader and other Democrat Senators were out paying homage. And if these same leftwing groups have their way, Democrats will be keeping up the shutdown for a long time to come. They don't really care about a solution. This is about politics.

For the sake of the American people, let's hope that there are some Democrat Senators who will eventually put the needs of their constituents over the demands of their far-left base and work with Republicans to pass the clean, nonpartisan funding measure that is sitting right here in front of us today. And when passed, it will be sent to the President and signed into law, and this government will open up again.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we enter another week of Donald Trump's government shutdown, and Republicans seem happy not to work, happy not to negotiate, happy to let

healthcare premiums spike for over 20 million working and middle-class Americans.

Our country is staring down the barrel of a healthcare catastrophe, and Republicans will spend this week either vacationing or holding pep rallies at the White House. It has been over a month since the House of Representatives even took a single rollcall vote. That is shameful. That is derelict. Government workers must work without getting paid; House Republicans get paid without working.

What about the Democrats? Our position remains the same: We want to end the shutdown as soon as we can and fix the ACA premium crisis that looms over 20 million hard-working Americans and many tens of millions more whose premiums will also go up.

Look, the ACA premium crisis is not a fix-it-later issue like Republicans keep pretending it is. It is a fix-it-now issue because, very soon, Americans are going to have to make some really difficult choices about which healthcare plan they choose for next year. When they see the increase in the number of dollars that these premiums will cost them because the tax credits expired—\$500 a month; \$600 a month; \$1,000 a month; for older couples, over \$20,000 a year—they are going to have to make an awful choice: Do I cut out healthcare altogether and be left alone or do I cut back on everything else to afford a healthcare plan? Do I have to look for a new plan with different doctors, different hospitals, higher copays, higher premiums?

Every American, just about every American—so many Americans, tens of millions—are going to have to start making that choice in the next month.

Health insurance prices under the ACA are now available in about a dozen States, and Americans in those States are already seeing with their own eyes the horrifying truth, what we have been warning about for months; that multiple millions of people are going to pay tens of thousands of dollars more for healthcare so vital to Americans.

When you are in a family and you know you can't provide healthcare for them or a much reduced healthcare and you look at your spouse, you look at your kids, and you say: What am I going to do if they get sick, what a frightening experience for people that Republicans are putting America through, all because they want to cut all of this healthcare, cut Medicaid, cut so much else in healthcare to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy.

It is just perverse. It is inside out. It is upside down.

And let's be clear about who will get hurt if these tax credits expire. Republicans have been lying about that too. If the ACA premium tax credits expire, the majority of people who will pay more out of pocket are working and middle-class families. In fact, the majority of people who benefit from the expiring tax credits live in Republican districts.