

and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes.

John Thune, James E. Risch, Tim Sheehy, John Cornyn, Mike Rounds, John R. Curtis, Jim Justice, Katie Boyd Britt, Todd Young, David McCormick, Bill Hagerty, Marsha Blackburn, Rick Scott of Florida, John Barrasso, Kevin Cramer, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Lindsey Graham.

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.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 581 Ex.]

#### YEAS—54

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

#### NAYS—46

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

(Mr. DAINES assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. MORENO assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 46.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The motion was rejected.

#### MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining rollcall votes in this series be 10 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

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 bill 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. 458, Bill Lewis, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama.

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.

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 nomination of Bill Lewis, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama, 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 Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 60, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 582 Ex.]

#### YEAS—60

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hassan	Murkowski
Britt	Hawley	Paul
Budd	Hoeven	Peters
Capito	Husted	Ricketts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schiff
Cornyn	Justice	Schmitt
Cotton	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Crapo	King	Shaheen
Cruz	Lankford	Sheehy
Curtis	Lee	Sullivan
Daines	Lummis	Thune
Durbin	Marshall	Tillis
Ernst	McConnell	Tuberville
Fetterman	McCormick	Wicker
Fischer	Moody	Young

#### NAYS—39

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

#### NOT VOTING—1

Risch

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). On this vote, the yeas are 60, the nays are 39. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Bill Lewis, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama.

#### 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 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 Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, is this a 10-minute vote?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. This is a 10-minute vote.

By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Stephen Chad Meredith, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky, 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 Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 583 Ex.]

#### YEAS—52

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

## NAYS—45

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

## NOT VOTING—3

Gillibrand	Murkowski	Van Hollen
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 45. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

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

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the next nomination.

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

## NOMINATION OF WILLIAM W. MERCER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today the Senate will vote to confirm William Mercer to the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana.

I will vote in opposition to Mr. Mercer's confirmation to a lifetime appointment on the Federal bench. There are several reasons why I cannot support his nomination.

While serving as a member of the Montana House of Representatives, Mr. Mercer opposed a bill designed to end Montana's 3-year statute of limitations for civil lawsuits by sexual abuse victims. He said that eliminating the statute of limitations was a "very bad idea." Victims disagreed, calling changes to the bill he proposed a "total sellout in favor of child molesters and insurance companies."

And, while serving as the U.S. attorney for the District of Montana, Mr. Mercer was scolded by a Federal judge for "pursuing statistics" rather than justice.

I am also deeply troubled by Mr. Mercer's record as a senior official at the Justice Department during the George W. Bush administration, where he played a key role in the partisan U.S. attorney firing scandal.

He said that the firings were done "so that the Republican Party would have more future candidates for the federal bench and future political positions."

We need lifetime appointees who are devoted to the rule of law and the Constitution, not to partisan politics.

I cannot support his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this nominee.

## VOTE ON MERCER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Mercer nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 584 Ex.]

## YEAS—52

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

## NAYS—45

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

## NOT VOTING—3

Heinrich	Murkowski	Van Hollen
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The majority leader.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and 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.

## GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I often think about times when government resources played an important role in my family's life, long before I became a U.S. Senator.

When I was in high school, shortly after my father passed away, my family received a Social Security disability assistance check. That check helped send me to college. But when I arrived at Georgetown, the costs of tuition, books, and housing became more than that check could support.

Luckily, I was able to borrow money under the National Defense of Education Act of 1958. This money had to be paid back to the government, but it helped put me through college. Had the government not been there in my time of need, I may not be addressing you from the Senate floor today.

Millions of Americans have similar stories when there was a time they needed a helping hand. Maybe they needed help paying for groceries, finding safe and affordable housing, or accessing healthcare—and in all those experiences, the government was there to give them a lifeline.

But, since his inauguration, President Trump and his enablers have taken a chainsaw to the Federal Government, hacking away at the support systems that everyday Americans rely on. And at the President's direction, congressional Republicans have plunged the Nation into a government shutdown.

Rather than address a looming healthcare crisis that will cause healthcare costs to soar, the President—and Project 2025 mastermind Russell Vought—have used it as cover to settle petty political scores against Democratic-led cities and States. Don't believe me? Let me show you.

Look at this chart from the New York Times. Since the start of this Republican-led shutdown, the Trump administration has frozen or canceled nearly \$28 billion across 87 Democratic districts. How does that compare to Republican districts? Look at this, just \$738 million across 14 Republican districts.

This is petty, unfair, and wrong. The administration is using these projects as pawns in their crusade against Democrats and denying communities the benefits these projects would have provided residents regardless of their political leanings.

As part of this administration's attacks on Democratic-led States, Director Vought announced the cancellation of \$8 billion in clean energy and grid enhancement grants—including almost \$700 million for the State of Illinois.

Bringing down energy costs and preventing power outages are not partisan issues. But the Trump administration wants you to believe these dollars were going to radical climate policies. In Illinois, more than \$150 million of the