

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	

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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

canceled awards were going to upgrade the power grid. These upgrades would have made our grid more reliable in the face of rising energy demand. Now, that work is in jeopardy. Other canceled awards in Illinois are for methane detection and leak prevention along natural gas pipelines.

When the government refuses to upgrade the grid and protect our pipelines, it does not mean utilities don't need these enhancements anymore. Instead, utility companies will pass along these costs to consumers. You will soon be forced to pay more for your electricity and heat because the Trump administration wants to punish Americans for the candidate they voted for last November.

The administration also has aggressively targeted billions of dollars of previously approved transportation funding. Wreaking havoc in Chicago neighborhoods with cruel immigration raids and sending the military in to patrol the city's streets is not enough for this President. Two weeks ago, the President further escalated his feud with Mayor Johnson and Governor Pritzker—whom he has called to be jailed—by withholding \$2.1 billion in funding for Chicago infrastructure projects.

The Red Line project has been decades in the making, would finally extend mass transit to the far South Side of Chicago, and would generate tens of thousands of good-paying jobs. But Donald Trump is fine with ripping this away as long as he scores a few political points.

For decades, State and local governments have been able to compete for grant awards for projects—no matter where they live or who they vote for. The Trump administration is taking that tradition and tearing it at the seams. Even some of my Republican colleagues have publicly stated how wrong this is, and I applaud them for bravely coming forward to say so.

I urge the President to stop targeting resources that help everyday Americans and negotiate a reopening of government. Every day that goes by, Americans face increased healthcare costs while the President remains hyperfixated on inflicting as much pain as possible on his political opponents and the communities they represent.

We owe it to the American people to fund the government in a manner that protects their health coverage and ensures government funding and the resources that so many rely on are there in their time of need.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, unfortunately, I was not present to once again vote on the Republican continuing resolution proposal, rollcall vote no. 576. Had I been present, I would have voted no. We are now 3 weeks into this shutdown. It is time for Republicans to come to the table and negotiate in good faith to reopen the government

and ensure millions of Americans can continue to access truly affordable healthcare. The Republican spending proposal misses the mark. Let's work together to fix it.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THE MONTANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AVIATION CREWS

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I have the distinct honor of recognizing the Montana Army National Guard, MTARNG, aviation crews as Montanans of the Month for their extraordinary courage and dedication during a series of lifesaving rescue missions across our State.

In the rugged backcountry of Montana, where steep cliffs, high altitudes, and unpredictable weather can turn a simple hike into a life-threatening situation, these guardsmen stand ready, day or night, to answer the call. Their professionalism and heroism exemplify the very best of our citizen soldiers.

On August 9, 2025, the Helena-based aviation team responded to a rescue near Zortman after a person fell over a cliff and suffered serious injuries. With limited visibility from wildfire smoke and nightfall plus the added challenge of a sheer rockface and heavy timber, the crew conducted a highly technical nighttime rescue. Thanks to their precision and teamwork, the injured individual was safely hoisted and flown to Billings for medical care.

Recognized Crew: CPT Otis Smith (Pilot-in-Command), CW3 Tom Kinyon (Co-Pilot), SGT Ian Montgomery (Crew Chief), SSG Anthony Wright (Crew Chief), and SGT Randy Scales (Flight Paramedic).

Only a week later, on August 17, 2025, another MTARNG aircrew from Billings sprang into action when three hypothermic hikers became stranded in the Beartooth Mountains. With ground rescue teams unable to reach the group safely, the MTARNG crew braved freezing temperatures and rough terrain to extract the hikers and deliver them to Columbus for emergency treatment.

Recognized Crew: CW3 Zach Lundgren (Pilot-in-Command), CW2 Cameron Olson (Co-Pilot), SGT Justin Asher (Crew Chief), SPC Patrick Northrup (Flight Paramedic), and Rob Gersbach from the Billings Fire Department (Flight Paramedic).

Their month of service didn't end there. Between August 24-26, 2025, MTARNG crews from both Billings and Helena joined a multi-agency search for a missing 71-year-old hiker in the Beartooth Mountains. After the hiker was located by an Air Force helicopter from Malmstrom Air Force Base, the MTARNG team from Helena performed a high-altitude hoist rescue, successfully recovering both the hiker and the Air Force flight doctor who had stayed with him overnight in the mountains. Their teamwork and coordination with the Air Force and local responders en-

sured a safe end to a dangerous mission.

Recognized Crew: CW3 Brett Normandeau (Pilot-in-Command), CW3 Pat Rickar (Co-Pilot), SPC Sydney Stephenson (Crew Chief), and SPC Zach Blank (Crew Chief).

Each of these operations demanded split-second decision-making, advanced flight skill, and immense courage. Even through flying in wildfire smoke, over jagged terrain, or in the dead of night, these crews embody the Montana spirit of bravery, selflessness, and a steadfast commitment to saving lives.

To the men and women of the Montana Army National Guard aviation teams: Thank you for your service to our State and your unwavering dedication to the people of Montana. Your courage in the face of danger makes us proud to call you fellow Montanans.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Hanley, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a withdrawal which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

(The message received today is 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 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged of further consideration of S.J. Res. 82, a resolution on providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services relating to "Policy on Adhering to the Text of the Administrative Procedure Act", and, further, that the resolution be immediately placed upon the Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

Angus S. King, Jr., Tina Smith, Jeanne Shaheen, Ron Wyden, Sheldon Whitehouse, Elizabeth Warren, Lisa Blunt Rochester, Brian Schatz, Richard J. Durbin, Adam B. Schiff, Tammy Duckworth, Catherine Cortez Masto, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Amy Klobuchar, Martin Heinrich, Patty Murray, Ben Ray Lujan, Ruben Gallego, Mazie Hirono, Charles E. Schumer, Jacky Rosen, Gary C. Peters, Peter Welch, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Chris Van Hollen, Richard Blumenthal, Cory A. Booker, John W. Hickenlooper, Alex Padilla, Mark R. Warner.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following joint resolution was discharged from the Committee on