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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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.
Our Lord and our God, as the waters fill the sea, fill our Nation with people who know and love You.

Today, guide our lawmakers so that they will live for Your honor, ensuring that our citizens will have a government of, by, and for the people. Lord, use our legislators to help end this government shutdown. Increase their faith, hope, and love, enabling them to transform cacophony into concord, doubt into faith, and falsehood into truth. May our Senators seek to become a voice for those who are suffering during these challenging times, until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

We pray in Your great 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. MORENO). 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 AUDIOLOGY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, October is National Audiology Awareness Month. It also happens to be the 3-year anniversary of the bipartisan Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act regulations going into effect. You see this on television now—advertisements for the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act. Before this legislation was passed, there was a whole bunch of redtape you had to go through to buy very expensive hearing aids. Now they are more affordable.

While it took too many years for the Food and Drug Administration to issue these regulations following my bipartisan 2017 law, I am glad Americans now have access to safe, effective, and affordable hearing aids over the counter.

While we have known for years that hearing loss is a major factor in a person getting dementia, it wasn't until recently that we found out that accessing hearing aids can decrease the risk of cognitive decline by nearly half.

For many, purchasing hearing aids presents many questions. That is why accessing audiology services can be helpful.

To access audiology services, like a diagnostic test, under Medicare, a physician's order is required. That requires more time and a great number of hoops to jump through. I want people to know that I support cutting this unnecessary redtape. That is why I partnered with my colleagues to introduce legislation called the Medicare Audiology Access Improvement Act. Our bill will let seniors access a full range of hearing health services provided by licensed audiologists without the redtape.

During Audiology Awareness Month, Americans should be aware that they can access hearing aids over the counter, and Congress is working hard to improve access to those audiology services.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

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.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this is a quote:

The path forward for Congress is clear: Reopen the government immediately under a clean continuing resolution that allows continued debate on larger issues.

That is from the president of the American Federation of Government Employees—a labor union, I would add, most often aligned with Democrats. But this is what AFGE's president says:

It's time to pass a clean continuing resolution and end this shutdown today.

I couldn't have said it better myself, and actually I have been saying that for about a month now.

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



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The far-left activists wanted a show-down with President Trump, and so Democrats have shut down the government and have forced hard-working Americans to live in uncertainty for 4 weeks—4 weeks and counting.

Even as nutrition programs are running out of money and Federal workers are lining up at food banks, Democrats continue—continue—to reject every opportunity to end the shutdown or mitigate its pain. They now blocked a clean, nonpartisan continuing resolution 12 times—12 times. A clean resolution is sitting right there to open up the government, get everybody paid, get Federal employees back to work. That thing sitting at the desk that funds the government doesn't have a single new Republican policy in it. It doesn't have a single partisan policy rider. It simply extends current government funding.

But Democrats have said no to that now 12 times. We offered them a chance to continue the bipartisan appropriations process starting with the Defense appropriations bill, a bill that passed out of the committee by a big bipartisan vote of 26 to 3. But Democrats said no to that too. They didn't want to lose leverage in a shutdown. Then, last week, we offered up a bill to pay any Federal employee who is working during the shutdown, including everybody here. Once again, Democrats said no.

I don't know what Democrats are holding out for. Do Democrats think that we are suddenly going to vote for their partisan CR, which, by the way, would spend an additional \$1.5 trillion to keep the government open until the end of this week. That is their alternative—\$1.5 trillion to keep the government open until Friday. That is their alternative. It wouldn't pass here; it can't pass in the House; and it wouldn't be signed into law by the President.

Our bill, on the other hand, passed the House a month ago. It has been sitting here for an entire month and would be signed by the President immediately to reopen the government.

I have to say, this wasn't my plan for the month of October. A government shutdown may have been what Democrats had in mind to show the far left that they are fighting President Trump and get some cheers at the No Kings rally. That wasn't my plan. My plan was to get the government funded with as little drama as possible. That is why Republicans put forward a clean continuing resolution, no partisan policies, nothing new. Who could possibly have a problem with that? It would give us more time to continue progress on full-year appropriations bills, the way we are supposed to fund the government.

I realize that would be out of the ordinary, given the past few years under the Democratic majority and Leader SCHUMER. But I was clear from the day I took office, I want to do things differently around here. My goal was to have an open process conducted

through regular order, something that I think is in the best interest of this institution and of all Senators, both sides of the aisle. I know I was not alone in wanting an open process.

Until Democrats derailed everything, we had actually made a lot of progress on restoring regular order this year. We passed three bipartisan appropriations bills before the August recess, the first time the Senate had done that since 2018. Now we are trying to go to conference on those three bills to reach a final agreement with the House, and the Democrats are blocking that. That includes the Agriculture bill that funds farm programs and nutritional assistance, the Military Construction and VA bill that funds programs that veterans rely on.

As I said, we tried to bring up the Defense appropriations bill this month in hopes that if Democrats wouldn't agree to fund the entire government, we could, at least, make some progress on this critical aspect of it.

I told my Democrat colleagues at the time, if we got on that bill, we would work to add other bipartisan bills, the same way we did it just a few months ago. But once again, Democrats said no—no to funding programs they claim they support, no to an open process, no to bipartisanship. Time and again, we heard the Democratic leader lecture about bipartisanship. So why is his caucus blocking progress on bipartisan appropriations bills? Why are Democrats blocking bills that they helped write in the Appropriations Committee where these bills are passing with overwhelming bipartisan margins, as I said, 26 to 3? Why are they upending a bipartisan process that benefits all Senators on both sides of the aisle?

The senior Senator from Hawaii said recently:

We still have hope for the appropriations process. There's a bipartisan desire to get something done and avoid a full-year continuing resolution.

All I can say in response is if Democrats still have hope for the appropriations process, they need to start acting like it. We are running out of time. Every day Democrats say no to reopening the government is another day lost.

We have given Democrats a lot of opportunities to work in the best interest of the American people. But Democrats seem more interested in getting the upper hand in their partisan games. The No. 2 Democrat in the House said last week:

I mean, shutdowns are terrible and, of course, there will be, you know, families that are going to suffer . . . but it is one of the few leverage times we have.

"Of course there will be families that are going to suffer . . . but it is one of the few leverage times we have." That from the second ranking Democrat in the House of Representatives. I think it describes where we are at. Sure, people are suffering, but Democrats need their leverage.

Are they serious?

Mr. President, I end as I began, quoting the president of a major labor union and a Democrat ally:

The path forward for Congress is clear: Reopen the government immediately under a clean continuing resolution that allows continued debate on larger issues.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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, open enrollment is now 4 days away, and Republicans do not even want to talk about fixing healthcare.

Americans are on the brink of a healthcare crisis unlike we have seen in our lifetimes. Never before have we been in a situation where more than 20 million Americans can see their insurance premiums more than double, on average, in the blink of an eye. That is just the average because for many people it is worse.

Yesterday, the State of New Jersey also announced the average New Jersey family would see premium hikes of 175 percent—175 percent. In Upstate New York, the average family with a plan costing \$280 a month today is about to pay \$1,700 a month for the same plan next year, a 500-percent hike, and that starts this Saturday with open enrollment.

This crisis will be felt in every community and by nearly every single household, red, blue, purple, and everything in between. So tonight, Senate Democrats will come to the floor and warn our Republican colleagues and the Nation of the devastation Republicans are causing by doing nothing—nothing—on healthcare. We will highlight the impacts of surging premiums on families. We will share the stories we are hearing right now from people scared of premium hikes. I thank my colleagues for coming to the floor and speaking on this urgent—urgent—issue.

We are in a healthcare crisis, and Republicans don't even want to talk about how to fix it. The President isn't even in town as Americans are about to be devastated by the bills they will receive on healthcare. The President is on the other side of the world instead of being here in Washington working with Congress to lower healthcare premiums. When the President is in town, what is he focused on? Instead of being focused on fixing healthcare, Donald Trump is sending \$40 billion to Argentina, spending \$300 million on his ballroom, and giving Kristi Noem \$170 million for two big private luxury jets.

Meanwhile, millions of hungry kids and working families are about to lose SNAP benefits to buy food because Donald Trump has ordered the Department of Agriculture to rip up its own

contingency plan. Isn't that a disgrace, using hungry kids, hungry parents, hungry veterans as hostages? It is cruel.

Let's be clear about the facts. There is somewhere around \$5 billion in emergency funds that could be used right now to ensure parents and kids don't go hungry when SNAP runs out this Saturday. The USDA said weeks ago that contingency funds were "available to fund participant benefits." That is the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Trump's own Cabinet position. But now, they reversed course and literally wiped their plan from their own website because Donald Trump has ordered them not to use this funding. Donald Trump should reverse course immediately and allow these emergency funds to go through to spare working families from hunger and needless suffering.

What the administration is doing in ordering the U.S. Department of Agriculture not to use emergency funds to keep SNAP afloat is an act of cruelty—cruelty. The same administration that gifted Argentina a \$40 billion bailout and cut taxes for billionaires by \$1 trillion is now telling hungry kids: You are on your own.

And what about Republicans in Congress? Today, Leader THUNE will force yet another vote on a Republican CR that has zero bipartisan input. It is a partisan bill, and most importantly, it does nothing to solve the ACA crisis.

Just now, here on the floor, the Republican leader seemed perplexed about what precisely it is that Democrats are pushing for. He knows damned well what Democrats want. It is the very same thing that a vast majority of Americans want, including nearly 60 percent of MAGA voters. We want lower healthcare costs now. We want to solve the ACA premium crisis now. Open enrollment is just days away. We want lower costs, better healthcare, and to reopen the government.

Let me repeat again what Democrats want so that the Republican leader can hear it. We want lower healthcare costs, to fix the ACA premium crisis, and to reopen the government.

We Democrats have been calling on Republican leaders to sit down with us and negotiate and address this crisis since the summer, but even now, Leader THUNE insists we should fix ACA premiums later, not right away. This is not good enough for the American people because Americans know that when it comes to healthcare, when Republicans say "later," they mean "never."

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives has become a ghost town. It has been 39 days since Members of Congress have shown up for work. We all know what is going on here: Speaker JOHNSON is simply afraid to bring the House back because the minute he does, a good number of House Republicans will start saying exactly what many of us are calling for—that we need to address the ACA premium crisis as soon as we can. The Speaker is so afraid of expos-

ing divisions within his own conference that he has unilaterally shut down one half of the legislative branch of government.

To sum it all up, we are just days away from a healthcare crisis unlike any we have ever seen, and Republicans from the Senate, to the House, to the White House are dithering about. Republicans are the party in charge. They hold the White House and both Chambers in Congress. Americans know that. They know the onus is on the majority party to govern and to work with the other side to get things done. But today, Americans look at this Republican Party and see a majority refusing to do its job. It is no surprise that Americans primarily hold the Republicans responsible for this disastrous shutdown.

So I will say it once again: Republicans need to get serious about ending this shutdown and ending the ACA crisis that has now become a reality for millions of people. They need to get serious. If Donald Trump continues to ignore the ticking time bomb that is ACA premiums, the American people will hold him responsible when disaster strikes.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALLS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum calls with respect to cloture on the Pratt and LaCour, Jr., nominations.

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today marks day 28 of the Schumer shutdown of the U.S. Government. Democrats continue to block a clean continuing resolution that would reopen the government. For them, it is a big game, and for the American people, they continue to suffer.

So listen to his own words. Listen to what Senator SCHUMER said, what he gloated to the press. He said:

Every day gets better for us.

I have got to wonder who the "us" is because it is not the American people.

Then, just last week, the Democrat whip in the House of Representatives said to the press, in an interview that was broadcast on television—proudly proclaimed, it looked like:

Of course, there will be families that are going to suffer. . . . But it is one of the few leverage times we have.

Leverage?

The Democrats are playing the politics of pain, and the American people are the ones who are suffering. It is wrong. It is heartless. It is mean.

Leverage for what—taxpayer giveaways of healthcare, funded by the taxpayers, to illegal immigrants who stormed into this country in the last administration? Is that why they are shutting down the government?

Leverage for that? Leverage for \$1.5 trillion in new spending?

Leverage so they can eliminate the one thing that we passed this summer to help our rural hospitals—\$50 billion for rural hospitals, remote hospitals like those that we have all across the country? They want to get rid of that? Leverage for that?

Leverage so they can continue to suck up to the far-left, radical wing of their party they are trying to impress? That is not good for our country. It is not good for healthcare. It is not good for anything.

I am a doctor. I have practiced medicine in Wyoming for 24 years. I want Americans to have high-quality, affordable healthcare. That is what we want for American citizens, but right now, that is impossible because American healthcare is broken. The Democrats broke it. They broke it when they passed ObamaCare. The day they passed ObamaCare, they broke healthcare in America.

The headline in the Sunday New York Times proves the point in its first three words: "ObamaCare is pricey."

That is what they have done.

They said: Oh, we want to lower the cost of care.

They didn't. They misnamed it and put the word "affordable" in it, but there is nothing affordable about it. ObamaCare has been pricey from the beginning, and it is getting worse.

The Washington Post's editorial page agrees. They wrote recently:

The real problem is that the Affordable Care Act was never actually affordable.

That is the Washington Post. They are right.

ObamaCare is a failed program. It has failed financially. The Democrats created it, and they continue to defend the failure today.

The Democrats tried to prop up ObamaCare with very juicy subsidies to try to hold down out-of-pocket costs. Then, when Joe Biden became President, the Democrats added Biden COVID bonus payments on top of all of the subsidies. These payments are an admission that ObamaCare's flaws have only gotten worse.

Democrats voted twice to make these Biden COVID bonus payments temporary. The first was scheduled to end in 2022, but they noted that ObamaCare was still failing miserably, so they extended the payments again. They extended them to the end of this year. Democrats set the expiration date. Democrats created the cliff. Democrats created what they are now referring to as a "crisis."

Remember, Democrats created ObamaCare, and they created these Biden COVID bonus payments, and they did it without a single Republican vote—not in the House, not in the Senate—not a single one.

These payments were always intended to be temporary—or so they claimed. Democrats' own report that they wrote back then when they passed it said they were to be applied "during the public health emergency."

Today, Democrats are now demanding \$350 billion in permanent, new spending. Why? Because they need to prop up ObamaCare once again because it has failed. When the Democrats say "Fix it now," what they are really saying is "Prop up ObamaCare forever." It is wrong. COVID is over. Democrats probably didn't see the memo. Maybe they don't realize it is over. They are still trying to go after money for COVID.

Look, even after the Biden COVID bonus payments expire, the Federal Government is still going to pay for 80 percent of the average ObamaCare enrollee's premium because ObamaCare is pricey. That is what the New York Times tells us. What is expiring now is this added cash that Democrats paid insurers during the pandemic. Money didn't go to private individuals. It didn't go to the citizens. It went to the insurance companies. They won't tell you that either.

These Biden COVID bonus payments are riddled with waste, fraud, abuse, and actual corruption. Democrats removed every income limit on the subsidies, with no means testing whatsoever.

You hear BERNIE SANDERS come out to the floor and say: Oh, we can't do this for millionaires and billionaires.

They did it for millionaires and billionaires. They removed the upper limit. It is for anybody. The sky is the limit. No matter how much money you make, no matter what is going on in your life, you get these bonus payments for COVID through the Democrats, and they want to make it permanent. It is absolutely wrong. It is ridiculous.

In 2024, 12 million people whom they enrolled in this program got insurance that they never used. Since the subsidies flowed directly to the insurance companies from the government, the insurers pocketed tens of billions of dollars even though the enrollees did not make a single claim. How does that happen?

Let me talk about some of the waste and some of the actual fraud and manipulation that is going on, because in 29 States of our 50, more people are claiming full benefits than are eligible for those benefits in the State.

How did the Democrats allow that for the last 4 years? That is what we are trying to take a look at and are saying: Mr. President, this is wrong.

There were 6.4 million people under the Biden administration who were improperly enrolled that year, and \$27 billion was paid by hard-working taxpayers for all of these people who were improperly enrolled. At least 1.6 million people were doubly enrolled—enrolled in both Medicaid and in ObamaCare—which, of course, is not al-

lowed. It is illegal. You can't do it. Democrats allowed it to happen anyway because they don't care.

They have never shown they care. It is all a political game for them. You heard it. You heard the whip in the House say: Oh, no; this gives us leverage. You heard the minority leader here, CHUCK SCHUMER, say that every day gets better for them. Well, it doesn't get better for the American people.

This isn't about making healthcare more affordable; this is a direct theft of taxpayer money, and it is all to prop up a program that they named after President Obama—ObamaCare—and it is a program that never worked. Healthcare costs continue to go up, and ObamaCare has failed to address that. As even the New York Times said on Sunday, ObamaCare is pricey.

So what caused those prices to go up? Well, Democrats did, of course. When the government pays any price, insurers can charge any price. It is exactly what is happening today, and now it is the American families who are paying their taxes who are paying the price.

Republicans will not allow Democrats to paper over the inadequacies of ObamaCare. We want to get to the root cause of the cost of medical care.

Democrats are protecting waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption. At the same time, Federal workers are going unpaid. Enough is enough.

Even liberal labor unions are fed up with the Democrats' politics of pain, and we have seen it. Finally, yesterday, the American Federation of Government Employees urged Democrats to join Republicans and reopen the government.

What exactly did they say?

They said:

Both political parties have made their point.

And then they went on to say:

It's time to pass a clean continuing resolution and end this shutdown today. No half measures, and no gamesmanship.

That is from the union that has, for years and years and years, supported Democrat candidates across the board. They are saying: Do what Republicans have been saying from the beginning. Pass a clean continuing resolution.

Remember, they did it 13 times when Joe Biden was President, and now they voted against it 13 times with Donald Trump in the White House.

It is a big political game for the Democrats. It is a dangerous game, and the American people are suffering.

So are the Democrats going to listen to the union that represented and worked with the Democrats to get them elected in the first place?

Well, we are going to find out.

Let me echo what Leader THUNE said: Republicans are happy to address ObamaCare's many failures, but, first, we need to reopen the government.

There are not going to be negotiations while the government is closed. We are not going to negotiate with hostage takers. We need to reopen the gov-

ernment and then talk about all the things that people want to talk about, because, right now, our troops and women, infants, and children in the Women, Infants, and Children Program—they shouldn't be used as leverage for Democrats to try to save their failed programs.

Air traffic controllers, TSA agents, whom I talked to yesterday coming from Wyoming to come back to Washington—they don't want to be used as pawns. They don't want to be thought of as chips on the table in a political game of leverage.

CHUCK SCHUMER saying "Every day gets better for us"—that is wrong. The American people deserve better.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, the President of the United States says that the United States is at war. In the past 7 weeks, President Trump has ordered U.S. forces to take military action to destroy 10 boats in international waters. That has resulted in the death of more than 40 possible drug couriers.

President Trump has also told Congress he is determined that the United States is at war with what he calls "narcoterrorists." He has also said that he is taking steps to escalate military action against Venezuela and Colombia. And, of course, he is sending U.S. warships, fighter planes, and special forces to their coasts. And he is also openly tossing around threats of airstrikes against targets in the sea and on land.

The questions before us, as the U.S. Senate, are clear, and they are urgent: Are the President's actions steering the American people into yet another undeclared war, and would it be legal for the President to expand this war to the sovereign territories of countries in South America, as he is now threatening to do?

The clear answer is no, that this President—no President—has the legal authority, without congressional authorization, to take America into military conflict.

There have been no credible legal experts who have defended the President's actions, with one exception, and, of course, that is the Attorney General, who has provided an opinion to the President—we are told, but we have not seen—that what he is doing is legal.

That is without precedent. It is without precedent for the top legal official in this country to give an opinion that it is legal to go to war without congressional authorization. But it is

clearly the legal advice the President wanted and won't even share with the Members of the U.S. Senate.

The President, of course, seems to be basing the legality of these actions on the declaration that drug traffickers are terrorists. We all hate what the drug traffickers do, but it is also based on that legal opinion, the Office of Legal Counsel at the Justice Department, that we are told gives legal cover for the President to do what is clearly beyond the authority of the Chief Executive. We know nothing about that opinion in this body, and all who have called for it to be released are doing the right thing.

We know that under the U.S. Constitution, the President does not have authority to start a war without congressional authorization. It is an article I responsibility of the Congress of the United States, and there is a reason for that, that is so very important.

If we are going to ask—with the authority of Congress and the Executive—men and women to go to war on behalf of defending our country, that profoundly important decision that is being made by Congress but is putting in harm's way the men and women who serve in the military, there should be a debate, and there should be a vote; there should be responsibility, and there should be accountability.

And simply determination by the President that he is attacking a group of what he calls terrorists—"narco-terrorists"—does not, by itself, make it legal under the Constitution.

You know, some people may say: What is the big deal? These are bad folks. Drugs are terrible.

We all agree with that, but it is not up to the President to determine whether we go to war. It is up to Congress: Should we be going to war with Venezuela?

All of us are on board, Republicans and Democrats, with the fight against narcotics, illegal drugs, fentanyl, in particular, which mostly enter the United States through Mexico and on the Pacific Ocean, and are wreaking havoc on our communities.

It has happened in Vermont as well as West Virginia, Idaho, Florida, Montana, and every other State. Our sons and daughters, mothers and fathers are struggling with addiction and dying from overdose.

So yes, this is a very serious problem, and we should be doing far more to deal with treating addiction in our own country, bolstering our local police forces, our mental health resources, and working with source countries to stop the production and transshipment of these dangerous drugs.

This has not been a partisan issue. In fact, it was an issue where, when I served in the House, there was a Republican and Democratic collective action to provide treatment that is providing real-world help in realtime to folks in your State and in mine.

But laws matter, and the Constitution matters. If the President does

want to start a war, if he wants to put America's troops in harm's way, he needs to seek authorization from Congress.

As my colleagues and I know too well, the United States has a very unfortunate history of wars—forever wars—started by Presidents who misrepresented the facts; from the USS *Maine* incident used to justify the war against Spain to the Gulf of Tonkin resolution incident to justify the Vietnam war—60,000 young Americans killed—to President Bush's stretching of the facts about Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction to launch a disastrous forever war.

In each of these cases, majorities of our predecessors on this very Senate floor abdicated their responsibility to question the President's intentions and justifications for war.

That is why I hope that each of my colleagues—each of us here—will join me in questioning the President's legal basis to carry out these killings and to potentially launch attacks against one or more South American countries. We should demand that Congress assert its constitutional obligation to determine where and why the United States goes to war.

You know, as I mentioned, we all hate the scourge of drugs. But why are we spending billions of dollars in this effort in Venezuela while at the same time taking funding away for treatment programs here at home that actually have been proven effective to help the most vulnerable Americans that are actually struggling with addiction to fentanyl and other drugs?

The Department of Justice has also diverted thousands of Drug Enforcement Administration funds and other law enforcement personnel from their critical missions to carry out the President's immigration agenda. Yet the Department has inexplicably shut down the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force, which has been effective in dismantling thousands of criminal organizations, and, unilaterally, the administration has terminated hundreds of grants that do provide critical funding to State and local law enforcement, folks on the ground in the community helping folks who are struggling with addiction and helping law enforcement get to the sellers of those terrible drugs.

In fact, the administration's fiscal year 2026 budget would slash the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program by more than a third from \$298 million to \$196 million. And under the direction of Attorney General Bondi, Federal drug prosecutions—I have no idea how this happened—but Federal drug prosecutions have dropped to the lowest level in decades, a fact I find shocking.

So when the President claims his new war is about protecting America from drugs, it is a fair question: Why are we doing so little? Why are we taking money away from treatment? Why are we taking money away from high in-

tensity drug enforcement? Why are we not prosecuting more, instead prosecuting so much less?

It is up to the Senate to do its job. We have seen from history that our failure to assert our constitutional responsibility to decide whether to send our military to war has resulted in grievous suffering for the American people and a weakening of our national security.

In asserting our responsibility, at the bare minimum, this U.S. Senate should demand—should demand—to see Attorney General Bondi's legal analysis that the President has used to justify his use of the U.S. military to engage in these attacks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Alabama.

SHARIA LAW

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about two bills I recently introduced to shut down Sharia law in this country. I ruffled some feathers a few weeks ago when I came to the Senate floor to talk about what I believe is the greatest national security threat facing the United States of America: radical Islam and Sharia law.

The Democrats and the mainstream media, they have been coming after me ever since I started talking about this subject. But after spending 40 years coaching, I don't really care what people think about me. I love this country, and I want to save this country for our kids and our grandkids.

I was back in Alabama, and I heard from countless Alabamans who told me they are 100 percent behind what I am talking about. At the end of the day, I work for the great people of Alabama and the great people of this country, not the pearl-clutching media that is out there hammering me every day.

Speaking of Alabama, I am proud that the Yellowhammer State banned Sharia law a long time ago. For too long, people have been afraid to call out radical Islam for what it is because if you dare—if you dare to speak out—the left will come after you, your family, your reputation, and your job. They will try to ruin your life just because they disagree with you. That is how they play the game.

One of the radical left's go-to tactics is to accuse anyone—anyone—who disagrees with them of being a racist, a bigot, or intolerant. They tried that with me, calling me an Islamophobe for calling out the evils of Islam. But there is only one problem with that strategy—one. Radical Islam isn't a race; it is an ideology. It is a choice, and I would argue it is a cult.

So, no, I am not an Islamophobe. If you want to peacefully practice your religion, that is fine with me. That is what our Constitution gives you the right to do. Our Constitution gives you that right, and that is why we have millions—millions—of Christians, Jews, Mormons, Hindus, Buddhists, and peaceful Muslims, who worship freely

in this great country of ours called the United States of America.

But if you come here, you are expected to assimilate into our country and our values.

I recently saw a stat that absolutely shocked me. We have 42 million people in this country that are on food stamps—42 million. You would think these people are just Americans who have fallen on hard times, which is whom the program is for. But a disproportionate amount of these 42 million people are immigrants; 45 percent of Afghanistan immigrants are on food stamps; 42 of the Somali immigrants are on food stamps; and 59 percent of all illegal aliens are collecting food stamps—59 percent.

So, clearly, these people are not coming here and assimilating into our American way of life by working hard and taking care of your family—what an idea. They are coming here to mooch off the American taxpayer. It is wrong, and we need to call it out.

But beyond the taxpayer concerns, this religion is also fundamentally incompatible with our Western values, so wake up America.

The Quran instructs Islamists to fight Jews and Christians, along with anyone else who doesn't believe in Allah. Simply put, radical Islam teaches that it is righteous to kill Christians. It is righteous. There is no peaceful coexistence with this type of people, none.

Just look at the Middle East and North Africa, where Christians and Jews are being slaughtered by the thousands.

Where is our media? Where are they at?

More than 7,000 Christians have been slaughtered by radical Muslims in Nigeria so far this year—7,000. That is 35 people that have been killed every day this year.

Where is the mainstream media? How come they are not talking about that?

Radical Islam demands complete obedience—complete, 100 percent—and will kill you if you dare to speak out against their beliefs and ideologies.

This isn't anything new. Muslims have been fighting to wipe out Christians and Jews for centuries. But now the problem isn't just confined to the faraway Middle East. It is happening right here in our backyard, in the 50 States.

We are already seeing cities in Michigan and Minnesota being taken over by Sharia law. In Dearborn, MI, a Christian pastor recently protested after a street was named after a radical Islamic terrorist. The pastor just complained about it. In response, the Muslim mayor of Dearborn told the pastor that he is no longer welcome in the town and will celebrate the day he leaves.

Think about that. A Christian pastor is being silenced here in America for objecting to a taxpayer-funded road being named after a terrorist.

We are losing.

Or take what has been happening in Minneapolis, MN, which has seen a massive influx of Somalians moving into their neighborhoods.

I recently saw a story that absolutely shocked me. More than 75 Somalians have been arrested in a massive scheme where they stole \$300 million from an American taxpayer-funded child nutrition program—\$300 million.

So these Somali criminals came to Minneapolis, they took advantage of our free schools and our free healthcare, and then they stole \$300 million from American taxpayers, right under our noses. Where is the media? Where is the outrage?

And where did this money go? Where do you think it went? You guessed it: It went back to Somalia.

It is disgusting, and these people should be deported, if not jailed for life.

In case you are still unclear about the dangers we are facing, here are a few reasons why Sharia law does not work in a Western society like the United States. In America, we value free speech. The U.S. Constitution gives us that right. The First Amendment is what makes this country, America, great. You are allowed to express your opinions publicly, without fear of the government arresting you or killing you.

But under Sharia law—under Sharia law—any criticism that goes against what Muhammad or the Quran says can be punishable by death.

Further, under the U.S. Constitution and the First Amendment, equal rights for people of all faiths are protected. Western culture treats everyone equal, regardless of their religious beliefs.

Under Sharia Law, if you are not a Muslim, you are treated as the enemy. Radical Islam says you can discriminate against and even be violent toward non-Muslims. We see that happening now in Europe, where non-Muslims are being violently attacked every day, all over Europe. It is because Sharia law not only accepts but encourages this type of disgusting behavior.

Another major difference between Islam and our Western culture is the way we treat women. In the United States, marriage happens when a man and woman mutually decide that they want to get married and be with each other. But under Sharia law, older men are allowed to marry 6-year-old girls, which is unbelievable. Six years old—that is not marriage. In America, we call that pedophilia.

But that is just scraping the surface. In Sharia Law, women are sold, raped, trafficked. It is no problem to them. That is their way of life.

Women are not allowed to get an education or have a job. They aren't even allowed to leave home without a man escorting them. And women are forced to wear burqas, which cover basically everything but their eyes.

Meanwhile, men are allowed to have multiple wives, marry children, and do not have to cover their heads.

It makes your blood boil, not to mention the horrible way that minorities are treated in countries that follow Sharia law. There is no tolerance in these countries. If you live in a country that practices Sharia law and are not Muslim, you are lucky if you aren't thrown in jail or killed. That is because Islam and Sharia law teach that you must hate non-Muslims and should wage jihad, which literally means holy war, against people who do not believe.

One thing I find particularly ironic is how the left turns a blind eye to the horrible ways LGBT people are treated in countries that follow Sharia law. In countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, gay people are often given the death penalty.

Does that sound like a peaceful, tolerant religion to you? Not me.

Unfortunately, this religion, which I think is closer to a cult, is rapidly growing in this country. Wake up, America.

Look no further than New York, where radical Islamist Zohran Mamdani is the frontrunner to become the next mayor. Mamdani has tried everything he can do to hide his radical Islamic beliefs, ever since he started campaigning. But he was recently seen in a photo with a coconspirator of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

Think about that. And they are getting ready to elect him mayor. The leading candidate for mayor of New York City is cozying up with an openly jihadist terrorist sympathizer. Where are we going?

If New Yorkers are stupid enough to elect a radical Islamist as their mayor, then they deserve what they get next. And it is coming.

I truly believe we are at a crossroads in this country. The time for political correctness is over, that is why I have introduced two bills in the Senate to end Sharia law in this country—end it.

The first one is the No Sharia Act, which makes it illegal to practice Sharia law when it conflicts with our constitution.

As I have repeatedly said, the radical Islam cult is the opposite of everything—I mean everything—that we stand for in America.

The second bill I introduced, the Preserving a Sharia Free America Act, prevents all foreign nationals who advocate for Sharia law from entering this country—no more. If you want to practice that, stay where you are at or go to one of the other 50 countries that practices this.

The Trump administration banned people from nearly 50 Muslim countries during the first administration. And thanks to Joe Biden's 4 years of open borders, we now have thousands—I mean thousands—of terrorists and their sympathizers who entered our country unchecked—how stupid was that.

We have to shut off the spigot before it is too late. This is a major national security threat. Radical Islamists have proven, over and over again, that they

are willing to do whatever it takes to kill just one American citizen. And it isn't just happening overseas. It has been allowed to fester and is alive and well in our very own country, just waiting for the right opportunity to attack.

So now is the time to act, because if we don't, we are going to lose this country as we know it. Open your eyes, America. The values this country was built on cannot coexist with radical Islam. It doesn't work.

It is one, our Constitution, or the other. You can't mix it. This isn't a Republican or Democrat issue. This is an American issue. Just look at Europe. We are headed down the same dark path as what Europe is going through now if we don't wake up.

We need to permanently shut down Sharia law in this country before it is too late. Wake up, America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 470

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, Nevadans work hard for their money—really hard—especially right now, when they are being squeezed by rising costs as a result of Trump's chaos and his reckless economic policies.

Nevadans pay taxes with the expectation that the Federal Government is going to work for them and provide critical services when they need it—services that are shamefully being disrupted by the Republican government shutdown. Instead, their taxpayer dollars are being wasted on gold-plated dinners at the White House, two—count them, two—private jets for Kristi Noem, and, unbelievably, a potentially multimillion-dollar illegal payment to Donald Trump.

So you heard that right. In the middle of a government shutdown that he caused because he refuses to take action to prevent a spike in your healthcare costs, Donald Trump is seeking \$230 million in payment from the Department of Justice. For whom? Well, for himself.

He is going to use your money to pad his own pockets, instead of working with Democrats to take action to make sure that you and your family can go to the doctor without breaking the bank.

Trump has even acknowledged that "it's awfully strange to make a decision where I'm paying myself."

And I want to go one step further. It is not just "strange." It is outrageous.

Mr. President, \$230 million—all while families are worried about paying their bills, putting food on the table, and wondering if they will be able to afford their health insurance for next year.

Instead of paying himself, why doesn't Trump put that money toward SNAP benefits, since his administration has decided to renege on its promise to provide the funding to prevent Americans from going hungry? The President has the power to do this.

So, today, I am introducing a resolution condemning Donald Trump's deci-

sion to pay and enrich himself with your tax dollars. You got that right. He is going to pay to enrich himself nearly a quarter of a million dollars—from Donald Trump to Donald Trump—off the backs of the American taxpayer.

And if my Republican colleagues—who like to stand up here and talk all about cutting costs, cutting wasteful spending—if they want to practice what they preach, they will support my resolution. They will stand up to Donald Trump and say, finally—finally—with the gold-plated dinners and the ballrooms, et cetera, that enough is enough, and it is time to put the American people first.

So let's show the American people that at least this Chamber still knows the difference between serving the public and serving yourself.

So let's pass my resolution right now, today. We can do it.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 470, which is at the desk. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, today is day 28 of the Democrat shutdown—a shutdown caused by the Democrats' complete blind hatred—complete hatred—of Donald Trump. They are spending more time attacking President Trump than fighting for the American people, who are harmed by their shutdown.

Democrats have voted for weeks to deprive our men and women in the military of getting their paychecks. They are stopping Capitol Police, Federal law enforcement, air traffic controllers, and essential Federal employees from getting paid.

In just a few days, 42 million people receiving SNAP benefits may not get the benefits they rely on because the Democrats will not support the continuing resolution that most of us don't like.

It is the Biden funding.

Further, my Democrat colleagues are willing to do anything they can to attack President Trump instead of voting to reopen the government and stop this recklessness.

The American people are sick of the political games at their expense, and so am I; therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. This is extremely disappointing. By blocking my resolution, Washington Republicans are saying that they approve of Donald Trump paying himself a multimillion-dollar settlement using taxpayer dollars.

Millions of Americans are missing their paychecks, worrying about pay-

ing their bills, losing their SNAP benefits, and wondering if they are going to be able to afford their health insurance next year.

My Republican colleagues have lost their way and should be ashamed of themselves for standing up and allowing this lawlessness to happen. Like I said, my Republican colleagues like to stand up here and talk about cutting wasteful spending. This \$230 million, I would argue, is exactly that. So if they wanted to practice what they preach, they would actually support my resolution, stand up to this wasteful spending of the President, again, approving himself to pay himself nearly a quarter of a million dollars, and we can show the American people that all of us know the difference between serving the public and serving just one individual—President Trump.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. If my Democrat colleagues want to make sure people are not being harmed by losing SNAP benefits or going without paychecks while they show up to work day after day, then they would vote to reopen government. Unfortunately, they have elected to not do that.

So I hope my Democrat colleagues will come to their senses and vote this week to reopen the government.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

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

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

MOTION TO PROCEED TO THE MOTION TO RECONSIDER CLOTURE VOTE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the motion to reconsider the cloture vote on October 14 to the motion to proceed to H.R. 5371.

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

The motion was agreed to.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5371.

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

The motion was agreed to.

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. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations

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 H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close, upon reconsideration?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 590 Leg.]

YEAS—54

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—1

Justice

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 45.

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

The motion was rejected.

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. 295, Jordan Emery Pratt, 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 Husted, Jim Justice, Ashley B. Moody, Roger Marshall, Joni Ernst, Roger F. Wicker, Ron Johnson, 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 Jordan Emery Pratt, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, 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 Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 591 Leg.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—47

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

NOT VOTING—1

Hawley

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 47. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk reported the nomination of Jordan Emery Pratt, of Florida, to be United

States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

NOMINATION OF JORDAN EMERY PRATT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Jordan Pratt to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Judge Pratt has repeatedly demonstrated his partisanship and extreme views over the course of his career. While working in the Florida Department of Legal Affairs, he argued in support of restrictions on abortion rights and voting rights.

He later worked for the first Trump administration and a far-right legal organization, First Liberty Institute. In his role at First Liberty, Judge Pratt belittled abortion rights, opposed transgender rights, and argued against firearms restrictions. During his tenure with First Liberty, the organization was a member of the advisory board of Project 2025. Judge Pratt participated in meetings regarding Project 2025 and provided research as part of that effort.

My colleagues may claim that Judge Pratt did these things during his time as an advocate and that he understands the difference between the role of an advocate and the role of a judge.

However, following his appointment to the State bench in 2023, Judge Pratt continued to act in a fashion more befitting a political activist than an even-handed arbiter of the law. Earlier this year, he wrote an opinion in which he held that a Florida law allowing minors to seek abortions without parental consent was unconstitutional. In commenting on Judge Pratt's opinion, one lawyer said that "[j]udicial overreach doesn't even begin to describe it."

We do not need to wonder how this nominee will rule if he is confirmed to the Federal bench. We already know. Like other judicial nominees put forth by President Trump, Judge Pratt has strong ties to rightwing organizations. He is an active member of the Federalist Society, and he has stated his intention to remain affiliated with the Federalist Society if he is confirmed to the Federal bench.

Judge Pratt's record clearly reflects a level of partisan ideology and judicial activism that is inappropriate for someone nominated to a lifetime position on the Federal bench.

I will oppose Judge Pratt's nomination, and I urge my colleagues to join me.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:05 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).