

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 Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 596 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

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
Galleo	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

NOT VOTING—2

Lummis Tillis

The nomination was confirmed.

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

The Senator from Tennessee.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

FBI

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, earlier this month, we discovered one of the worst abuses of government power in our Nation's history: The FBI, under President Biden, spied on eight U.S. Senators. I was one of those eight.

Now, what we have learned so far is this: The Agency, the FBI, tracked whom we were calling on our cell phones, where we were physically located when we made or received the calls, and how long each call lasted. We still don't know the predicate for the subpoena, but they did go into a court, and they got a subpoena.

Now, by all appearances, the spying was politically motivated. The law-

makers who were spied on are all Republicans, each one of us supports President Trump, and we had valid questions about the outcome of the 2020 election.

What we also know is that no American should be spied on by their government because of their political beliefs whether they are a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent. This should not happen.

We are all duly-elected Members of Congress, and Jack Smith and the CR-15 unit at the FBI that did his dirty work for him violated our First and Fourth Amendment rights, the separation of powers, the speech and debate clause, and the Stored Communications Act.

If they are willing to do this to us, just imagine what they are willing to do to private citizens who have a different political point of view. What were they doing to the moms and dads that went to school board meetings? What were they doing to pro-lifers?

We already know that through the same probe, which was termed "Arctic Frost," the FBI investigated nearly 100 Republican and conservative groups, including the Republican National Committee, the Republican Attorneys General Association, and Charlie Kirk's Turning Point USA. We are hearing they may have surveilled as many as 150 different individuals.

We are learning that this weaponization of government was approved by those at the very top of Joe Biden's Justice Department. Late last week, Chairman GRASSLEY, who chairs our Judiciary Committee, released an FBI memo drafted on April 4, 2022, that authorized the Arctic Frost probe. Among the people whose signatures appear on that document are then-Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco and the Attorney General of the United States, Merrick Garland. Oh, by the way, the memo was written by FBI Director Christopher Wray.

We are only learning about this abuse of power and this weaponization of the FBI because the Trump administration and Republicans are committed to complete transparency and accountability. They are committed to a single tier of justice, not two different tiers of justice.

Thankfully, FBI Director Kash Patel has fired all the individuals that were involved in the spying operation.

Now it is time to find out how else they have weaponized our Nation's justice system, so we will begin to have some hearings, and we are going to put these individuals under oath and ask them to explain how they allowed this to happen.

What we have heard so far is that Jack Smith, who was the ringleader of this, wants "assurances"—his choice of words—that he won't be punished in exchange for testifying about his spying scheme before Congress. He is absolutely out of his mind if he thinks he is going to get off with this scot-free. This is a scandal bigger than Water-

gate. It is a scandal where the FBI and the DOJ have been weaponized, politicized. And, no, he will not get off scot-free. The American people want to see that people are going to be held to account. So if we need to subpoena him, that is exactly what we will do.

We are also going to determine why exactly Verizon Wireless complied with the FBI's groundless subpoena request.

Just last week, we learned that AT&T also received a subpoena request from Jack Smith for two other Members of Congress's phone records. Yet, when AT&T questioned Smith's team about the legality of the subpoena, they apparently backed down, and they abandoned the effort altogether.

So it is very curious why Verizon just rolled over and went along with this lawless request and didn't move to question and didn't move to quash the subpoena. So we will get to the bottom of that.

It is important to realize that Lady Justice is blindfolded. The American people want that one tier of justice—equal treatment under the law, equal access. We are not going to stop fighting until we can ensure that the weaponization of government that occurred under Joe Biden does not ever happen again.

MEMPHIS

Mr. President, late last month, I had the honor of joining President Trump in the Oval Office as he signed an order establishing the Memphis Safe Task Force. This is a coordinated effort by the Justice Department, the FBI, and 11 other Federal Agencies to work with local and State officials, support the Memphis Police Department, and get violent criminals off the streets.

This support has been desperately needed. Last year, Memphis saw the highest crime rate in the country. In many parts of the city, residents have told us they could not walk out their front door without fear of being robbed, shot, or murdered.

Now, with the task force, we are seeing violent, repeat criminals get locked up after terrorizing Memphians for far too long. In just 1 month of operations, there have been some just astounding, remarkable results. The authorities are working together as a team. They have made more than 1,700 arrests, including 114 warrant arrests for aggravated assault, 116 arrests for domestic violence, 23 arrests for robbery, 12 for sexual assault, and 10 for homicide. At the same time, the task force has recovered more than 370 illegal weapons and more than 230 stolen vehicles, and they have found more than 80 missing children.

This is a huge step forward for Memphis. Already, Memphians are doing things they could not do before, and they are enjoying this wonderful, historic, iconic city. For the opening night for the Memphis Grizzlies, fans came out to the game in huge numbers, knowing that law enforcement was there to keep the peace.

As one fan said outside the FedExForum:

It is so peaceful . . . we're just enjoying life and it just feels so free.

This is something that all Americans should celebrate.

We will not stop fighting to make Memphis safer. We are going to make certain it is the safest city in the United States, not the most dangerous.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, a couple of weeks ago, I came to the floor to talk about where the Republicans are, and this is now—effectively, the House of Representatives has adjourned. The national legislature has adjourned.

I want everyone to understand what is going on here. These are work periods. These yellow days are work periods. So August is off; everyone is supposed to be home. But what they did was they left early, so here, all these are crossed out. They didn't show up. And then they didn't show up for any of these days. That is fine. But then they decided to unexpectedly cancel this week and then this week and then this week and then this week. Now we are at the point where, if you are a Member of the House of Representatives, over the last 3 months, for every day that you show up for work, you get 7 days off. The rest of the Federal workforce is either furloughed at home and not getting their paycheck or they are considered an excepted employee, which is essentially a designation you get if the work you do is so essential for safety that you have to work anyway.

So here you have the Members of the House of Representatives getting paid not to show up, and then you have the rest of the Federal workforce having to show up and not get paid.

I have lived through several shutdowns, unfortunately, but none like this. Usually, both parties are in town, for a start. Usually, both parties are in town.

I get the play that Speaker JOHNSON made at the outset. It is a pretty common play. It is considered a jam-job, which is essentially: Here is this bill. Now we are out of town. It is the only thing you can pass or not pass, so you are now under pressure to either pass it or not pass it.

It is a very common thing to do. They jammed us. They did the same thing in March, and it worked, but it didn't work this time, and then the Speaker of the House, instead of saying "Gosh, we should probably start a negotiation, try to figure out how to keep the lights on in the U.S. Government, keep people from losing their paychecks," he just said "Well, tough. I am going to adjourn the House of Representatives."

I want everyone to understand how ahistorical this is. This is already a very light schedule, right? Just objectively speaking, people don't get schedules like this before you do all the cross-offs, right? This is even a light

schedule compared to normal House schedules.

This guy is not that interested in legislating.

And I also want to make one other specific point: It is not as though there is nothing else to do.

We haven't passed a national defense authorization. We haven't passed the rest of the appropriations bills. We haven't passed a Water Resources Development Act. We haven't done oversight.

And what happens is, when you stop doing your work, it is just like homework. It piles up. It piles up, and then you run out of time at the end of the year.

And the House of Representatives—these people who spend so much money and time and put their family and their friends and coworkers through a bunch of pain to achieve being a Member of Congress and having this little pin and having "The Honorable" in front of your name, and then they just said: Do you know what? I don't think I need to show up at all.

Sometimes, it can be hard for people to understand what politicians in Washington are arguing about. But this is actually pretty simple. Open enrollment starts on Saturday, and about 24 million Americans—it just so happens that most of them are in States that supported Donald Trump—are about to face roughly a doubling of their healthcare costs.

And for some people, it will be like a 30-percent increase, and for some people, it will be a 70-percent increase, and for some people it will be like a three-fold increase in their healthcare costs.

And in raw dollars—percentage is a big deal. But the raw dollars are kind of what matters, right, because people don't have an extra \$600 or \$700 that they can kind of like wring savings out of.

You don't get to go: You know what; I would like a \$12,000 raise to cover this.

That is not available to them, not in this economy. And there is not \$12,000 less that you can spend somewhere.

And in the middle of this, even though the U.S. Department of Agriculture in their initial shutdown guidance said specifically: We have got \$5 billion in contingency funds, and those resources are available to keep people getting their nutritional assistance, their SNAP benefits—and then abruptly, like four or five days ago, they just like changed their guidance. This is something that Trump did in his first term, during a shutdown, to use those contingency funds to prevent Americans from starving—to prevent Americans from starving.

And I guess I just don't understand why anybody thinks this should be a point of leverage. Like, half of the roughly 40 million people who receive SNAP benefits are working poor because we have decided nationally we are not going to raise the minimum wage, and we are not going to support

the labor movement enough so that when people work 40 hours a week or 60 hours a week or 100 hours a week, they still can't even afford to put food on their table.

And so we have these SNAP benefits to make up for our policy failure, and 40 million people need it. About 20 million of them actually have jobs, and most of the rest of them are the elderly or the disabled. And I don't know what the hell has come of this country when the President of the United States, who is in charge of this particular question has said: As a point of leverage against Democrats, I am going to cause millions of Americans to not have enough food on their table.

I remain flabbergasted that the national legislature has basically adjourned under MIKE JOHNSON's leadership. He is not even trying anymore because he thinks it increases his leverage.

Costs are about to double for tens of millions of Americans on the healthcare side. Electricity is going up at double the inflation rate. Vegetables are up 39 percent. Coffee is up 30 to 40 percent. And now there won't be enough food.

I implore everyone on every side of the aisle to just sit down and negotiate this. Under Biden and under Leader SCHUMER, we just didn't have shutdowns. We just didn't. And you could actually make a valid criticism that under Democratic leadership we conceded too much. We conceded too many policies to the minority party. But we did because we understood that in order to enact an appropriations bill, even a continuing resolution, you need four corners.

What does that mean? The Speaker, minority leader in the House, majority leader and minority leader in the Senate.

So let's get the House back in town. Let's turn on these SNAP benefits. Let's fix this ACA problem. And let's turn the Federal Government's lights on.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

UNITED STATES ARMED SERVICES

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a matter that transcends party lines and goes to the very heart of what makes America's military the most trusted institution in our country.

I speak from a lifetime of devotion to the Army and our armed services. I joined the Army at 17 when I took the oath to defend and protect the Constitution as a new cadet at West Point.

I served 12 years on Active Duty. I earned my Ranger tab and my senior jump wings. I had the privilege of commanding an infantry company in the 82nd Airborne Division. I taught at West Point, but I want to make it clear, I am not a combat veteran.

I have spent, in addition, nearly three decades on the Senate Armed Services Committee, with the great

privilege of serving as ranking member and chairman.

My connection to the military is neither transient nor incidental. That is precisely why I must speak out today about what President Trump is doing to our Armed Forces. He is attempting to politicize an institution that has remained steadfastly apolitical for nearly 250 years. He is disrespecting the professionalism and sacrifice of our servicemembers. And if we in Congress do not reject his actions—and very soon—the damage could take generations to repair.

America's apolitical military was constructed deliberately by leaders who understood that republics die when generals and soldiers become political pawns or political powers.

George Washington set the standard. When he resigned his commission in 1783, he established a principle that military leaders serve the Nation, not a party or a President or anything else. He made clear that military leadership is not a pathway to personal political power. Washington could have made himself King. He refused, and that refusal created a tradition we inherit today.

The Founders enshrined a non-political military in our Constitution, giving Congress—not the President—the sole power to raise armies, establish laws governing the military, and, importantly, to declare war.

The Founders built checks and balances precisely to prevent the situation we now face: a President who views the military as his personal political instrument.

This tradition is maintained in the United States through deliberate policy. The Uniform Code of Military Justice prohibits Active-Duty personnel from partisan political activities. Military bases do not host campaign rallies. Servicemembers do not appear in uniform at political events.

Indeed, the Supreme Court itself has affirmed this principle. In the case of *Greer v. Spock* in 1976, the Court upheld military regulations strictly prohibiting partisan political activities on military bases. The Court's conclusion was unequivocal. The majority opinion explained that the military has a special responsibility to avoid "both the reality and the appearance of acting as handmaiden for partisan political causes or candidates."

Justice Powell went on to warn that "it is the lesson of ancient and modern history that the major socially destabilizing influence in many European and South American countries has been a highly politicized military. . . . Complete and effective civilian control of the military would be compromised by participation of the military in the political process."

The Supreme Court understood what we must remember: Once the military appears political, civilian control itself is compromised; public confidence evaporates; and history shows where that leads.

And these are not bureaucratic niceties. Once the military becomes politicized, it loses the trust of the American people. A military seen as serving a political party cannot claim to serve the Nation. For nearly 250 years, this principle has held. The American military has remained the most trusted institution precisely because it has stayed out of politics.

Now, President Trump is systematically dismantling this bedrock principle, brazenly, repeatedly, and with apparent pride.

On May 24, he addressed West Point's graduating class while wearing a red MAGA hat—a political campaign symbol at a military ceremony. This was not an accident. It was a statement. He told our Nation's future Army officers that this election victory gave him the right to "do what we wanna do." He told cadets about to take their oath to the Constitution that winning an election means you can do whatever you want.

In June, at an event at Fort Bragg, President Trump made this politicization even more explicit. Soldiers attending the event were apparently screened for physical appearance and enthusiasm and were positioned in the bleachers as background props for what Trump boasted was a political rally. The troops were encouraged to boo his opponents, cheer his applause lines, and jeer the press.

Almost as disturbing, President Trump's team brought vendors on to Fort Bragg to sell campaign merchandise to everyone, including soldiers in uniform. This was an explicit violation of longstanding Army regulations and Department of Defense policy. It exploited soldiers and the prestige of their service for the President's partisan and personal gain.

And, again, just last month at Quantico, Trump spoke to a hall of hundreds of generals and admirals to make explicit what had previously been unspoken. He complained about "an enemy within" and told the assembled officers that dealing with this domestic enemy "is going to be a major part for some of the people in this room. That's a war, too. It's a war from within."

Let us be clear about who Trump means when he says "the enemy within." He does not mean terrorists or foreign agents. He means his political opponents. He means Americans exercising their constitutional rights to disagree with him.

Indeed, any doubt about whom he considers "the enemy within" was erased when he pardoned more than 1,500 people convicted of attacking Congress and Capitol Police on January 6, 2021.

These are people who attacked the Capitol, at President Trump's urging, who savagely beat police officers, who forced Members of Congress to flee the Chamber for their own lives.

The vast majority of my colleagues were there that day and know exactly what they saw.

These criminals who supported President Trump were rewarded with pardons while those who he believes are opposed to him are being targeted for retribution.

This is not a theoretical concern. The President went further in his remarks at Quantico, suggesting that he wants to use "some of these dangerous cities as training grounds for our military." He proposed to deploy American troops in American cities to train for operations against American citizens—all without the consent of State and local leaders and in very apparent violation of the Posse Comitatus Act. Already, we have seen him order deployments in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Chicago, Portland, and elsewhere.

The pattern is unmistakable. Trump is attempting to transform the military from an apolitical institution that serves the Constitution into a political tool that serves him. He stages political rallies on military bases. He sells campaign merchandise to troops in uniform. He fires generals who give him professional military advice he doesn't like. He tells military leaders that their mission includes waging war on his domestic political opponents.

This is not normal, this is not acceptable, and if my Republican colleagues don't publicly reject this behavior, the President will fundamentally alter the character of American civil-military relations.

Beyond politicization, President Trump has shown consistent disrespect for the military leaders and the values they hold.

At his West Point graduation speech, he claimed he defeated ISIS "in three weeks." There is just one problem: It is not true. General Caine himself has refuted the story that President Trump repeatedly tells about that campaign—that he defeated ISIS. In fact, according to the 2025 intelligence community threat assessment, which was prepared by the Trump administration itself, ISIS "remains the world's largest Islamic terrorist organization." But the President stood before America's future military leaders and essentially lied to inflate his ego and his reputation.

Trump also told West Point graduates that "we do not need an officer corps of yes-men." Yet he fired General Kruse, the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, because the DIA's expert analysts contradicted Trump's claims about his military strike on Iran. He fired Gen. CQ Brown, ADM Lisa Franchetti, Gen. Timothy Haugh, and many others in a purge of flag officers that appears motivated by race, gender, and political loyalty rather than merit. The message is clear: Give the President the advice he wants to hear or lose your job.

President Trump disrespects not just military leaders but also military customs and traditions.

At the West Point graduation, he left before the diplomas were presented. He declined the opportunity to present the

first and last cadets their diplomas—a tradition honored by the Presidents before him and hopefully future Presidents. He couldn't be bothered to fully participate in a ceremony that meant everything to these young officers and their families.

Earlier this month at Norfolk, at the Navy's 250th anniversary celebration, Trump dispensed with any pretense. He declared:

Let's face it. This is a rally.

He closed the ceremony by dancing to his campaign song "Y.M.C.A." by the Village People.

The Navy's 250th anniversary became about Trump, not about the history of sacrifice of sailors and the service they represent.

To my Republican colleagues who have served in uniform: You understand that service requires honesty, humility, and respect for those who came before you. You know that officers must give their best professional advice even if it is not what the Commander in Chief wants to hear. You know that when officers fear giving honest answers, people die, missions fail, wars are lost.

So when the President lies about military operations, he disrespects every soldier who was told the truth about the battlefield. When he fires officers for honest advice, he disrespects every officer who has had the courage to speak truth to power. When he turns military ceremonies into political rallies, he disrespects every servicemember who has kept politics out of their professional life. You know this. The question is what you—and all of us—will do about it.

We are at a crossroads. The damage Trump is inflicting is not theoretical; it is happening now. If we don't act, it will accelerate. America's civil-military relationship took 250 years to build, but it can be destroyed in a fraction of that time. Once the military is seen as a partisan instrument serving one party, once it is deployed domestically against political opponents, the trust that sustains it will evaporate, and that trust, once lost, can take generations to rebuild.

Consider the dangers if this continues. Will military officers refuse to serve under future administrations, depending on the party in power? Will they resist civilian authority over policy disagreements? Will the military itself fracture along partisan lines?

Consider what happens if Trump continues to deploy the National Guard against his political opponents. What happens when citizens see soldiers in the street to suppress constitutionally permitted dissent? What happens to recruiting when young Americans view the military as a partisan tool? What happens to military cohesion when soldiers treat fellow citizens as enemies?

These are not hypothetical questions. President Trump told our most senior military leaders that fighting the "enemy within" is their mission. He suggested using American cities as

training grounds. The precedent he sets will outlast his administration and be available to every President after him.

Congress has the constitutional authority and moral obligation to stop this. We are not powerless. We control the purse—although it appears so many times recently that we want to surrender that control. We have oversight authority; we are not exercising it properly. We can pass legislation, and we must act.

After 9 months of this Presidency, it is clear that my Republican colleagues must do more than recognize the problem; they must act. Republicans must work with us to call out the President and take concrete legislative action.

First, we must codify prohibitions on political activities at military installations and block Federal funds from supporting such activities. No more campaign rallies on military bases. No more merchandise sales to troops in uniform or civilian dependents or anyone else who wanders up.

Second, we must pass legislation—already in the Senate National Defense Authorization Act—to require explanations and notifications for senior general and flag officer dismissals. If these decisions are based on merit, the administration should have no problem explaining them publicly.

Third, we must strengthen the Hatch Act as it applies to political leaders interacting with military personnel. The rules that constrain servicemembers from politics must also constrain politicians from exploiting servicemembers for political purposes.

Fourth, we must establish clear standards requiring congressional approval for domestic military deployments except in genuine emergencies. The Founders gave Congress the power over the military for exactly this reason—to prevent any President from deploying troops as a personal force.

I recognize the political pressure that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle face, but we all took the same oath either in uniform or in elected office to support and defend the Constitution, not a President or party.

The American military is trusted by the American people because it has earned that trust by remaining apolitical, professional, and devoted to defending the Constitution of the United States.

I will close with this: Yesterday in Japan, President Trump boarded an aircraft carrier to address American sailors and marines. For a full hour, standing before hundreds of young men and women deployed thousands of miles from home, the Commander in Chief lectured them on his political grievances. He complained that the 2020 election was stolen. He mocked reporters. He whined about the Nobel Peace Prize. He boasted about deploying the National Guard domestically. He invented false stories about President Biden and jeered him. The sailors and marines, for their part, remained silent and respectful, like the professionals they are.

But the name of that aircraft carrier is worth noting: The USS *George Washington*. How fitting that our first President set the standard for the military we inherit today and how shameful that President Trump so badly fails that standard.

Washington recognized that the Presidency and the military are grander than any one person, and he recognized the danger of any man who believes otherwise. As he warned in his Farewell Address:

Guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism.

President Trump, I fear that Washington's warning has come to bear.

Simply put, President Trump is politicizing the military for his benefit. He is disrespecting our servicemembers, and he is setting precedents that will haunt us for generations.

Every day that passes, every political rally on a military base, every firing of an officer for honest advice, every statement about deploying troops against domestic opponents—each inflicts damage that becomes harder to repair.

To my Republican colleagues: This is your moment. You can help defend the military you cherish—and, indeed, you do cherish it. You have served in it with distinction, honor, and courage. You can exercise your constitutional authority as the majority power, or you can stand by and concede to an Executive who recognizes no limits.

I suspect history will not forgive this body—all of us—for remaining silent while the President transforms this military into his personal political tool. The military I served in and my colleagues served in deserves better. The country we all swore to defend deserves better. The young men and women taking the oath today deserve the apolitical, professional military our Founders fought and died to establish.

Let us together reassert Congress's power and preserve the military tradition we inherited.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RELATING TO "RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE BARRED OWL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY; WASHINGTON, OREGON, AND CALIFORNIA"—Motion to Proceed

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, in a few minutes, we are going to vote on