

Graham	Lankford	Rosen
Grassley	Lee	Rounds
Hagerty	Lummis	Schmitt
Hassan	Marshall	Scott (FL)
Hawley	McConnell	Scott (SC)
Hoeven	McCormick	Shaheen
Husted	Moody	Sheehy
Hyde-Smith	Moran	Sullivan
Johnson	Moreno	Thune
Justice	Mullin	Tillis
Kaine	Murkowski	Tuberville
Kennedy	Ricketts	Wicker
King	Risch	Young

NAYS—40

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

The motion was agreed to.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2026

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The clerk will report the bill.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5371) making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3937

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I call up substitute amendment No. 3937.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE], for Ms. COLLINS, proposes an amendment numbered 3937 to H.R. 5371.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 substitute amendment No. 3937 to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Kevin Cramer, Johnarrasso, James Lankford, Shelley Moore Capito, James E. Risch, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lisa Murkowski, Katie Boyd Britt, Pete Ricketts, Jon A. Husted, Roger Marshall, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Sheehy, Jerry Moran, Susan M. Collins.

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3941 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3937

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 3941 from Senator PAUL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE], for Mr. PAUL, proposes an amendment numbered 3941 to amendment No. 3937.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To strike a provision modifying the definition of hemp for purposes of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946)

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act, in title VII of division B, section 781 shall have no force or effect.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3942 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3941

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE], proposes an amendment numbered 3942 to amendment No. 3941.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

At the end add the following.

"This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment."

AMENDMENT NO. 3943

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the text of the underlying bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE], proposes an amendment numbered 3943 to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 3937.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike "1 day" and insert "2 days"

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3944 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3943

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 3944 to amendment No. 3943

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

At the end add the following.

"This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment."

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 3945

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to commit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] moves to commit the bill, H.R. 5371, to the Committee on Appropriations to report back forthwith with instructions with an amendment numbered 3945.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

At the end add the following.

"This Act shall take effect 5 days after the date of enactment."

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion to commit with instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3946

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 3946 to the instructions on the motion to commit with an amendment No. 3945.

Mr. THUNE. I ask consent the reading be waived.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike "5 days" and insert "6 days"

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3947 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3946

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 3947 to amendment No. 3946.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask consent that the reading of the names be waived.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike "6 days" and insert "7 days"

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk with respect to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes, as amended.

John Thune, Kevin Cramer, John Barasso, James Lankford, Shelley Moore Capito, James E. Risch, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lisa Murkowski, Katie Boyd Britt, Pete Ricketts, Jon A. Husted, Roger Marshall, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Sheehy, Jerry Moran, Susan M. Collins.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

MOTION TO TABLE

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, shortly, I will move to table amendment No. 3947 for the purposes of offering my amendment to extend the Affordable Care Act tax credits for 1 year. I am doing this because my Republican colleagues are refusing to act to stop healthcare premiums from doubling for over 20 million Americans.

I just can't stand by without a fight. Americans have said loudly and clearly that they are in a healthcare crisis. That is not up for a negotiation. But it didn't have to be this way. We are at this moment because Donald Trump and congressional Republicans have simply refused to address the biggest increase in insurance premiums they will likely ever experience.

For months, congressional Republicans and Donald Trump have refused to even talk to us about addressing it. Estimates show that 22 million Americans will see their premiums double on average. I am getting calls daily from Wisconsinites begging me to stay in this fight.

A couple in Door County, WI, told me their premium is rising by \$550 a month next year. Everything is already too expensive. So where are they supposed to find 6,500 extra dollars in their budget?

Another couple, from Butternut, WI, told me their premiums are going from \$400 per month to over \$5,000 per month. That is \$55,000 more a year. As they wrote to me, "healthcare tax breaks are not just numbers on paper. They are a lifeline that allows us to

sleep at night, knowing that we won't lose everything if one of us gets sick."

Behind every one of the 22 million Americans who rely on these tax credits is a story, a family who has to put together a budget, who has to make the hard decisions of what they can afford for their family next year. Some are logging on to healthcare.gov right now and finding that they simply can't afford health insurance next year. That is unconscionable.

Addressing this demands that we act now—not in a week, not next month, but now.

That is why a handshake deal with my Republican colleagues to reopen the government and no guarantee to actually lower costs is simply not good enough. The people I work for need more than that. They need healthcare that they can afford, not a symbolic vote.

For over a year now, I have been fighting to get a bill passed to avoid this very situation and make these tax credits permanent. My colleagues and I have tried every which way to get this bill passed. Every time, my Republican colleagues kill the effort and put 22 million Americans on the path to pay more for healthcare next year.

For 41 days, I have been clear. I will work with anyone to reopen the government and lower Americans' healthcare costs. And I am not throwing in the towel until we have exhausted every option to make that happen.

That is why I have offered an amendment to extend tax breaks for Americans who buy their insurance through the Affordable Care Act for 1 year. My amendment is as straightforward as it gets. It would extend current law for 1 year, stop costs from skyrocketing for constituents, and give us time to negotiate on healthcare costs, without leaving 22 million Americans in the lurch.

Is this everything I think we should do? No. We should make healthcare more affordable for everyone forever. But I am willing to compromise to avoid catastrophe for families I work for.

I am demanding that we take this vote so that we can actually provide some relief to millions of American families. The American people are desperate for healthcare that they can afford and demand that we do everything in our power to lower costs. This is a tool in my toolbox to try to lower their costs. So I am using it.

I have talked to so many of my Republican colleagues who want to do something here, who want to keep healthcare costs down for their constituents, who know their constituents in red States and districts will be hardest hit.

Well, now is the time to show it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. BALDWIN. My sincere hope is that the Republicans join me so I can make this amendment to the continuing resolution and let 22 million

Americans rest easier. I hope my Republican colleagues choose to join us.

And now I yield to Senator SANDERS. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Wisconsin for offering this important and very simple and straightforward amendment. Nothing can be simpler.

Are you prepared, I say to my Republican friends, to sit back and allow over 20 million Americans to see a doubling of their healthcare premiums?

In my State of Vermont, people who are 65, 63 years of age will, in some cases, see a tripling or quadrupling. And that is the case in your States as well.

All that Senator BALDWIN is saying is: Let us take a deep breath. Let us make sure that people do not see an outrageous increase in their premiums. Let us not pave the way for 15 million Americans to lose their healthcare entirely because of savage cuts to Medicaid. That is all she is asking.

Now, I notice that recently, some of my Republican colleagues are beginning to talk about the healthcare crisis. Well, during Trump's first 4 years, he had virtually nothing to say about the crisis, and nothing to say about it in the next 4 years. But I am glad that there is some discussion.

The truth of the matter is, in my view, that the current healthcare system is broken, it is dysfunctional, and it is cruel.

But I want to ask my Republican friends a simple question: Are you happy with the fact that here in the United States, we are the only major country not to guarantee healthcare to every man, woman, and child?

We are unique. That is not the kind of exceptionalism we should be proud of.

Are you happy that we are paying twice as much per capita for healthcare, over \$14,000 per person, more than any other major country, and yet we have 85 million Americans who are uninsured or underinsured?

Are you content with the fact that the insurance companies and the drug companies are making huge profits, paying their CEOs exorbitant salaries? Are you happy with that?

Are you happy that patients in America have to get on the phone and fight like crazy and deal with all kinds of bureaucrats in order to get the healthcare that they paid for in an incredibly complicated, broken system?

So if you want to have a debate about healthcare, let's have that debate. I happen to believe that we should join the rest of the industrialized world, guarantee healthcare to all people through a Medicare-for-all, single-payer system.

You got a better idea? Bring it forward. But what we should agree upon is that you don't raise premiums by 100 percent or, in some cases, triple or quadruple.

Let's take a deep breath. Let's extend these ACA subsidies for another

year. Let's have that debate on healthcare. That is what the American people want.

Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Michigan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Ms. BALDWIN's amendment on a clean 1-year extension on the healthcare.gov credits.

Since July, I have been really clear. If you want me to vote on a deal, it has got to do something to bring down the cost of healthcare because of the healthcare crisis that Republicans in this Chamber precipitated back in July.

Just to review the bidding, in July, the Big Beautiful Bill, which all of you voted for—most of you voted for—slashed Medicaid and slashed coverage for people on healthcare.gov. Now, all our hospitals, all our healthcare systems, all our nursing homes—everybody—accepted that and started to plan.

In response to that, the hospitals said: Well, look, people are still going to come. They are still going to get into car accidents. They are still going to have heart attacks. They are just not going to be covered by health insurance. So we are going to have to charge the people with insurance even more money.

So we are now at this point. This crisis that has been precipitated has led to the fact that every single American—everyone watching, everyone listening—is either facing losing their health insurance or paying more, and that includes people on private, employer-provided insurance.

When we take a step back and we look at all the people that are going to fall off healthcare, all the healthy young people that are not going to pay for healthcare anymore, it looks like—across, at least, my State—every single person is looking at their prices doubling, not just the people who are affected by the Big Beautiful Bill but the bill payers, the people on private health insurance.

No one in this room would say that we are paying too little for healthcare right now.

And I don't always agree with Senator SANDERS, but I can say there is no more broken system in America than healthcare right now. It needs full rebuilding. We may disagree on some of the ways to do it, but the Republicans offered zero plan, zero ideas. Hell, MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE is talking about how Republican don't have a plan. I never thought I would be agreeing with her.

So, today, all we are asking for is a clean 1-year extension. No one says ObamaCare is perfect. No one says a clean extension is perfect.

But you pushed people back into a corner. You have said we are going to pay for our tax cuts on the backs of everyday Americans by using their healthcare as the bill payer.

So can we do a 1-year extension, please, so that we can have some kind of conversation—a real conversation—that the American people expect people of our stature to be having? Can we have that conversation over the next year, but not, in some cases, have people's health insurance go up by 600 percent? That is what you have precipitated.

So to every American watching, whether you are on healthcare.gov or you are on private insurance, if you are getting those letters, if you are getting those notifications of an increase of your bill of \$200, \$500, \$800 starting January 1, my peers on the other side of the aisle are the ones—you should lay it at their feet because they have put us in this place. And if they vote tonight against this, it is because they don't give a crap about the cost of your healthcare. They don't give one single crap about it.

So I hope my colleagues find it in their hearts to say: Let's fix the system, fine. But at least for now, give us a 1-year extension so we can have a real conversation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

MOTION TO TABLE

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I move to table amendment No. 3947 for the purposes of offering my amendment to extend ACA tax credits for 1 year. That is Baldwin No. 3950.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

VOTE ON MOTION

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

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 612 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Luján	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	

NAYS—53

Banks	Crapo	Hyde-Smith
Barrasso	Cruz	Johnson
Blackburn	Curtis	Justice
Boozman	Daines	Kennedy
Britt	Ernst	Lankford
Budd	Fischer	Lee
Capito	Graham	Lummis
Cassidy	Grassley	Marshall
Collins	Hagerty	McConnell
Cornyn	Hawley	McCormick
Cotton	Hoeven	Moody
Cramer	Husted	Moran

Moreno	Rounds	Thune
Mullin	Schmitt	Tillis
Murkowski	Scott (FL)	Tuberville
Paul	Scott (SC)	Wicker
Ricketts	Sheehy	Young
Risch	Sullivan	

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Oregon.

MOTION TO TABLE AMENDMENT NO. 3946

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I want to provide an opportunity tonight for us all to stand up for the Constitution, one of the most important powers that we have here as a Congress, and that is the ability to design a program and to fund a program. And once that has been signed into law by a President of the United States, it is the law of the land. The President has the responsibility to execute that program as designed and funded.

But back in 1974, we decided to give the President a fast track to propose that something we have designed and funded should be unfunded. It is called a rescission, a fancy name for us acting to unfund a program we previously had put in place.

And here is the thing, that law, the Budget Act of 1974, says that it takes an affirmative vote of the Senate and of the House of Representatives to unfund the program that is already in law.

But an unexpected challenge has emerged, and that unexpected challenge is that if the request from the President to unfund the program comes within 45 days of the end of the year, even if we were to act and turn down the rescission, it still means that, under a grace period in the law, the funds evaporate at the end of the year. So in other words, with no approval from the House or Senate, no new law being passed, the existing law is undone on the clock. It is like—well, it is like Cinderella's coach. It reaches midnight, and the coach becomes a pumpkin. It falls apart. It disappears.

That is a threat that goes fundamentally to the difference between a democracy and an autocracy. In a democracy, we come together with all of our varied experiences, with all of our different parts of the country, and we say: Here are programs and funding that fit our Nation as a whole. It is a master compromise. But in an authoritarian government, one person decides what is funded and what isn't. And that is what happens in this special power when it is submitted within 45 days of the end of the fiscal year.

So however much one may like or dislike a given President in power, support or oppose, all of us have a responsibility to stand up for our constitutional power of the purse; that all of America will be served by the laws we pass and that if they are to be undone, they have to be voted on by this Chamber and the Chamber down the hall in an affirmative fashion.

So I will, at the appropriate moment a minute or two from now, propose at that point to table an amendment that is in the tree so we can submit an

amendment that will defend our Constitution, defend article I power, defend our democracy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent that the remaining rolcall votes be 10 minutes in length.

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

There will now be 2 minutes of debate, equally divided.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I will be happy to give a portion of that equally divided by saying simply this: None of us are well served by a situation where the President decides to cancel programs based on the President's preferences. That is not a democracy.

And whether it is this President or a future President, we need to have these rescission requests submitted in time for us to take action as the law requires.

So submitting them with enough time to spare at the end of the fiscal year for us to vote up or down is the right thing to do. It protects our constitutional power to design and fund programs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

The Senator from Oregon.

VOTE ON MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. MERKLEY. I move to table amendment No. 3946 for the purpose of offering my amendment No. 3948 to defend our constitutional power of the purse and the importance of our democracy in ensuring that what we put into law stays in law unless we choose to change it.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 613 Leg.]

YEAS—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
Gallago	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

NAYS—53

Banks	Britt	Collins
Barrasso	Budd	Cornyn
Blackburn	Capito	Cotton
Boozman	Cassidy	Cramer

Crapo	Justice
Cruz	Kennedy
Curtis	Lankford
Daines	Lee
Ernst	Lummis
Fischer	Marshall
Graham	McConnell
Grassley	McCormick
Hagerty	Moody
Hawley	Moran
Hoeven	Moreno
Husted	Mullin
Hyde-Smith	Murkowski
Johnson	Paul

Ricketts
Risch
Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Sheehy
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

AMENDMENT NO. 3941

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, instead of a clean CR, this bill contains language that has been air-dropped in that will destroy hemp farming in Kentucky and across the United States.

Tucked away on page 163, title VII, division B of this spending package is a provision that will shut down the hemp industry across the United States. My amendment would strip the provision designed to regulate the hemp industry to death.

The bill as it now stands overrides the regulatory frameworks of several States, cancels the collective decisions of hemp consumers, and destroys the livelihoods of hemp farmers. And it couldn't come at a worse time for America farmers. Times are tough for our farmers. Farmers' costs have increased as the price of fertilizer and machinery have jumped, while prices for their crops, like soybean, corn, and wheat, have declined.

For many farmers, hemp has proved to be a lifeline, a new cash crop. Farmers turn to growing hemp to mitigate the losses they endured during this season of hardship. But that lifeline may soon be extinguished by this very legislation.

The effective hemp ban included in this spending package is a result, we are told, of bad actors skirting the legal limits by overly enhancing the concentration of THC in their products. The hemp industry, myself, and others have come together, and we have been willing to negotiate to get rid of the bad actors. Yet, instead, we are met with legislation that would be prohibition.

Members of the industry, myself, and others who are advocates of this have been willing to get rid of synthetic cannabinoids, willing to compromise at every turn, but we are met with the numbers in this bill, which will eradicate the hemp industry.

For the last several weeks, we have offered proposals with the goal of creating an environment in which the hemp industry could thrive and sell products, and we have been met with those who want to prohibit the industry from continuing.

This bill's per-serving THC content limit would make illegal any hemp product that contains more than 0.4 milligrams. That would be nearly 100 percent of the existing market. The numbers put forward in this bill will eliminate 100 percent of the hemp prod-

ucts in our country. That amounts to an effective ban because the limit is so low that the products intended to manage pain or anxiety will lose their effect.

The States have done what they are supposed to. The States have instituted laws. Twenty-three States have instituted laws on hemp. None of them have limits anywhere close to what is being proposed in this bill. So what will happen is most of the things that your States have regulated, are regulating, and have made legal will be made illegal by this bill. This bill will effectively preempt and nullify all State laws concerning hemp.

Currently, Maine limits THC to 3 milligrams per serving; that will be overruled. My home State limits THC to 5 milligrams in beverages; that will be overruled. Minnesota, Utah, and Louisiana also have 5 milligrams per serving. Alabama and Georgia have 10 milligrams. Tennessee has 15 milligrams. The bill before us nullifies all these State laws and makes the hemp industry kaput.

The language in this bill will outlaw all current hemp plants and seeds. It changes the definition of what a hemp plant is. It makes it so low that there may not even be an existing plant that can meet the parameters. But every plant in the country will have to be destroyed. Every hemp seed in the country will have to be destroyed. This is the most thoughtless, ignorant proposal to an industry that I have seen in a long, long time.

The States have made progress, and more progress is coming. Most States have age limits.

To add insult to injury, we are given this legislation in an appropriations bill. We have Senate rules against this.

So I would recommend that we vote for this amendment, and my amendment would strip out the language.

I would transfer the remainder of my time to Senator MERKLEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. I really ask my colleagues, particularly on this side, to hear me out on this.

The Senators from Kentucky and Oregon cooperated to create the first research on hemp. We cooperated to give the first opportunity to move research seeds across State lines. We cooperated and pushed to create hemp as a legitimate agricultural product.

CBD derived from hemp has been approved by the FDA for treating seizures. It is a legal medicine. We would wipe out an industry that we have spent more than a decade creating.

The advocates for this language that is in the bill will tell you this won't affect CBD. Every expert I have consulted has said that that is exactly wrong; that this will, in fact, wipe out 95 to 99 percent of the industry.

My colleague from Kentucky is exactly right. We asked our farmers to engage in this research, and we asked them to build this industry. We should protect it for CBD.

I support my other colleague from Kentucky, who doesn't want intoxicated products produced from hemp. The definition that is in this bill does far more than that, and it has to be fixed. So, for now, it needs to be stripped out.

Please support Senator PAUL's position.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the language I helped secure in the Agriculture appropriations bill addresses a serious concern regarding the manufacturing and selling of unregulated, intoxicating THC products nationwide.

I led the effort to legalize industrial hemp through the 2014 pilot program and the 2018 farm bill. Unfortunately, companies have exploited a loophole in the 2018 legislation by taking legal amounts of THC from hemp and turning it into intoxicating substances and then marketing it to children in candylike packaging and selling it in easily accessible places like gas stations and convenience stores all across our country. So the children end up being the unknowing consumers of these poisonous products and being sent to the hospital at an alarming rate.

My efforts to close this loophole and stop this from happening are included in this appropriations package. It will keep these dangerous products out of the hands of children while preserving the hemp industry for farmers. Industrial hemp and CBD will remain legal for industrial applications—such as seed, stock, fiber, grain oil—or will be used in drug trials. This language merely clarifies the original intent of the 2018 farm bill, rooting out the bad actors and protecting the growing hemp industry.

While some may masquerade as advocates for hemp farmers, even sometimes threatening to hold up government funding over this issue, I will continue to work on behalf of Kentucky's farmers while protecting our children not only in my State but in yours as well. I would urge my colleagues to do the same.

VOTE ON MOTION TO TABLE

Therefore, I move to table Senate amendment No. 3941, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

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

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 76, nays 24, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 614 Leg.]

YEAS—76

Alsobrooks	Blunt Rochester	Cantwell
Banks	Boozman	Capito
Barrasso	Britt	Cassidy
Blackburn	Budd	Collins

Coons	Husted	Ricketts
Cornyn	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cortez Masto	Johnson	Rosen
Cotton	Justice	Rounds
Cramer	Kennedy	Schiff
Crapo	Kim	Schmitt
Curtis	King	Scott (FL)
Daines	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Duckworth	Lee	Shaheen
Durbin	Lujan	Sheehy
Ernst	Lummis	Slotkin
Fetterman	Marshall	Sullivan
Fischer	McConnell	Thune
Gillibrand	McCormick	Tillis
Graham	Moody	Tuberville
Grassley	Moran	Van Hollen
Hagerty	Moreno	Warner
Hassan	Mullin	Whitehouse
Hawley	Murkowski	Wicker
Heinrich	Murray	Young
Hirono	Padilla	
Hoeven	Reed	

NAYS—24

Baldwin	Kelly	Sanders
Bennet	Klobuchar	Schatz
Blumenthal	Markey	Schumer
Booker	Merkley	Smith
Cruz	Murphy	Warnock
Gallego	Ossoff	Warren
Hickenlooper	Paul	Welch
Kaine	Peters	Wyden

The motion was agreed to.

(Mr. HUSTED assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I yield back all remaining time.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on substitute amendment No. 3937 to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, James Lankford, Shelley Moore Capito, James E. Risch, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lisa Murkowski, Katie Boyd Britt, Pete Ricketts, Jon Husted, Roger Marshall, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Sheehy, Jerry Moran, Susan M. Collins.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 3937 to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 60, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 615 Leg.]

YEAS—60

Banks	Blackburn	Britt
Barrasso	Boozman	Budd

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

NAYS—40

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 60, the nays are 40.

Three-fifths of the Senators, duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

AMENDMENTS WITHDRAWN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the motion to commit and the amendments pending thereto fall.

Under the previous order, the pending amendments, other than the substitute amendment No. 3937, are withdrawn and all postcloture time is expired.

The amendments were withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question occurs on the substitute amendment.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I yield back all debate time.

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

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 3937

The question is on adoption of the amendment.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 60, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 616 Leg.]

YEAS—60

Banks	Cramer	Hassan
Barrasso	Crapo	Hawley
Blackburn	Cruz	Hoeven
Boozman	Curtis	Husted
Britt	Daines	Hyde-Smith
Budd	Durbin	Johnson
Capito	Ernst	Justice
Cassidy	Fetterman	Kaine
Collins	Fischer	Kennedy
Cornyn	Graham	King
Cortez Masto	Grassley	Lankford
Cotton	Hagerty	Lee

Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
McCormick
Moody
Moran
Moreno
Mullin

Murkowski
Ricketts
Risch
Rosen
Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)

Shaheen
Sheehy
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

NAYS—40

Alsobrooks
Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Blunt Rochester
Booker
Cantwell
Coons
Duckworth
Gallo
Gillibrand
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono

Kelly
Kim
Klobuchar
Lujan
Markey
Merkley
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Paul
Peters
Reed
Sanders

Schatz
Schiff
Schumer
Slotkin
Smith
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden

McCormick
Moody
Moran
Moreno
Mullin
Murkowski
Ricketts

Risch
Rosen
Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Shaheen

Sheehy
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

NAYS—40

Alsobrooks
Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Blunt Rochester
Booker
Cantwell
Coons
Duckworth
Gallo
Gillibrand
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono

Kelly
Kim
Klobuchar
Lujan
Markey
Merkley
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Paul
Peters
Reed
Sanders

Schatz
Schiff
Schumer
Slotkin
Smith
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden

Moreno
Mullin
Murkowski
Ricketts
Risch
Rosen

Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Shaheen
Sheehy

Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

NAYS—40

Alsobrooks
Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Blunt Rochester
Booker
Cantwell
Coons
Duckworth
Gallo
Gillibrand
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono

Kelly
Kim
Klobuchar
Lujan
Markey
Merkley
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Paul
Peters
Reed
Sanders

Schatz
Schiff
Schumer
Slotkin
Smith
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden

The amendment (No. 3937) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield back all debate time.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes, as amended.

John Thune, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, James Lankford, Shelley Moore Capito, James E. Risch, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lisa Murkowski, Katie Boyd Britt, Pete Ricketts, Jon A. Husted, Roger Marshall, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Sheehy, Jerry Moran, Susan M. Collins.

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 Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, a bill making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes, as amended, shall be brought to a close.

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 60, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 617 Leg.]

YEAS—60

Banks
Barrasso
Blackburn
Boozman
Britt
Budd
Capito
Cassidy
Collins
Cornyn
Cortez Masto
Cotton
Cramer

Crapo
Cruz
Curtis
Daines
Durbin
Ernst
Fetterman
Fischer
Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hassan
Hawley

Hoeven
Husted
Hyde-Smith
Johnson
Justice
Kaine
Kennedy
King
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 60, the nays are 40.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I want to thank all of our colleagues for their hard work on this bill. I am excited about its impending passage. I hope that will mean that we will immediately reopen government as soon as the House acts and the President signs it into law.

I am also very pleased that we were able to fully fund three appropriations bills that passed with overwhelming bipartisan support on August 1.

I thank my colleagues. I know of no other requests for time.

I yield back the remaining time.

VOTE ON H.R. 5371, AS AMENDED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will read the bill by title for the third time.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 60, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 618 Leg.]

YEAS—60

Banks
Barrasso
Blackburn
Boozman
Britt
Budd
Capito
Cassidy
Collins
Cornyn
Cortez Masto
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo

Cruz
Curtis
Daines
Durbin
Ernst
Fetterman
Fischer
Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hassan
Hawley
Hoeven
Husted

Hyde-Smith
Johnson
Justice
Kaine
Kennedy
King
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
McCormick
Moody
Moran

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 60, the nays are 40. The bill, as amended, is passed.

The bill (H.R. 5371), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The Senator from Maine.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I just want to reiterate my gratitude for my colleagues, our staff who report night and day, literally, and to all of those who have brought us to this point.

We are going to reopen government. We are going to ensure that Federal employees, whether they were furloughed or laid off or forced to work without pay, will now receive compensation that they have earned and deserve.

And we will also be able to celebrate on Veterans Day tomorrow the fact that we have passed the appropriations bill for the VA.

This would not have come about without the work of so many people—too numerous to mention. But I do want to thank my fellow appropriators, particularly the chairs of the three committees—Senator BOOZMAN, Senator HOEVEN, and Senator MULLIN—for their hard work.

I want to thank our House counterparts, particularly Chairman COLE, who worked night and day with us on getting conference agreements.

And our Democratic colleagues who courageously realized that we could not let this shutdown continue to go on with the harmful consequences growing worse with each passing day.

I also want to particularly thank my staff. They literally went without sleep and worked continuously to do all that needed to be done.

I want to thank Leader THUNE and Leader BARRASSO for their hard work and the work of their staff as well.

My list of gratitude could go on and on, but the hour is getting late, and I do want people to be able to go home for the night and home-home, finally.

Again, I think this is a great victory for the American people. It shows that the Senate can work; that we can produce the results that are needed.

I want to give a shout-out to Senator KATIE BRITT, who is here this evening—

she helped in so many ways with the negotiations— and Senator SHAHEEN, Senator KAINE, Senator ANGUS KING, my colleague, and the rest of the eight Democrats who were willing to cross party lines for the good of the people of this country.

So thank you, Mr. President, for all that has been done and for your personal participation as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this has been a very long road—quite literally, the longest shutdown in history. I am very, very happy to be able to say that we are coming to the end.

Before we close today, I want to take the time to say thank you to my staff, who have worked around the clock tirelessly now for the past 6 weeks; to the staff of the Appropriations Committee, who have played a critical role in getting us to where we are today; to the Cloakroom staff; to every Senate staffer on both sides of the aisle, who has spent 41 days coming into work without pay; to the custodial staff, who, again without pay, have kept this building and the Senate office buildings livable; to all institutional staff, without whom this place would not run; to the Secretary of the Senate and everyone in her office; the Sergeant at Arms and her team; the Architect of the Capitol and his staff; and everyone on the floor right now making this session happen; and to the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police, who have shown up during this shutdown day in and day out to protect the rest of us. I am humbled by and grateful for your service.

I know that the strain of these weeks has been immense, and you all have families, rent to meet, bills to pay, car and mortgage payments. I am grateful for all you have done to keep the Senate running and for all that you do every day, shutdown or no shutdown, to serve the Senate and to serve our country.

With that, after 6 excruciating weeks, I will stop talking and let all of you get some rest.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 515.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ho Nieh, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2029.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 515, Ho Nieh, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2029.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, John Barasso, John R. Curtis, Ted Budd, Mike Rounds, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tommy Tuberville, Jon Husted, Bernie Moreno, Steve Daines, Deb Fischer, Jim Justice, Kevin Cramer, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, David McCormick.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 464.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Donald Korb, of Ohio, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 464, Donald Korb, of Ohio, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, John Barasso, John R. Curtis, Ted Budd, Mike Rounds, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tommy Tuberville, Jon Husted, Bernie Moreno, Steve Daines, Deb Fischer, Jim Justice, Kevin Cramer, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, David McCormick.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

PAUL AMENDMENT NO. 3941

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today I voted yes on the motion to table Senator PAUL's amendment No. 3941 to strike a provision modifying the definition of hemp from the Agriculture Appropriations Act because I am concerned that existing Federal law creates the opportunity for unregulated and intoxicating synthetic hemp products to be marketed and sold to children. Current Maryland law bans these products, but without Federal action, they can still be distributed in our State. The language in the underlying bill would close that loophole while the Paul amendment would leave the loophole in place.

While I support closing the loophole that allows these intoxicating products to be marketed and sold to children, we should use the implementation period in the bill to ensure a sustainable pathway forward for safe hemp products like CBD, which many people depend on to safely manage pain and other health conditions. We ultimately need balanced, science-based regulation that preserves access to safe products while protecting public health.

VERMONT HEALTHCARE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the following printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

RUTLAND, VERMONT—RESOLUTION REGARDING PROPOSED FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS AND VERMONT'S HEALTH CARE CRISIS

Whereas, health-care organizations are among Vermont's largest employers, and reductions in federal health funding will likely have negative ripple effects on local economies, workforce stability, lead to service reductions, and limit access to care; and

Whereas, Vermont's health-care system is financially fragile, with several rural hospitals operating at or below break-even levels, and experts warn that further reductions in federal Medicaid support could force providers to reduce services, delay investments, or close certain programs; and

Whereas, the federal Budget Reconciliation Act enacted on July 4, 2025, is projected by the Congressional Budget Office and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities to reduce federal Medicaid funding by more than \$1 trillion over ten years, shifting significant costs to states and threatening health coverage for millions of Americans; and

Whereas, analyses by the Medicare Rights Center indicate that the same law would reduce hundreds of billions of dollars in Medicare funding, creating uncertainty for older