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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.

Eternal God, who transforms common days into transfiguring and redemptive moments, continue to guide our lawmakers with Your might. Make our Senators courageous enough for these momentous times as they seek to live worthy of Your great Name. Lord, guide them around life's pitfalls, bringing them through the darkness to the light. May they not trust in their wisdom or power but rely on You to keep them secure. Cleanse the fountains of their hearts, as Your Spirit inspires them to glorify You.

We pray in Your matchless 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. MULLIN). 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.

### EPSTEIN FILES TRANSPARENCY ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate having

received from the House H.R. 4405, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the bill, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4405) to require the Attorney General to release all documents and records in possession of the Department of Justice relating to Jeffrey Epstein, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bill is considered read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The bill (H.R. 4405) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The great Senator from Iowa.

### LUNG CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. One in eighteen people receives a lung cancer diagnosis during their lifetime. Twelve percent of the diagnoses have had no tobacco exposure. This disease impacts hundreds of thousands of families across our country.

My friend Marlys Carlson of Stratford, IA, finished her battle with lung cancer in July of this year and is now with her Lord and Savior. I want to raise awareness for lung cancer in her honor today.

I yield the floor.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 136, H.R. 4016.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 136, H.R. 4016, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have spoken a lot over the years about the need for a strong military. I believe that keeping cutting-edge responsibilities we have in America at the cutting edge of military capabilities is one of the most important responsibilities we have in Congress. I often say that if we don't get national security right, the rest is conversation.

The need for a strong national defense has been put into stark relief over the last few years as the world has grown more dangerous and as we have seen serious gaps in our own preparedness. And after 4 years of underinvestment during the Biden administration, Republicans made it clear that we would work to put our military back on the right track by investing in modernization to ensure our military is ready for today's threats and tomorrow's.

We have followed through on that promise since taking office at the beginning of this year. That began with a major investment in our military capabilities in the One Big Beautiful Bill. We also prioritized passing the Senate's National Defense Authorization Act, which includes significant reforms to weapons-buying as well as more than 100 amendments adopted through regular order on the Senate floor.

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



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This week, we continue those efforts with the Defense appropriations bill, which will provide the resources to continue our mission of rebuilding our military capabilities. That starts with the men and women serving in uniform.

This bill funds a 3.8-percent pay raise for our troops, and it supports military members and their families with investments in housing, childcare, and education for military families. It also funds bonuses that will, hopefully, help to ensure that we can sustain the record-setting recruitment success we have had this year, a complete turnaround, I might add, from recruitment challenges of the not-so-distant past.

The Defense funding bill makes critical investments that will help ensure our servicemembers have the military capabilities that they need to meet the challenges of the 21st century. That includes funding shipbuilding efforts and expanding our Air Force fleet, accelerating delivery of the Golden Dome for America, and investing in munitions, drones, and emerging technologies.

I do want to emphasize, though, that while this bill and the One Big Beautiful Bill make important investments in rebuilding our military, this can't be a one-time exercise. These are the types of investments that we will need to sustain in the coming years if we want our enemies to think twice before attacking us.

I appreciate the work that our colleagues have done to produce a robust funding bill. This bill reflects the priorities and input of a lot of Senators, and it has garnered significant bipartisan support coming out of the Appropriations Committee by a vote of 26 to 3. And it is not the only one.

The Appropriations Committee, under the leadership of Chair COLLINS, has advanced a number of bipartisan full-year funding bills. We have already brought three of those bills to the floor under an open process.

We passed them in August, the earliest the Senate has passed appropriations bills since 2018, and that package was signed into law last week.

That is how the appropriations process is supposed to work. Unfortunately, that is not how it was working the last few years under the Democrat majority. So when I became majority leader, I made it clear that I wanted to get back to regular order. And as I said, we were making progress on that this year; that is, until Democrats needlessly chose to shut down the government.

Before the shutdown, we were getting ready to bring the Defense funding bill to the floor. We just needed a few more weeks under a continuing resolution so we could finish our work. But Democrats took advantage of the situation for leverage, and they kept the government shut down and appropriations work halted for 43 days.

Despite their recent actions, I know a number of my Democrat colleagues

do share Republicans' interest in seeing regular order restored. Well, now it is time to act like it.

As I said before, during and now after the shutdown, this is our chance for regular order. We don't have time to waste. We have already wasted a lot of time on a completely avoidable government shutdown.

Let's get to work.

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.

JEFFREY EPSTEIN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, with near unanimity, the House and Senate agreed to pass legislation to compel Donald Trump to release the Epstein files. A few hours after the House voted, I came to the floor and got unanimous consent for the Senate to immediately pass this bill, and a few moments ago, the Senate received the Epstein bill from the House. We are glad the House has sent us the bill, and this means it will get to the President's desk quickly.

After months of waiting, months of Republican delay, after so many failed attempts from Donald Trump to hide the truth, the Epstein Files Transparency Act is headed to his desk. And, again, this is a very important moment for so many people whose lives have been destroyed by Jeffrey Epstein and his circle of abusers and monsters.

So I want to thank, again, all the advocates, the survivors, and the victims groups who raised their voices, who spoke courageously about the need for accountability, and pushed Congress to take action.

It is a shame that so many Republicans, Donald Trump, and Republican leaders in Congress tried for months to prevent the truth from coming out. Republican leaders had to be dragged kicking and screaming to get this bill over the finish line. Left to their own devices, these Republican leaders would have never let the bill see the light of day. But that shows you how powerful this issue is, and it shows you that when a strong group of people—they may be a small group, but with moral right on their side, with great conviction—they can get to the truth and move that desire forward.

But I want to be very clear: The job is not done. The vote is not the end. It is only the beginning. Once the President signs the bill, he must apply and execute it faithfully. There must be no funny business from Donald Trump. He must not use the excuse of frivolous investigations to release some Epstein documents while intentionally hiding others that deserve to be seen by the American public.

This is not an invitation for Donald Trump to pick and choose his version of the truth. This bill is a command for the President to be fully transparent, to come fully clean, and to provide full honesty to the American people, even if he doesn't want to.

So I want to be clear: Anything less than full transparency will be unacceptable in the eyes of the American people.

If Donald Trump refuses to comply, if he refuses to obey the law, Senate Democrats will hold him accountable. We will exercise oversight. We will demand transparency. We will make it clear to the American people that Donald Trump has broken his promise to come clean on Jeffrey Epstein.

INFLATION

Mr. President, now on costs and the high cost of living that American people are facing, 2 weeks ago, the American people, not only in New Jersey and Virginia but across the country, sent their loudest message yet that they are fed up—just fed up—with the high cost of living.

Nearly 6 in 10 Americans say Donald Trump's top priority right now should be lowering prices, and no other issue comes close. A Marist poll released this morning shows the American people know precisely who is fighting for them and who is making life more difficult, because the most important issue keeping Americans up at night right now can be summed up in one word: costs—or in three words: cost of living. And that is exactly the issue Donald Trump and Republicans have ignored and even made worse.

Now, just yesterday, Donald Trump posted on Truth Social that he will never sign an extension of the ACA enhanced premium tax credits, and we know, if they expire, people's cost for healthcare, so vital to American families, is going to go up—\$500 a month, \$1,000 a month, \$20,000 a year. How are families going to pay for that? And faced with the Hobson's choice of cutting back on everything else dramatically or having no healthcare for their families, Americans will hate that choice. And that is why we are fighting so hard for them.

Donald Trump says to the American people: Drop dead. That is his message in the middle of the most stressful open enrollment period, perhaps ever—just incredibly out of touch.

So Republicans can ignore high costs at not just their own political peril but also to the immense detriment of American families.

That is who they are hurting, which is why Democrats will keep the fight going. It is why we Democrats have worked for months and continue to fight every day to do something about people's healthcare costs. It is why Democrats have fought relentlessly and continue to fight relentlessly against Donald Trump's "Big Ugly Bill." It is why Democrats have demanded that Republicans work with us to extend the premium tax credits. We

will fight to lower people's healthcare costs. We will fight to bring down rent, bring down people's electric bill, and make groceries more affordable.

Donald Trump may think affordability is some kind of Democratic "con job," as he derisively called it, but the opposite is true: Americans are fed up with high costs, and they need a lifeline while Donald Trump is tossing them an anchor.

#### VENEZUELA

Mr. President, on Venezuela, last week, Donald Trump said he is "sort of decided" on his military strategy on Venezuela. This follows Trump sending our largest U.S. aircraft carrier and thousands of U.S. sailors and marines to the Caribbean, as part of the largest military buildup in this hemisphere in decades. Yet Congress has gotten very few answers from the Trump administration about this rapid and potentially dangerous escalation.

In fact, on multiple occasions, I have directed Secretary Rubio to explain their escalatory actions toward Venezuela, but, so far, I have received very little from him.

So, today, I am renewing my call on Secretary Rubio to provide an all-Senators classified briefing on this military buildup and the reported plans for military operations in Venezuela.

To date, the Trump administration has failed its duty under the law to consult with Congress on preparations for military action in Venezuela. We have heard no clear goals. We have heard no clear timeline. We have heard no clear explanation for what Donald Trump's ultimate objective is in the region, and military action could risk the lives of thousands of U.S. servicemembers and destabilize the entire region.

Make no mistake, the Maduro regime is horrific, undemocratic, and the United States should be strong in using all legal tools against drug traffickers who poison Americans with deadly narcotics. But the last thing Americans want right now is another endless war. The last thing Americans need is Donald Trump bumbling the United States into a war with Venezuela.

So, again, I am calling on the Trump administration and Secretary Rubio to provide an all-Senators classified briefing on current military planning for operations in Venezuela.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

#### INFLATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today having just heard the minority leader talk about affordability. What I didn't hear him talk about are any of the things he would reverse from the 4 years of the Biden administration that brought us the high prices that we are facing today.

Republicans are attacking the affordability crisis. We are tackling it head-on. It was created by reckless spending and higher taxes during the Biden administration—an indisputable fact.

Those Democrat policies—and many Democrats in this body voted for them; we saw them—they led to the highest inflation in 40 years. In just 4 years, prices rose over 21 percent, and the cost of energy alone—and the Presiding Officer's State and mine are energy-producing States—the cost of energy for Americans went up 31 percent.

From the grocery store to the gas station, high prices stretched and strained and squeezed the budgets of working families all across America. That is why Joe Biden and the Democrats will go down in history as the party of high prices and open borders—indisputable.

Republicans are making our Nation safer and more prosperous. The economy is improving. Inflation has cooled. The economy is growing. Gas prices are now at the lowest they have been in 4 years. For the first time in years, wages are rising faster than prices. America is getting back on track.

Republicans are building on these results by ensuring that Americans get to keep more of the money they earn. That is why earlier this year we passed the Working Families Tax Cut Act.

In Wyoming alone, families can save \$2,400 a year because of the tax cuts. I heard about it when I was working with coal miners last Friday in Gillette, WY.

Waiters, barbers, and bartenders are going to keep about \$1,300 more each year in their pockets because of our policy of no tax on tips. Nurses and firefighters and police officers are going to keep about \$1,400 more this year because of no tax on overtime.

New parents now get a thousand-dollar Trump account for every newborn child. Parents can use this money to invest in their child's future. All parents are going to get a bigger child tax credit—\$2,200 per child this year.

Seniors are going to keep more of their hard-earned money as well in their Social Security. There is now a \$6,000 deduction on Social Security income.

All of these things are designed to keep more money in people's pockets. That is where it belongs.

On the other hand, Democrats voted for the highest tax increase in the history of this country—\$4 trillion. That is what they wanted to see.

Right now, today, Republicans are cutting, here in Congress, waste and reducing spending. We do this by restoring fiscal discipline and regular order, and we are doing it for the regular appropriations process.

Mr. President, you are part of that committee.

This is a far cry from where the Democrats were when they were in the majority. Remember last year—then, the majority leader was CHUCK SCHUMER, and at that time, he blocked every bipartisan appropriations bill that came out of committee, blocked each and every one of them, didn't allow a single one of them to come here to the floor of the U.S. Senate.

Earlier this year, the Senate passed 3 appropriations bills of the 12 total. They each received overwhelming bipartisan support in committee, and some had unanimous support. They were signed into law last week when President Trump reopened the government. Those bills provide care for our veterans. They support food assistance through the SNAP program. Forty-two million Americans rely on that program.

The Senate is now prepared to move forward on another five appropriations bills. They eliminate billions of dollars in wasteful Washington spending. At the same time, they modernize our military, they support our servicemembers, and they invest in our long-term security. They also invest in urgent transportation needs, in keeping our highways safe.

Importantly, these bills all have proven bipartisan support. Here are the vote totals: In the committee—29 members of the committee—in the committee, Defense, 26 to 3; Commerce, Justice, and Science, 19 to 10; Interior, 26 to 2; Labor and Health, 26 to 3; Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, 27 to 1. We are talking about bills that earned overwhelmingly bipartisan support in the Appropriations Committee. They deserve to earn similarly strong bipartisan support on this floor when they reach the Senate floor.

The government shutdown is now behind us. Many Democrats—and I heard them all talking about it this past Sunday on television—they wish the government were still shut down. They didn't seem to care that they caused pain and hunger and anxiety all across the country. They want to ignore the fact that it cost the American economy tens of billions of dollars in lost productivity.

Now the government is open again. Republicans are back to investing in the priorities of the American people. We are investing in priorities to make America safer and more prosperous. We are getting America back on track with affordable prices and lower taxes. Republicans are going to continue to put more money in the pockets and purses and paychecks of America's hard-working families because that is where it belongs.

S.J. RES. 89

Mr. President, on another matter, today, the U.S. Senate will take the first steps to undo a very harmful piece of the previous administration's reckless and radical barrage of runaway regulations.

Astonishingly, last year, the Biden administration finalized a rule that prohibited new coal leasing in the Powder River Basin in my home State of Wyoming. The idea was to force Wyoming to say goodbye to producing energy that is actually affordable, available, reliable, and abundant right here in America.

The Powder River Basin supplies about 45 percent of our Nation's coal.

Wyoming is America's leading producer of coal. Cutting off access to one of our strongest resources not only kills Wyoming jobs, it attacks Wyoming's economic lifeblood. And, of course, as you know, Mr. President, it surrenders America's greatest economic advantage, which is American energy.

Now I am very, very grateful to my colleague Senator CYNTHIA LUMMIS of Wyoming. She has led the charge in the Senate to overturn this Joe Biden abuse of power, and she did it using the Congressional Review Act.

I also want to thank our Congresswoman HARRIET HAGEMAN. She led this effort in the House of Representatives, and last night, the CRA passed that Chamber, and we will address it today.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution right here today on the Senate floor.

I commend President Trump and the Department of the Interior Secretary Doug Burgum for their strong support for Wyoming coal. Both President Trump and Secretary Burgum understand that national security starts with energy security and that affordability starts with affordable American energy. That is why the Trump administration is investing in clean American coal, and that is Wyoming coal.

This week, the Senate must reverse another one of the many bad Joe Biden runaway regulations. The one we are repealing today targeted affordable, reliable, and abundant American energy. That is proof that Republicans are getting America back on track.

I yield the floor.

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it has been a little over a year since President Trump was elected in his second term of office. The key part of the campaign and mandate was to secure the border and to reverse the disastrous open-border policies of the Biden administration.

As we see, President Trump is delivering on that campaign promise by implementing the very policies that the American people voted for, not to mention the fact that these policies and these laws were passed by Congress and signed into law, and our law enforcement Agencies are merely enforcing laws that Congress itself has passed.

The President is doing this by securing the United States-Mexican border to prevent more illegal aliens from coming into the country and also removing illegal aliens who entered our country during President Biden's open-border disaster.

Aggressive immigration enforcement is not unprecedented. President Obama, who has been praised by the left for unifying the country, deported more than 2½ million illegal immigrants, earning him the title "Deporter-in-Chief." Democrats seem to have forgotten this data point, but I am happy to remind them.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the progressive left in the Democratic Party these days has lost its mind in the face of enforcement of current immigration laws—again, which the American people voted for and Congress has passed. They haven't hesitated to spread misinformation and vilify the very men and women in law enforcement who are enforcing our immigration laws. These groups have not stopped spreading lies. They are actually inciting violent mobs to impede the enforcement of laws that Congress has passed.

Inciting mob violence against any law enforcement officer is unacceptable, and those who do so have to be held accountable. For this reason, I am holding a hearing, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, to examine these unfounded attacks on our law enforcement agents.

In particular, we will consider what is unfolding in America's so-called sanctuary cities.

Under President Biden, millions of unvetted illegal immigrants entered our country across the U.S.-Mexico border. These included criminal aliens, violent gang members, including MS-13, Tren de Aragua, and individuals on the Terror Watchlist that came not just from Mexico or Central America but from literally every corner of the world.

And where did they go after they crossed the border? These individuals found refuge primarily in America's sanctuary cities—places like Los Angeles, Portland, and Chicago.

According to the Center for Immigration Studies, there are currently 12 sanctuary States and more than 200 sanctuary cities in the United States. Many of these States and communities have passed laws that actually prevent local police officers from cooperating with Federal law enforcement officers employed by ICE, or Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

This means that, in some instances, these local law enforcement officers can't share information about detained or incarcerated aliens, or honor DHS—Department of Homeland Security—detainers placed on criminal aliens. So ICE, or Immigration and Customs Enforcement, has no alternative but to conduct raids on various sites to detain illegal aliens and then see that they are removed from the country.

So just to explain that a minute, when an illegal alien is arrested and placed in a local jail, if local authorities are allowed to and do, in fact, cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, that transfer from the local jail to the immigration officials can occur in the jail, and then ICE doesn't need to conduct dangerous raids in our communities in these sanctuary cities.

But in the sanctuary cities, that is not possible. They have no alternative, since there is no cooperation at the local level. So in those jurisdictions, in the so-called sanctuary cities, criminal

aliens are released back into their communities and inevitably reoffend—that means they commit other crimes—rather than being detained by the Department of Homeland Security and allowing them to take custody.

This practice not only defies common sense; it makes the role of immigration enforcement officers more difficult and, in the end, more painful for each of these communities.

I would hope, at least, that some of my colleagues across the aisle would agree that criminal aliens should be detained and deported. I am not sure they would agree with that. It seems, by their conduct and by their votes, they are suggesting that illegal aliens have just as much right to be in the United States as you and me.

So once these criminals are picked up off the streets and detained in jails, why wouldn't we want Federal law enforcement officers with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to be able to accept them, transfer them from the jail authorities to ICE custody, and then deport them?

Any alien who has already shown a complete disregard for U.S. law should not be allowed to stay in the United States.

Sanctuary cities, instead, have the practice of actually releasing these very people—sometimes dangerous people whom we all know should be first in line for deportation.

ICE would not have to go into communities and find criminal aliens if elected officials and local governments would simply cooperate with Federal law enforcement authorities. These cities could have facilitated enforcement the easy way, but, instead, they chose the hard way.

Instead of reporting this unfortunate reality truthfully, mainstream media outlets like CNN, MSNBC, and ABC have ignored the real harm that these criminal aliens have caused in these communities and instead directed their ire toward law enforcement. This is sort of a manifestation of what used to be called the "defund the police" movement, which has made so many communities in our States and Nation unsafe, because ICE, or Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials, which are employed by the Department of Homeland Security, are Federal law enforcement officials.

And, basically, when the mainstream media accuses them of what, in essence, is just doing their job, they are suggesting that the laws should not be enforced and that the fault, if there is fault, lies with the Federal law enforcement officers that are simply doing their job as mandated by Congress.

The mainstream media and Democratic elected officials have used incendiary rhetoric to fan the flames of public protest that are anything but "mostly peaceful." The result has been widespread assault on our law enforcement officers.

Protestors and criminal aliens have physically attacked them in some instances. They have rammed officers

with vehicles, thrown tear gas, smoke grenades, rocks, bottles, and even punched and shot at these law enforcement officers for simply doing their job.

Leftwing protestors have laid down on the street in an attempt to prevent vehicles belonging to law enforcement from entering or leaving detention facilities and even slashed government vehicle tires, all in an effort to prevent ICE and Customs and Border Protection from doing their job.

Officers have been pepper-sprayed, choked, punched, and injured to the point of hospitalization in some cases. These individuals who seem to be celebrated and certainly given a lot of publicity in the mainstream media, as if they were in the right—these groups have prevented the arrest and removal of criminals—documented criminals—including facilitating the escape, in one case, of a convicted child rapist who is now out there somewhere in the community at large.

The Democratic Party claims to be the party of the people, but when it comes to protecting the American people from violent gangs like Tren de Aragua, pedophiles, and rapists, they simply look the other way or claim that the fault lies with law enforcement, not the people who have already violated our laws.

Progressive activists have done everything they can imagine to impede immigration enforcement officers from carrying out their duty, including doxing them, putting their personal information on the Web, and even making death threats.

The leftwing media has been intent on giving this behavior a pass, but Senate Republicans will not give them a pass.

So I encourage all of my colleagues and all of my constituents back home in Texas to tune into the hearing that we intend to have this afternoon in the Senate Judiciary Committee. In this hearing, we will hear testimony from Sheriff Boyd, who will give an update on Texas's cooperation with immigration enforcement and how it protects their officers and local communities. Danielle Carter-Walters will offer insight into how leftwing policies are failing Chicago residents and other Americans living in sanctuary cities, and Mia Cathell, an investigative journalist from the Washington Examiner, will offer a journalist's perspective on how leftwing groups are funding these protests against ICE.

While the mainstream media, apparently, will stop at nothing to spread lies and vilify the very people who have sworn to uphold our laws, my Republican colleagues and I are not afraid to push back in order to let the American people know the truth.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from West Virginia.

#### ENERGY

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote on a motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 76, the CRA introduced by my colleague from California Senator SCHIFF to repeal the Trump EPA's interim final rule that extends the compliance deadlines for the Biden administration's stringent attack on oil and natural gas facilities.

Over the past 4 years, we witnessed an onslaught of regulation like nothing we have ever seen before—an attack that specifically targeted affordable and reliable sources of energy like oil and natural gas, among others. The purpose of these overbearing and in some cases outright illegal rules was clear: It was an attempt to shut down conventional energy in our country from sources the Democrats just don't like.

Through this barrage of overregulation, the Biden administration created record-high gas prices and a grid reliability crisis that our Nation must now address.

We must recognize that we are really in a critical moment for American energy. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation has found that over the next 10 years, due to a rise in energy consumption and the policy-driven retirement of our existing power generation, our country may face major electric reliability concerns. The Biden administration compounded these issues through regulations that sought to force a transition to unreliable, intermittent energy resources.

We must take action now to ensure that future electricity demand is met, and we can do this by continuing to produce natural gas.

Fracking and shale gas have revolutionized American energy, leading to lower prices, job growth, and increased energy security.

According to the Energy Information Administration, the rapid expansion of natural gas in the United States has decreased—decreased—the power sector's carbon dioxide emissions by over 35 percent in the last 20 years. Additionally, upstream oil and gas production reduced its methane emissions by more than 40 percent over the last 10 years.

Natural gas is an affordable, reliable, and clean source of energy, vital to reducing our emissions. We should be expanding production of this resource, not restricting it. Unfortunately, restriction is the purpose of this CRA.

This rule put in place by the Trump administration extends compliance deadlines for crude oil and natural gas facilities because the Biden EPA set standards that are simply unachievable.

In a time of energy uncertainty, my Democratic colleagues should be in

total support of expanding the use of natural gas. Instead, they are forcing a vote to increase our energy prices.

The CRA is an attempt to take us back to Biden-era energy policy, and I urge my colleagues to swiftly reject this motion to proceed.

#### NOMINATION OF HO NIEH

Mr. President, I rise today in support of Ho Nieh's confirmation to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Our Nation is poised to unleash a nuclear power revival, and a strong NRC, guided by exceptional leadership, is central to enabling the use of nuclear energy.

Fully realizing nuclear energy's potential will improve electric reliability, which I spoke about in my former remarks, strengthen American energy and national security, and drive economic growth.

In 1974, Congress established the NRC to serve as our Nation's independent nuclear safety regulator. In the years since, our nuclear energy sector has matured, technology has advanced, and safety has been prioritized, as always.

There is now an opportunity to take the experience and know-how to build a new nuclear future. Doing so mandates a nuclear safety regulator that is ready to meet the moment and to do so by leading with its best attributes. Those attributes are embodied in the NRC's principles of good regulation: independence, openness, efficiency, clarity, and reliability. Each of these principles is a necessary pillar for the NRC's work, especially as the NRC implements the consequential task that it currently faces.

Last year, in passing my bill, the ADVANCE Act, Congress spoke with an overwhelming bipartisan voice that we must urgently modernize our regulations to prioritize what matters most. President Trump reinforced that message in May when he issued an Executive order tasking the Commission with a major reexamination of the NRC's nuclear safety rules. The ADVANCE Act and President Trump's Executive order both empower the Commission to deliver on a vision of deploying more nuclear power and doing so quickly and safely.

As the Commission acts on these directives, it must do so in a way that does not undermine regulatory certainty and works with all stakeholders to make sure the NRC's efforts are enduring.

I am confident that Ho Nieh will carry the principles of good regulation forward as the Commission implements our Nation's nuclear energy policy.

Mr. Nieh has served in a broad range of positions at the NRC and at international nuclear organizations.

As the leader of the most consequential office of the NRC—that office is called the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation—he laid out a vision of the NRC's role to make sure that the safe use of nuclear energy is possible. This set the tone for what the Commission established earlier this year when they

revised their mission statement, as directed by the ADVANCE Act.

Following his departure from the NRC, Mr. Nieh gained firsthand experience in understanding the role of regulatory compliance as a senior executive for a large nuclear facility. He also served on loan to the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations—the industry's own nuclear safety watchdog that seeks to promote excellence in nuclear performance.

I support Ho Nieh's nomination to serve as a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission because of his outstanding technical expertise, his real-world knowledge of regulatory compliance, his strong leadership and experience, and his commitment to executing the recently updated NRC mission statement.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for his confirmation to the NRC. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. I ask unanimous consent that we begin the scheduled roll-call vote immediately.

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

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill 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.

#### VOTE ON NIEH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postclosure time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Nieh nomination?

Mr. SCHATZ. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE).

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 32, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 620 Ex.]

#### YEAS—66

Banks	Collins	Duckworth
Barrasso	Coons	Ernst
Blackburn	Cornyn	Fetterman
Boozman	Cotton	Fischer
Britt	Cramer	Galleo
Budd	Cruz	Graham
Capito	Curtis	Grassley
Cassidy	Daines	Hagerty

Hawley	McConnell	Schmitt
Heinrich	McCormick	Scott (FL)
Hoeben	Moody	Scott (SC)
Husted	Moran	Sheehy
Hyde-Smith	Moreno	Sullivan
Johnson	Mullin	Thune
Kelly	Murkowski	Tillis
Kennedy	Ossoff	Tuberville
King	Padilla	Warner
Klobuchar	Paul	Warnock
Lankford	Reed	Welch
Lee	Ricketts	Whitehouse
Lummis	Risch	Wicker
Marshall	Rounds	Young

#### NAYS—32

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Kaine	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kim	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Lujan	Shaheen
Booker	Markey	Slotkin
Cantwell	Merkley	Smith
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Rosen	

#### NOT VOTING—2

Crapo	Justice
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The nomination was confirmed.

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

## RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:53 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Ms. LUMMIS. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RELATING TO "BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE RECORD OF DECISION AND APPROVED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT"—Motion to Proceed

Ms. LUMMIS. Madam President, Wyoming became a State in 1890. It was the 44th State to enter the Union. In 1893, Wyoming adopted our State seal, which also appears on our State flag inside the buffalo, and on that seal are two figures that tell the story of Wyoming.

(Mr. SCHMITT assumed the Chair.)

One figure represents the livestock industry and the ranchers and cattlemen of Wyoming, and the other represents our mining heritage—here, it says mining and oil—the miners that

power America and have powered it for years.

These two industries are instrumental to my State, but in terms of gross State product, no industry comes close to the energy industry. Wyoming is an energy-producing State.

For over 130 years, these figures have stood as a testament to Wyoming's values: hard work, self-reliance, and providing for our Nation.

The Biden administration looked at that seal and decided Wyoming's way of life has to end. They wanted to unilaterally rip the mining symbol from our State's seal. One way they wanted to end this mining heritage was via the Buffalo Resource Management Plan amendment, which was a deliberate, calculated attack on our miners and an assault on every Wyoming family that depends on coal. Wyoming has since 1986 been the No. 1 coal producer in the Nation. We produce 40 percent of America's coal.

So today, I come before the Senate in defense of the people of Wyoming and our rich energy sector. In a last-minute, desperate, post-election attempt to promote his anti-energy Green New Deal scam, President Biden issued the Buffalo Resource Management Plan amendment to cripple Wyoming's coal industry. Biden's Bureau of Land Management zeroed out almost 500,000 acres of coal in Wyoming, shutting down the possibility of any future coal leasing.

This is why I introduced the congressional resolution of disapproval with Senator BARRASSO to overturn this reckless, anti-Wyoming assault. We have the backing of the Department of the Interior, and we have the full support of President Trump.

As I said earlier, Wyoming produces 40 percent of America's coal. The Powder River Basin holds more than 48 billion short tons—enough to power our Nation for more than a century.

The Biden plan would have destroyed thousands of high-paying Wyoming jobs, erased billions in labor income, and gutted the State revenue that funds our communities and, more importantly, our K-through-12 school system.

Moreover, the Biden Bureau of Land Management and this resource management plan didn't just attack coal, it aimed to lock up Federal land that belongs to the American people.

While the Biden administration tried to shutter American coal mines, our foreign adversaries are ramping up production. Their coal is dirtier, their environmental standards are nonexistent, and their labor practices include child labor and human rights abuses no American would ever tolerate.

Shuttering U.S. coal doesn't help the planet; it outsources pollution to the worst polluters on Earth and sends American jobs straight overseas.

American coal—Wyoming coal—is the cleanest, safest, and most responsibly produced coal in the world. The most recent coal plant that was built