



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2025

No. 202

Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will now report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Matthew E. Orso, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MULLIN). The Senator from Iowa.

NIGERIA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, if you watch television, you are hearing a lot of reports from Nigeria about kidnappings and murders, other reports of violence, and particularly you are hearing it about Christians in Nigeria.

This violence has grown more frequent and more troubling as time goes on. The enforcement of blasphemy laws by the Nigerian Government coupled with the rise of violent attacks by terrorists against religious communities represents a serious infringement upon the freedom of religion that you are supposed to have in that country.

Blasphemy laws are enforced in 12 Nigerian states and also at the Federal level. That enforcement is resulting in the prosecution and imprisonment of Christians, Muslims, traditional practitioners, and even humanists. Furthermore, violence by terrorists like Boko Haram and the other organization called the Islamic State West Africa Province continues to pose serious security challenges.

Unfortunately, these challenges are not new developments. For years, we have been hearing from our own government Agencies, particularly the FBI and the Department of Justice, urging our own State Department to designate the terrorist group Boko Haram as a foreign terrorist organization, a step that was delayed until 2013.

For my part, I have consistently sought information and action to address this ongoing threat. Going way back almost 10 years in 2016, I sent a letter to then-U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch requesting information regarding the yearslong process of designating the Nigerian Islamist group Boko Haram as a foreign terrorist organization.

In 2020, I wrote to then-Secretary Pompeo and Ambassador Sam Brownback asking what steps were being taken to protect Christians in Nigeria and whether a Special Envoy might be appointed.

At that time, the Department assured me that they were actively addressing the issue at multiple levels with the Nigerian Government, but now, years later, we continue to see concerning reports about violence and religious prosecution in Nigeria.

That is why I was so very happy to see our own President Trump take long-awaited action in designating Nigeria a country of particular concern. That designation puts Nigeria on a watch list, puts Nigeria on notice that if they don't take care of this situation, other things can intervene.

The Nigerian Government must take immediate action to end this violence, and the United States should do all it can to support and encourage those efforts. Once again, I am proud to see President Trump on television, at his news conferences and things like that, speaking up for the Nigerian Government to take action and supporting the plight of Christians in Nigeria.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God our shield, the giver of victory and honor, shine on us with Your kindness that brings a rich harvest of joy. Today, guide our lawmakers with Your Spirit. Complete the work You have begun in them and lead them by the power of Your prevailing providence. May they trust You completely, permitting You to remove obstacles from the road ahead.

Lord, train them in Your school of humility so they will walk safely without stumbling. Help them to remember that all efforts to defend themselves will fail without Your grace and mercy. Inspire them to seek Your will in all they do.

We pray in Your magnificent 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 PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S8455

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER
The majority leader is recognized.

ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we are 4 weeks away from the new year and from the date that the 2017 tax relief for Americans was set to expire. Back in 2017, of course, Republicans passed a huge tax-relief package. We lowered tax rates for every income group, we doubled the child tax credit, and we nearly doubled the standard deduction.

But all of that was scheduled to expire at the end of this year. Without action, Americans would have seen their tax rates increase and the child tax credit shrink by 50 percent. A typical family would have seen their taxes go up by about \$1,700 a year. In my State of South Dakota, a typical family would have seen a \$2,500 tax increase.

Republicans were determined not to let that happen, so a priority for 2025 became extending the 2017 tax relief—but not just extending it, making it permanent. We didn't want hard-working Americans to have to worry every few years that their tax bills were suddenly going to soar. So in July, we passed the Working Families Tax Cut to make permanent the 2017 tax relief. We made those lower tax rates permanent, we made the increased standard deduction permanent, and we made the increased child tax credit permanent. But we didn't stop there. We expanded the child tax credit even further and indexed it to inflation so that its value will never go down.

We also further increased the standard deduction, exempting additional money from Americans' taxable income, and we added a new \$6,000 bonus deduction for seniors, allowing Americans on Social Security to keep more of their money.

That is still not all. We eliminated taxes on tips for millions of tip workers: Uber and Lyft drivers, hair stylists, delivery drivers, servers at restaurants. We also eliminated taxes on overtime pay for millions of hourly workers. Thanks to this provision, everyone from nurses and police officers to firefighters and paramedics will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money.

We did still more because one aspect of prosperity is being able to keep more of what you earn. Another aspect is being able to earn more, so in addition to the individual tax relief, we also made permanent some of the 2017 tax law's business tax relief to help businesses grow and create new jobs and opportunities for workers. That included the lower tax rates for small and medium-sized businesses, the job-creating 199A small business deduction, and full expensing for new equipment and for domestic research and development.

Again, we went beyond the 2017 tax relief and added full expensing for new factories and factory improvements, so we can expect to see more goods made in America and, again, more jobs and opportunities for American workers.

We also acted to protect countless family farms, ranches, and small businesses from the punitive death tax and all of the headaches and expense that come with planning for it.

I am incredibly proud of what we were able to accomplish for hard-working Americans. We not only averted a massive tax hike on American families but were able to further lessen Americans' tax burden. Hard-working Americans can be assured the Republicans will continue to work to enhance affordability, expand opportunity, and increase prosperity.

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.

AFFORDABILITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, Americans once again went to the polls in an election where affordability—how much people have to pay for the things they really need—was the driving issue. A deep-red Tennessee district that Trump won by 22 points swung by double digits in Democrats' direction.

Last night was the latest flashing red light indicating Americans are fed up with Republican policies—particularly how much they have to pay for the things they really need.

Donald Trump doesn't get it. At yesterday's Cabinet meeting, Donald Trump once again doubled down on the bizarre claim that the affordability issue is somehow a hoax. Yeah, maybe it is a hoax for a billionaire like him and all of his cronies, who never have to worry about how much they have to pay for the things they need, but American people have to worry and worry about it every week when the bills come in, and they say: My income isn't equal to what I need to buy.

The costs are going up and up and up, in large part—in good part—because of Donald Trump and his administration's policies.

So when Donald Trump says that affordability is somehow a hoax, he is on a different planet than the average American. At his Cabinet meeting, he called affordability “a fake narrative” and “a con job.” He said affordability “doesn't mean anything to anybody.” What a bubble he is in. He doesn't understand how the average person struggles each week, each month, to pay the bills.

Of all the ways Donald Trump could respond to people's worry about the high cost of living, he has chosen the worst strategy. He is telling Americans they are imagining things. Donald Trump—a man who has lived his entire life in the kind of luxury most people

could never wrap their heads around—is pretending that high costs somehow don't exist. The man is a multibillionaire. The President of the United States, who is supposed to know what is on people's minds, is telling people that high costs that they pay each week don't exist. Well, their pocketbooks feel it. Their wallets feel it. Their bank accounts feel it.

Maybe things are going great if you are rich like Donald Trump, but for everyone else, things are getting worse, not better, when it comes to paying for stuff.

In a recent Axios-CBS poll, half of Americans said that food is harder to purchase this year than it was a year ago. That doesn't sound like a hoax—not to people who go to the supermarket every week and have trouble and look at those bills and say: How the hell did they get so high? It sounds, rather, not like a hoax, which Donald Trump seems to think it is, but a big problem every week for American families—the high cost of groceries and what they buy at the supermarket.

Seventy-four percent of Americans now say that the economy is either poor or just fair. Consumer confidence—one of the watch words of how good our economy is going to do in the future—is sinking.

This holiday season, the price of an 8-pound, bone-in spiral ham is up nearly 50 percent compared to last year—50 percent for a traditional Christmas dish. Beef prices are up 15 percent compared to last year. Canned vegetables are more expensive because tariffs made the packaging more costly even when those vegetables are grown here. Even something as simple as aluminum foil is up 40 percent compared to last year.

So, Donald Trump, hear the American people: Affordability—the high cost of paying for things—is not a hoax. People are struggling to pay for the things they need.

It is because of Donald Trump and his disastrous policies. His tariffs have effectively taxed each household around \$2,000 a year. Tariffs sent retail coffee prices up 40 percent in September alone. And those tariffs were placed on places like Brazil. We don't grow coffee here in America, so what the hell is there a tariff doing there? Except it is a tax. That is the way Trump taxes people.

Tariffs have poisoned American manufacturing. This week, the Wall Street Journal reported that manufacturing has contracted for 9 months in a row. Manufacturing, one of the lifebloods of America, has been declining every month for the last 9 months. And what is the reason? Ask manufacturers. Tariffs are the No. 1 cost. Producers say it is getting more expensive to source the material they need to make their products. It is very simple.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, when it comes to paying for things that Americans need, healthcare is way at the top of the list.