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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 12 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2025

(Legislative day of Thursday, December 4, 2025)

The Senate met at 3 p.m., on the expiration of the recess, 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, yesterday we remembered a date which will live in infamy: December 7, 1941. Lord, thank You for the reminder that even when wrong seems to have its way, You continue to sit on the throne of Your universe. Today, give our lawmakers hearts that seek Your wisdom, feet that flee from evil, and hands that serve Your purposes.

Lord, empower our Senators to be faithful to You, to do Your will on Earth, and to live above reproach. May they be guided by integrity, reverence, and righteousness in all they think, say, and do. We pray in Your mighty 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. BUDD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Iowa.

VOTING

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in early November, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service announced improvements to their voter verification system. Now, States can use a program named the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements to verify that only citizens are voting in the Federal elections. This is welcome news.

So here is why it is welcome news: During the 2024 election, Iowa's election official, Secretary of State Paul Pate, sought confirmation of citizenship status for 2,176 voters that, based on driver motor vehicle records, may have been noncitizens.

The Biden-Harris administration refused—yes, refused—to give Secretary Pate the information he needed to confirm whether these 2,176 voters were eligible to vote, which kind of proves that the previous administration was not interested in verifying citizenship for voting.

Now that the Trump administration has allowed Secretary Pate access to the SAVE Program, we know that 277 people from Iowa's 2024 voter registration list were noncitizens. In other

words, potentially, 277 people could have voted if they wanted to, and I will tell you that some did.

While the Biden-Harris administration refused to verify the citizenship of these voters, 40 noncitizens attempted to vote in Iowa. Five of those attempts were caught before the ballots were counted, but 35 unlawful ballots were actually tallied.

Thanks to President Trump's Executive order concerning election integrity and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service's needed upgrades to the SAVE system, other States can avoid the uncertainty that Iowa had in last year's election, and the voters in those States can have peace of mind that noncitizens won't be voting because when noncitizens vote, it reduces the value of every legal vote.

I would encourage these States to participate in this program. I want to thank the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service for their improvements to the SAVE Program, and I also want to thank Iowa's Secretary of State Paul Pate for his commitment to election integrity and the Trump administration for providing Iowa the information needed to confirm the citizenship of its voters.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

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



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HEALTHCARE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I would like to read a few quotes from some of my Democrat colleagues from the past couple of months.

This is from November 6:

We did fail to bring down the cost of healthcare.

This is from September 30:

Now, right now, we have a broken health care system. Nobody can afford health care.

This one is from December 3:

I think we all agree there's brokenness in the whole system.

Again, from December 3:

As much as we disagree on things, I just want to note the underlying agreement that this system needs a lot of reform.

Now, as I said, all of these are quotes from my Democrat colleagues in just the past couple of months. Every quote is an implicit admission that ObamaCare has failed.

Back in 2009, of course, Democrats were arguing that ObamaCare was going to fix healthcare. This is a quote from that time:

[A]n historic bill that will finally reform our broken health care system and help millions of our families and small businesses get the coverage they need at a price they can afford. It is about time.

That, again, was a senior Democrat Senator from back in 2009.

Or in the words of the Democrat leader:

Who would have thought that we could finally get a handle on the thing that is driving our budget deficit to great heights, which is health care costs, and at the same time do so much good by covering so many people?

Well, contrast that with the words of the Democrat leader today:

[T]he healthcare crisis is so deep and so real.

"The healthcare crisis is so deep and so real." In other words, Democrats' great scheme to fix healthcare—ObamaCare—has failed. So what are Democrats proposing to do this week? Introduce reforms? Perhaps try a different approach? Well, no. That would be wrong if you assumed that. They have announced plans to throw good money after bad. They proposed a clean, 3-year extension of the enhanced ObamaCare subsidies. "Clean"—no reforms, no revisions, just billions of additional taxpayer dollars to prop up part of a program that has utterly failed to reduce healthcare costs.

Since 2013, premiums for ObamaCare enrollees have risen 221 percent—221 percent. In other words, this program is doing the very opposite of lowering healthcare costs. And as if soaring premiums weren't a big enough problem, the exchanges are rife with potential for waste, fraud, and abuse. A damning report from the Government Accountability Office released last week found that the exchanges continue to enroll fake individuals, are improperly paying out subsidies, and are failing to ensure payment accuracy, potentially putting taxpayers on the hook for millions or billions in improper payments.

So I might just show you. This is what the GAO found—the Government Accountability Office—and this just came out literally just this last week. This was a finding on their behalf—on their part: ObamaCare subsidies granted without documentation to 90 percent of fake accounts.

So what the Government Accountability Office did is they ran an audit of the exchanges in which these insurance policies change hands and found that 90 percent—90 percent—of these fake accounts were granted subsidies without documentation. Think about that. Ninety percent of these—this investigation—these accounts they checked—they created fake accounts to see if, in fact, they would get a government subsidy, and they did. There is a 90-percent failure rate in this program.

So we have spiraling healthcare costs, a program incredibly vulnerable—as is evidenced—vulnerable to fraud and abuse, and, again, Democrats are proposing that we do absolutely nothing—no reforms, no revisions, no safeguards; just billions more in taxpayer dollars.

Republicans have made it very clear that we would like to work with Democrats to address the affordability of healthcare and find solutions that actually reduce costs, but, as Democrats have made clear with this "clean bill," they are not really after healthcare solutions. They seem to be OK with a 90-percent fraud rate. They are after a political issue to attempt to batter Republicans with during this next election year. If that means a proposal to throw more money at a program they know very well—very well—is failing—it is documented—then that is what they are going to go with.

I will quote again:

As much as we disagree on things, I just want to note the underlying agreement that this system needs a lot of reform.

Again, those are the words of a Democrat Senator, and she is right. The system does need reform—and a lot of it. It is too bad Democrats aren't interested in making any.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 4, S. Res. 532.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the executive resolution.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

An executive resolution (S. Res. 532) authorizing the en bloc consideration in Executive Session of certain nominations on the Executive Calendar.

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 executive 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 Executive Calendar No. 4, S. Res. 532, an executive resolution authorizing the en bloc consideration in Executive Session of certain nominations on the Executive Calendar.

John Thune, John Cornyn, Steve Daines, Bernie Moreno, Roger Marshall, Chuck Grassley, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Rick Scott of Florida, Tim Sheehy, Pete Ricketts, Jon A. Husted, Tom Cotton, John R. Curtis, John Barrasso, Markwayne Mullin, Josh Hawley, Todd Young.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive 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.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 94-304, as amended by Public Law 99-7, appoints the following Senator as a member of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) during the 119th Congress: the Honorable RUBEN M. GALLEGO of Arizona vice the Honorable TINA SMITH of Minnesota.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

FARMERS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, Donald Trump is announcing a \$12 billion bailout for farmers who have been punished by his trade war and his tariffs.

Let's be very clear. The reason farmers need relief at all is largely because Donald Trump betrayed them and decimated their businesses with his disastrous tariffs.