

insurance premiums spike. Their bill, which was introduced last week, has never been debated in committee, and no Member had a chance to amend it.

I say this to my friends on the other side of the aisle: You are in the majority. You have the power to set matters for a congressional hearing. You have the power to go through a serious process to reform healthcare. You are in the majority.

But, first, we need triage. First, we have to stabilize the patient. Americans who are about to pay thousands of additional dollars cannot wait as Republicans attempt to change the entire healthcare system in a week.

Four Senate Republicans understood this and voted with all the Democrats to extend these tax credits. I thank them for their singular political courage.

Each additional day we delay an extension of the enhanced premium tax credits, more Americans forgo their health insurance because it is just too darn expensive.

Time is running out.

I recently spoke to a waitress at Lou Mitchell's restaurant in Chicago—in downtown Chicago, across from the train station. She is personally worried that she will not be able to afford her healthcare next year without the enhanced premium tax credits. She sees her health insurance bill doubling or more.

This waitress does not care about who is winning the political fight in Washington. She cares about whether she and her family can pay for their doctors' appointments and medications.

I want to go back to that restaurant soon and tell my friend that the Senate did something to help her. We can help her, so long as we act on a bipartisan basis.

If you don't like our proposal for a clean, 3-year extension, counter it with a reasonable offer. Show that there is a beating heart that cares to address the real problems Americans face. Let us come together and give American families the gift of health coverage they can afford for Christmas.

#### NIH FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I also want to draw attention to the crisis surrounding medical research in this country, created entirely by this new Trump administration.

Ten years ago, I met with Dr. Francis Collins, then the Director of the National Institutes of Health, the world's premium biomedical research agency. I admired his work so much that I asked him what I could do to help.

He said:

If you can provide a 5-percent increase to NIH's medical research budget, year after year, we'll light up the scoreboard.

So I took that message and went back to Congress. With the help of colleagues on both sides of the aisle—Republican Senator ROY BLUNT, Repub-

lican Senator Lamar Alexander, and Democratic Senator PATTY MURRAY—we increased NIH funding from \$30 billion to \$48 billion over the next 10 years, a 60-percent increase in research—a 60-percent increase in cures, hopes, and breakthroughs.

But what took us 10 years to build, President Donald Trump has all but dismantled in less than 11 months.

Recent reporting from the New York Times shed light on the dire consequences of President Trump's medical research cuts. The President and DOGE instituted a new set of rules at NIH that resulted in 3,500 fewer medical research grants, affecting virtually every area of medical study.

Funding for mental health was reduced 31 percent, brain diseases by 26 percent, and cancer research by 19 percent. All of these reductions are in real areas of opportunity, which we are walking away from under Trump. This is a fundamental blow to how America supports medical research and has real implications for the progress we made.

Instead of ushering in the next wave of medical breakthroughs, which could save you or your loved one from suffering, this administration has cut them off at the knees.

I am pleased that the Senate Appropriations Committee, on a bipartisan basis, rejected Trump's proposed cuts and actually provided an increase for next year. But if the administration ignores Congress's wish and continues to upend research funding, that could create irreparable harm.

As the father of a child born with a severe medical condition, I know personally that families across this country depend on the hope and promise that research holds. Cures and treatments that come from the National Institutes of Health funded the research behind 99 percent of the new drugs approved by the FDA in the last decade.

Oh, sure, you see the ads on television for all these new drugs that they say hold onto some promise. The pharmaceutical companies that are selling them and developing them have virtually all started with Federal research by the taxpayers of this country—the same research that has been cut off now by President Trump.

So when Donald Trump handicaps the NIH's work, he is telling patients: Your cure can wait.

Our communities will feel the pain of this change too. Our universities, not just in blue States but in every State—great research institutions in Alabama, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma—will be unable to pursue more cures. Our hospitals, already scaling back operations thanks to budget cuts and the President's so-called “Big Beautiful Budget Bill,” will be forced to diminish services even more.

The scientists and doctors of tomorrow may decide to forego their profession entirely or bring their talents to other countries.

As we fight to protect healthcare for millions of Americans, let us also not

forget to fight for research that fuels that care. We cannot stand for this assault on medical research funding. We need to continue to work on a bipartisan basis to make sure that funding does continue.

It is not just a matter of national pride. It is a matter of finding cures and drugs that will help people all around the world and that has defined America for decades.

We can't let the Trump administration kill off medical research and kill off that dream that people keep alive every single day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

#### WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the motion to concur in the House message to accompany S. 1071.

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

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 560.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Joshua Simmons, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

#### 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 the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 560, Joshua Simmons, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

John Thune, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Mike Rounds, Pete Ricketts, Roger F. Wicker, Steve Daines, Todd Young, Mike Crapo, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Bernie Moreno, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Marsha Blackburn, Tom Cotton, David McCormick, Ted Budd.

#### 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. 70.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Keith Bass, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

## CLOTURE MOTION

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). 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 the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 70, Keith Bass, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, John Boozman, Lindsey Graham, John Barrasso, Steve Daines, Tom Cotton, Ted Cruz, Deb Fischer, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Tim Sheehy, Katie Boyd Britt, Jame E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Jon Husted.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Madam 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. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 574.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Alexander C. Van Hook, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana.

## CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam 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 the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 574, Alexander C. Van Hook, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana.

John Thune, Katie Boyd Britt, Tommy Tuberville, Tim Sheehy, Jon A. Husted, Joni Ernst, Shelley Moore Capito, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Mike Rounds, Bernie Moreno, Jim Justice, Pete Ricketts, John Barrasso, Ted Budd, Eric Schmitt, Ashley B. Moody, Tom Cotton.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Madam 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. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 476.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Sara Bailey, of Texas, to be Director of National Drug Control Policy.

## 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 the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 476, Sara Bailey, of Texas, to be Director of National Drug Control Policy.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, John Boozman, Lindsey Graham, John Barrasso, Dan Sullivan, Steve Daines, Tom Cotton, Ted Cruz, Deb Fischer, Thom Tillis, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Tim Sheehy, Katie Boyd Britt, Jame E. Risch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

## OPERATION DIRTY LAUNDRY

Mr. BUDD. Madam President, I rise today to commend the law enforcement officers of Graham County, NC, for their exceptional efforts in the completion of Operation Dirty Laundry. This 11-month undercover investigation successfully disrupted a large-scale criminal network in Appalachia. The operation unveiled a coordinated criminal enterprise involving drug trafficking and illegal gambling in Western North Carolina.

The investigation began with tips about unlawful activity tied to multiple businesses in and around

Robbinsville, including 30 vape shops that were in the area.

The Graham County Sheriff's Office worked in conjunction with State and Federal partners to uncover some horrific evidence. On the scene, law enforcement discovered more than \$200,000 in illicit cash that was seized, along with 130 pounds of dangerous scheduled substances—including marijuana, methamphetamine, fentanyl, and hallucinogenic mushrooms—and 13 illegal gambling machines. Authorities are pursuing charges against more than 38 individuals connected to this criminal activity.

But these numbers are not just statistics; they represent safer neighborhoods, families shielded from the devastation of addiction, and young people steered away from the life-altering trap of dangerous drugs. For North Carolinians of Graham County, the completion of this operation brings a renewed hope and reassurance that local law enforcement is standing firm and holding criminals accountable that seek to exploit our communities.

I want to extend my gratitude to my good friend Graham County sheriff Brad Hoxit and to every other officer and deputy in his department who worked tirelessly and took on personal risk to keep their community safe.

Your courage, integrity, and unwavering commitment represent the very best of public service.

I applaud the continuing efforts of local law enforcement to bring these dangerous criminals to justice.

I am going to continue to ensure our law enforcement agencies have the resources they need to keep North Carolina strong. As I have said before on the Senate floor, drug traffickers will find no refuge in Western North Carolina or anywhere in the Old North State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

## IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, a few weeks ago, I spoke about the tragic death of a National Guard servicemember here in Washington, DC, on the eve of Thanksgiving.

While I salute and we should all salute the bravery of those who risk their lives to keep us safe, we can't ignore the reality that this woman was yet another unnecessary victim of President Biden's careless immigration policies. The man who committed this heinous crime was an Afghan national who President Biden allowed to enter the United States without proper vetting after our disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. He did this via a procedure known as parole, which I will explain more about in a minute, but this was not in accordance with any law or any visa recognized by Congress or passed through a legislative act. This was done on a wholesale abuse of something called parole authority.

As I said, I will explain a little bit more, but parole allows inadmissible