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## Senate

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Senate met at 12 noon 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.

O God of love, give our lawmakers wisdom to know what they ought to do. Create in them a passion to seek the truth, the humility to accept advice, and the courage to act with integrity. When they don't know which step to take, give them the wisdom to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." May Your wisdom motivate them to faithfully follow Your commands.

Lord, empower each of them with the grace to seek and to find, to know and to love, to obey and to live the truth.

And, Lord, comfort those who weep.  
We pray in Your great 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. HAGERTY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

#### DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 311, H.R. 7147. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 311, H.R. 7147, a bill making further consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

#### VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor about a project that I have been proud to support over the years at the Library of Congress. The project is called the Veterans History Project. The Veterans History Project helps collect, as well as preserve, the stories of American veterans so that future generations can hear directly from the people who have served our country. These are actually videos so you can hear as well as see.

The sacrifices of the men and women in uniform should never be forgotten. Their stories help us to better understand the cost of freedom and the service that has helped keep our country safe and free and strong.

Today, I will be delivering for the ninth year the stories of six more Iowa veterans to the Library of Congress as part of this project. These veterans come from communities across Iowa and represent different branches of military service—this year: the Army, Navy, Air National Guard, and Army National Guard. Their service includes different periods and experiences, even including service during Operation Desert Storm.

These records bring the total number of records that I have submitted for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project to well over 100.

These additional stories will now be preserved at the Library of Congress, where they can help future generations better understand the roles our veterans have played in defending our freedoms.

I am glad that these Iowa stories will be part of such an important project.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate majority leader.

#### SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Americans are pretty used to presenting their photo IDs. These days, you need one for just about everything you do. Driving a car, you better have your license on you. Starting a new job, you will need to show a photo ID. Want to be an emergency snow shoveler in New York City, you need to bring two forms of ID for that. You need a photo ID to open a bank account or visit your doctor. You could be asked for a photo ID before you get on a plane or check into a hotel. You need to have your ID ready to buy an alcoholic drink or to go into an R-rated movie.

So it is safe to say Americans are taking their IDs out on a regular basis and having a pretty easy go of it. Yet, when it comes to voting, Democrats talk like requiring a photo ID is some kind of an insurmountable burden, and that really doesn't make sense. As I said, most Americans are taking out their IDs on a regular basis and for things that are a lot less important than voting.

In the city of Washington, DC, for example, you need to show a photo ID any time you go to use a city rec center. Yes, if you are in a basketball league or trying to swim a few laps in the pool, you need to show an ID here in Washington, DC. But you can vote in this city, perhaps in that very rec center, without showing a photo ID. Now, how does that make any sense?

There is a very clear difference between using a city facility and casting a vote to determine how your city or

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



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Federal Government is run. And, logically speaking, doesn't it make sense that our elections should at least be as secure as the local rec center?

I think so, and the American people seem to think so too. Poll after poll shows that the American people support voter ID. Yet despite years of Democrat fearmongering about the implications of requiring a photo ID to vote, the American people view voter ID as just common sense. North of 80 percent of Americans in a poll last year said they support requiring all voters to show a photo ID at the polls.

An NBC News headline this week reads: "Most Americans support requiring photo ID to vote. Democrats in Congress reject it."

Well, that is pretty much it. Requiring a photo ID to vote is something that is so common sense only congressional Democrats could oppose it, and I would really like to know their reasoning.

Of course, Democrats are now hedging, suggesting that they do kind of support voter ID. Well, if they do, it would certainly be news to me. As I said, for years, Democrats have acted like asking for a photo ID would be an intolerable burden to place on voters.

When he was a Senator, Barack Obama opposed a national voter ID amendment, saying that it was an attempt "to restrict the approach for people voting throughout the country."

As Vice President and later as President, Joe Biden decried State laws that required voter ID.

And a few years ago—and this one really baffles me—then-Vice President Kamala Harris said:

I don't think that we should underestimate what [voter ID laws] could mean. Because in some people's mind, that means you're going to have to Xerox or photocopy your ID to send it in to prove who you are. Well there are a whole lot of people, especially people who live in rural communities who don't—there's no Kinkos, there's no OfficeMax near them.

That was from then-Vice President Kamala Harris.

Well, I spend a good amount of time in rural South Dakota, and I am happy to share that people in rural areas do, in fact, have photo IDs and regularly use them, and they would be more than happy to show them at the polls. In fact, under South Dakota law, voters already—already—have to show a photo ID to cast a ballot.

And the former Vice President will be happy to know that copy machines have also made it to rural America.

Despite Democrats' fearmongering, requiring a photo ID is not some sort of an impossible thing to ask of voters, and I think Democrats actually know this. A photo ID was required to get into the Democratic National Convention in 2024. Vice President Harris required an ID to get into her campaign events. The senior Democrat Senator from Georgia required a photo ID to get into his recent rally.

The other day, the junior Senator from Oregon said that the SAVE Amer-

ica Act is "about stopping groups from voting who tend to vote for Democrats."

Well, if that were true, why would Democrats be requiring a photo ID for their voters to get into their campaign events? Needless to say, it is not true.

Requiring a photo ID to vote is just common sense, and it is not that hard. You need a photo ID to see a doctor, stay at a hotel, start a job. It is not too much to ask to require it when you go to vote.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, in today's Democratic Party, common sense is not very common.

Photo ID requirements are the definition of common sense. You need an ID to buy a beer. You need an ID to board a plane, to cash a check, as you do in so much of American life. Why would you not need one to cast a vote in an election?

The SAVE America Act simply says you need to be a citizen of the United States to register to vote and you need to show a photo ID in order to vote, plain and simple. This is in no way controversial unless, of course, you are a Senate Democrat because, this week, every Senate Democrat—every Democrat who is a Member of this body—has now been put on the record right in this very Chamber.

Republicans support photo ID. Every Democrat in this Chamber voted against it, and that includes Senator SCHUMER, the minority leader in the Senate. And apparently, Senator SCHUMER was for it before he is now against it—because, 30 years ago, then-Congressman CHUCK SCHUMER of New York was a champion of photo ID. He stood on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives and he argued to the body that IDs are necessary and they were necessary to stop illegal immigrants from receiving welfare. He was for it before he was against it—because, today, the same Senator SCHUMER from New York has called photo IDs "fringe." He did it right here at that podium on Monday afternoon.

Did he change his beliefs, or did his party change their demands?

The minority leader is not alone. There is actually a video—and it is worth watching—of President Barack Obama. He was voting in his reelection election in 2012. He was going to vote. Can you guess what the video shows? Well, let me tell you. The video shows President Barack Obama presenting his photo ID in order to vote. He was President of the United States. He was on the ballot. He was probably the best-known person in the entire world

at the time, and even President Barack Obama had to prove who he was when he showed up to vote.

Democrats are completely two-faced on this because, just recently, one of our Democrat colleagues, a Senator from the State of Georgia, demanded voters show photo IDs if they wanted to attend one of his political rallies. So you need to show a photo ID to get into his rally, but you don't need to show a photo ID in order to vote—oh, no. Two-faced, double standard, not common sense, out of touch with the American people.

The mayor of New York City—and he is, of course, the face of today's Democratic Party—he is an avowed socialist; he admits it out loud. He told New Yorkers, if they wanted to help shovel snow in the city during the storm, you need to bring not one but two forms of ID to prove who you were.

If you need an ID to get welfare, to attend a Democrat campaign rally in Georgia, or to shovel snow in New York City, you should absolutely need to show a photo ID if you want to vote in an election in America. Photo ID is a norm in democracies all around the world. All but one country in Europe requires a government-issued photo ID in order to vote. And 36 States in America, including Wyoming, my home State, require voters to present an ID when arriving at the polls.

It can't be what Senator SCHUMER called fringe. It can't be fringe to adopt a common practice in America in 36 States and around the world. That is what CHUCK SCHUMER and the Democrats think is fringe.

So why do Democrats continue to oppose the SAVE America Act? What is it that they are trying to protect?

Yesterday, I spoke on this floor about the mess in the State of Oregon. Oregon hands out driver's licenses to illegal immigrants—easy to get. In Oregon, a driver's license comes with automatic voter registration. You get a driver's license, you are of age, you are automatically registered to vote in the State of Oregon. As a result, from 2021 through 2024, hundreds of illegal immigrants were given driver's licenses and then automatically added onto Oregon's voter rolls.

People are astonished when they hear this. Oregon is still scrambling to try to clean up the mess. When Americans hear stories like this, they lose faith in our elections and in our system. The real voter suppression threat is not photo ID, but it is Americans losing trust in our elections. That is what we need to be concerned about. They lose trust when they learn that illegal immigrants are on the voter rolls, are being allowed to vote.

Photo IDs restore the trust that our system needs. It reduces fraud, and it sends a simple message. It sends the message that your vote matters and that elections are decided by your fellow citizens, not by illegal immigrants.

Democrats protect their own campaign rallies with ID requirements, yet

they encourage voting without IDs. Why do our elections deserve any less scrutiny than Democrats' own campaign events? Not a single Democrat will come to this floor and explain that to the American people. Tell us why. That is what I would say to the Democrats: Come to the floor, and tell us why you need a photo ID to get into your events but you don't need one to vote.

Every American should support elections that are fair, secure, and transparent. The SAVE America Act makes photo ID the law of the land, and it is the best way to ensure that our elections reflect the will of the American people. It is, by every measure, common sense, and that is exactly why every Democrat in this Chamber voted against it.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. President, now, on a separate matter, today, the Department of Homeland Security remains closed. It has been shut down by the Democrats for over a month. The Democrats shut it down. Now they want to peel it apart, and they refuse to reopen it.

Remember, the Department of Homeland Security was put into place after the terrorist attacks 9/11 of 2001. It was established as a comprehensive program to protect our Nation's security. The Democrats want to peel it apart.

As they are playing their political games, people are suffering. We are seeing long security lines at airports, thousands and thousands of TSA employees missing paychecks, and at the same time, there have been multiple terrorist attacks on American soil.

Here is what one Democrat Member told Axios this week. He said:

[W]e're making people hurt.

Oh, I bet he is real proud of that. That is the Democrat answer:

[W]e're making people hurt.

Apparently, this is what the Democrats want to pitch their voters on:

[W]e're making people hurt.

It is much worse. The Democrats have blood on their hands. Today, Democrats have blood on their hands. Democrats continue to prioritize illegal immigrant criminals over American citizens. It has been going on a long time, and it continues today. That is why they are holding hostage the Department of Homeland Security.

I want every American to know why this is happening because, for more than a month, Republicans have tried to negotiate with Democrats, all aimed at reopening the Department of Homeland Security so we could have a secure America. But in spite of good-faith efforts by the White House—and they have outlined and laid out a long offer—the Democrats continue to say: No. Stay closed.

The offer addresses mutual concerns and areas of cooperation. It includes IDs on the officers and body cameras. At the same time, the proposal protects the ability of law enforcement officers to uphold our immigration laws.

Remember the laws that Biden ignored and had 10 million illegal immigrants flooded into our country over the 4 years that the Democrats were in charge here and Biden was in the White House and the criminals that came with them?

That is what the Democrats want to protect. Those are the people that the Democrats are focused on: the illegal immigrant criminals rather than the safety and security of the American people.

We come up with reasonable offers, and the Democrats have responded first with silence, then with spin. But not once have they come up with solutions. This is a basic betrayal and a blatant betrayal of the responsibility that all elected officials have to protect the American people.

The Democrats are way off base.

Let me tell you what this means. In Georgia, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, which trains Federal law enforcement officers in over 100 different Agencies, it is shut down right now. In Nevada, a field office for the Homeland Security Investigations unit that combats fentanyl and other drugs, it is unfunded. In Washington State, major upgrades for the Coast Guard at the Seattle Polar Security Cutter home port, they are on delay.

None of this makes America stronger. None of this makes America safer. It makes America weaker.

It is time to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security. The American people know that it is the Democrats who are the ones standing in the way of their own personal safety. It is time for Democrats to get on board and fund the Department of Homeland Security.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, Donald Trump promised an easy and quick war with Iran. He promised overwhelming victory. Three weeks later in Iran, just the opposite of what Trump promised is happening.

Last night, a stunning report in the Washington Post revealed that the Pentagon has reportedly discussed with the White House requesting \$200 billion—\$200 billion—from Congress to bankroll Donald Trump's war with Iran.

Two hundred billion dollars so Donald Trump can go to war with Iran is preposterous and unacceptable. Even a fraction of that is unacceptable for a war without a plan, without a goal, without the support of the American people.

Let's be very clear: If Trump wants \$200 billion, that means he believes we might be in a war with Iran for a very, very long time. Two hundred billion is more than what we spent even at the height of the war in Iraq. It is more than we have spent all together in Ukraine.

It is an indefensible number; one of the most wasteful and unthought-out budget requests I have ever heard in my time in the Senate. For \$200 billion, we could lower healthcare premiums for tens of millions of Americans. For \$200 billion, we could educate a generation and unleash the immense potential of our students. For \$200 billion, we could cut hunger in this country in half or more for many years. For \$200 billion, we could invest in jobs and science and manufacturing. We could begin fixing our power grid.

But instead—instead—the Trump administration reportedly wants \$200 billion to go to war with Iran.

It is unacceptable. It is ridiculous. It is beyond the pale. Such a large amount of money for a war that no one knows the goal, no one knows the conclusion, no one knows the path that changes—Trump changes all of these things, the goal, the path, the cost every day—and he wants us to spend all this money?

And meanwhile, the consequences of Trump's war are mounting every hour. I hope America will look at this chart. In 4 weeks, gas prices have surged by 27 percent here at home.

It is the second largest 4-week jump in 35 years—the second largest jump in 35 years. And Donald Trump doesn't care.

Here is what Trump said about this huge increase—plus 27 percent—in gas prices. He said:

They're not bad. I thought it would be worse.

Well, if you are a billionaire, you don't care. If you are a billionaire, you don't think such a large increase every time you pull up at the pump is bad. Tell that, Donald Trump, to the people paying \$4 a gallon.

And then look at what Kevin Hassett, Donald Trump's top economic adviser, said on live television. He said:

Americans' pain is the least of our concerns.

What an outrage. Hassett, take that back because it sure is one of the biggest concerns of the American people.

"The least of our concerns right now." What kind of bubble are they living in when the average American has to figure out how to pay for gas to get to work or pay for lunch?

America, every time you fill up the tank know this: Donald Trump and his advisers don't care that you are hurting. It is the least of their concerns. They do not care that Trump's war is taking money out of your pocket. They do not care that rising gas prices are making it harder to pay rent, pay for groceries, pay for healthcare.

They do not care. Shameful, disgraceful, coldhearted, and so out of touch.

But it doesn't stop there. This morning, Reuters reported that Donald Trump is thinking about deploying thousands more troops to the Middle East as the Pentagon prepares for the next stage of the war.

You know what that sounds like to most Americans, what Trump said? It

sounds like Trump is getting closer and closer to putting boots on the ground. It sounds like Donald Trump is thinking of expanding this war—mission creep on a massive scale.

It seems like an oxymoron, “mission creep on a massive scale.” But they are creeping and creeping and creeping every day and bungling us into war. Boots on the ground, of course, will inevitably mean a surge in casualties, a surge in costs, a surge in chaos.

It is not what the American people want, and Republicans know it. They know this war goes against the wishes of the American people, and they refuse—Republicans here in the Senate—refuse to stand up to Trump, even though they know the war is wrong, wasteful, and putting lives at risk.

Last night, we gave Republicans another chance to assert Congress’ constitutional authority to tell Donald Trump he cannot drag this country into war without authorization. Once again, Republicans opposed it when they opposed Senator BOOKER’s motion.

Where is their courage? Where is their loyalty to the Constitution? Where are the public hearings with Secretaries Rubio and Hegseth under oath? You want to spend \$200 billion and you don’t want to even let their Cabinet people show up at hearings to answer questions?

What an outrage:

Americans’ pain is the least of our concerns.

Do you hear that, America, that \$4 gas?

Americans’ pain is the least of our concerns.

This is not the end of the matter in the Senate. This issue ain’t going away. Republicans can try to wash their hands of Donald Trump’s war with Iran, but they will not escape responsibility. The American people and Democrats will hold Republicans accountable for willingly supporting Donald Trump’s reckless, aimless, chaotic war in Iran.

#### SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. President, on the SAVE Act, Republicans want to waste yet another day on a radical piece of legislation that hardly anyone outside the MAGA fringe even cares about, the SAVE Act.

Democrats’ position has not changed. If Republicans want to waste the Senate’s time debating this bill, so be it. We will continue to debate it. That is what the rules allow the Senators and Senator THUNE to do.

But we will continue to expose just how radical and ugly it is. That is what Democrats will do over and over again. The longer the SAVE Act stays before the Senate, the more obvious it becomes it is not a voter ID bill. It is a voter suppression bill. It is a voter purge bill.

The SAVE Act says no more vote-by-mail, no more driver’s licenses to register, no registering online or on campus or at church.

Republicans want to make Americans pass through the eye of the needle

just to exercise their fundamental right to vote. The SAVE Act would force every State in America to send its voter rolls to the Department of Homeland Security, an Agency that has nothing to do with administering elections and everything to do with Musk and DOGE and incompetence at the top.

Those voter rolls would then be screened by an algorithm designed by Musk and DOGE to supposedly root out noncitizens from the rolls.

But in reality, it could kick millions of American citizens off the voter rolls just like it kicked off many American citizens when a screening was tested in Missouri.

Now, MAGA Republicans keep talking about the SAVE Act in terms of protecting elections. This is a load of nonsense.

Kristi Noem was more honest. She said it was about—Kristi Noem said—the SAVE Act is about making sure only the right people get to vote—the right people get to vote.

So anyone who thinks this is just some benign effort to tell the small number of illegal immigrants—make sure they are not on the rolls. No one disagrees with that. Oh, no. It is an effort to make sure the right people get to vote.

Who are the right people according to Republicans and Donald Trump? Well, the SAVE Act gives us some clues. Deep in the SAVE Act, there is one blanket exception for the SAVE Act’s draconian restrictions, only one—one exception. Guess what it is.

It is for the State of North Dakota. North Dakota is ruby red. It is overwhelmingly Republican, and it is the only State that right now does not require any form of voter registration. So it gets a free pass from all the rules every other State would have to follow.

How convenient.

Look, MAGA claims of voter fraud are utter garbage, but according to the ultraright Heritage Foundation, North Dakota had 12 instances of improper voting. Twelve is not a lot. It is tiny. But it was still more than other States that would be forced to impose draconian barriers to vote. North Dakota gets a pass again.

How convenient.

It is almost as if the goal of the SAVE Act has nothing to do with securing elections. This is how you write a bill designed to give Republicans a naked, partisan advantage, and it is what the SAVE Act does.

It is not a voter ID bill. It is a voter suppression bill.

#### DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. President, finally, on TSA and ICE, today, this afternoon, Democrats will be giving Republicans another chance to do the right thing by TSA workers and pay them for the important work they do while we continue to debate how to address issues at ICE. The Democrats have maintained the same position for weeks. We need to rein in ICE and stop the violence, and the American people are on our side.

But rather than negotiate common-sense reforms, Republicans have stonewalled funding and held critical Agencies—like TSA—hostage. We Democrats don’t want to do that.

Republicans, we are willing to fund TSA now. Just don’t stand in the way. Support us, just don’t stand in the way. Support us. TSA agents will be funded. We are willing to fund TSA now. Now. No ands, ifs, or buts.

Last night, Warnock went to the floor to offer a UC to pay our TSA workers. For the fourth time, Republicans blocked the bill. Today, Senator SLOTKIN will try it again and give Republicans another chance to fund TSA right away, shorten the lines at the airport, and bring the chaos to an end.

The only question Republicans must answer today is this: Has enough been enough? Will they finally fund TSA or keep holding those workers and our travelers hostage?

I yield the floor.

#### SAFEGUARD AMERICAN VOTER ELIGIBILITY ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message with respect to S. 1383, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 1383, a bill to establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Thune motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill.

Thune motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill, with Thune (for Schmitt) amendment No. 4420 (to the House amendment to the bill), in the nature of a substitute.

Thune (for Tuberville/Blackburn) amendment No. 4421 (to amendment No. 4420), to protect women and girls in athletics.

Thune motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Rules and Administration, with instructions, Thune amendment No. 4422, to change the enactment date.

Thune amendment No. 4423 (to the instructions (amendment No. 4422), of a perfecting nature.

Thune amendment No. 4424 (to amendment No. 4423), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

S. 1383

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this past weekend marked 61 years since President Lyndon B. Johnson delivered his “We Shall Overcome” speech to a joint session of Congress. Speaking from the House rostrum in the wake of Bloody Sunday in Selma, AL, President Johnson urged Congress to pass legislation that would secure “the full blessings of American life” to all, regardless of color or creed. That Congress would heed his call.

On August 6, 1965, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. That bill, nearly a century after the