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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable JAMES C. JUSTICE, a Senator from the State of West Virginia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, look beyond our mistakes and see our needs. Remind us that we are created in Your likeness and our hearts are restless without the gift of Your peace.

Lord, speak to our lawmakers today and teach them to listen, through wars and rumors of wars, for Your still, small voice. Guide them to learn the language of prayer and daily experience its power in their lives.

May they be calm when You would have them listen, grateful when You would have them blessed, and obedient when You would have them act. Make them always eager to receive directions from You.

And, Lord, be with those throughout our Nation and world who feel the pain of grief.

We pray in Your matchless Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 20, 2026.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JAMES C. JUSTICE, a Senator from the State of West Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. JUSTICE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

SAFEGUARD AMERICAN VOTER ELIGIBILITY ACT—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 311, H.R. 7147.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I said at the beginning of this debate that I was going to use the word “commonsense” a lot, and that is because the SAVE America Act unites a bunch of commonsense policies, the kind of things that are just intuitively obvious—or, at least, they should be—and should be getting 80 to 90 votes, or more, here in the Senate.

I have talked at length this week about commonsense election policies like showing a photo ID at the polls and demonstrating that you are an American citizen, in other words, eligible to vote when you register.

Today, I want to talk about a couple of other commonsense policies in this bill, in this case, not about protecting our elections but about protecting our youth.

In recent years, we have seen men—biological men who identify as

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



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women—take up spaces in athletics meant for actual women and girls. And this is happening across a range of sports: track, swimming, volleyball, basketball, soccer, softball, and the list goes on.

Now, I don't think I really need to tell anyone the problems with that. They are pretty obvious. There is the physical danger, of course, that can be posed to women by men competing in their sports.

But more than that, this is an issue of fairness and equality. At the most basic level, every roster spot that goes to a male is a roster spot that doesn't go to a female. That is a high school girl who has lost out on the chance to play high school sports because a male has taken up her space.

And for those women who are on the roster, the presence of a male on the team can, and frequently does, rob them of opportunities to excel. The simple biological, scientific fact is that men possess physical advantages when it comes to sports, things like greater muscle mass and greater aerobic power. And that means that, by and large, men are likely to dominate in women's sport, taking wins and medal opportunities away from women.

And it is not just about the unfairness of losing out on a place on the podium. Being knocked out of medal contention can mean the loss of things like college scholarships. As one female runner who was robbed of multiple wins by a biological male described the situation, "it robs girls of the chance to race in front of college scouts who show up for elite meets, and to compete for the scholarships and opportunities that come with college recruitment. I'll never know how my own college recruitment was impacted by losing those four state championship titles to a male. When colleges looked at my record, they didn't see the fastest girl in Connecticut. They saw a second- or third-place runner."

Let me read that again.

When colleges looked at my record, they didn't see the fastest girl in Connecticut. They saw a second- or third-place runner.

That is unconscionable, and what is even more unconscionable is that my Democrat colleagues are apparently OK with allowing this to happen.

With the way they talk about themselves as defenders of women's rights, you would think they would be the first—the very first—people up to bat for fairness and equality for female athletes, but they are not.

Last March, the Senate took up the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act, legislation to ensure that women—and women only—participate in women's sports at federally funded educational institutions; and every single one of my Democrat colleagues voted against the bill. Not one Democrat had the courage to say that women's sports are for women.

As the father of two female athletes and grandfather to a granddaughter who started playing sports, I feel pretty passionately about the subject.

I am grateful for the tremendous strides we have made in women's athletic programs over the past half century, and I cannot believe that one half of the U.S. Senate is apparently content to see those gains undermined by allowing men to take up places in sports meant for women.

With the SAVE America Act, Democrats are getting another chance to vote for legislation that would protect women's sports. It would be nice if this time they had the courage to stand up for female athletes.

I wish this were the only issue—the only consequence of radical transgender ideology—that we had to worry about. But as bad as it is for a female athlete to lose out on a college scholarship because her achievements are overshadowed by those of a biological male, the subjection of children to gender transition procedures is even worse.

In recent years, substantial numbers of children diagnosed with gender dysphoria have been prescribed puberty blockers—cross-sex hormones—and, in the most extreme cases, been approved for irreversible surgical procedures that permanently mutilate their bodies. And all of this has been done with little to no scientific evidence to support these dramatic interventions.

The Cass Review—a landmark, comprehensive study on medicine, gender issues, and youth conducted in Great Britain—repeatedly highlights the lack of scientific evidence to support gender transition procedures for minors. And thanks in substantial part to that review, Britain's national science service decided to largely discontinue providing puberty blockers to children.

And Britain is not the only European country that has reined in its provision of gender procedures for minors—Finland, Sweden, and Denmark have also done so. And a New York Times piece notes that there is reason to believe that there are other European countries that may follow suit.

Meanwhile, both the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the American Medical Association have come out against surgical gender transition procedures for minors, noting the lack of evidence to support their use.

It has become very clear that we simply do not have substantial scientific evidence to suggest that gender transition procedures benefit children. What we do have, however, is scientific knowledge of how dangerous these procedures can be, and the list of side effects is long and serious.

A 2025 report from the Department of Health and Human Services notes that side effects for gender transition procedures can include infertility, loss of bone density, heart disease and metabolic disorders, surgical complications, negative cognitive impacts, psychiatric disorders, and more.

It is unthinkable that we are subjecting children to these dangers before they can have any real understanding of what they are consenting to.

Mr. President, 12- and 13-year-olds cannot understand what it will mean to possibly damage their bones for the long term. And 14- and 15-year-olds are not capable of comprehending what giving up their fertility could mean. That is because they are children. They are still changing and growing and developing, and through no fault of their own, they simply don't have the experience and knowledge to grasp the full magnitude of what they are consenting to.

The Senate has been officially debating the SAVE America Act, which would ban gender transition procedures for minors, since Tuesday; and I have been struck by the near total silence of my Democrat colleagues on this issue during this debate.

Despite their embrace of the extreme sort of radical gender ideology—witness the refusal of even one Democrat to stand up for women in sports—I am not sure I have seen a single Democrat come to the floor to defend gender transition procedures for minors.

Now, they could just be keeping their powder dry for now, but I have to wonder if maybe some Democrats are reluctant to publicly advocate for subjecting children to, in many cases, irreversible medical procedures backed up by little scientific evidence with a whole host of serious, long-term side effects.

Open the 2025 HHS report on gender transition for children, and you come across this horrifying passage:

In many areas of medicine, treatments are first established as safe and effective in adults before being extended to pediatric populations. In this case, however, the opposite occurred: clinician-researchers developed the pediatric medical transition protocol in response to disappointing psychosocial outcomes in adults who underwent medical transition.

I mean, just say that again:

[C]linician-researchers developed the pediatric medical transition protocol in response to disappointing psychosocial outcomes in adults who underwent medical transition.

We have essentially been using children as guinea pigs. It is unconscionable, and it should stop now.

The SAVE America Act will give every Member of this body a chance to take a stand against the abuse of children, and I urge every Member of this body to vote to protect children from further harm.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

H.R. 7147

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the chaos at TSA is reaching a boiling

point. We need to reopen it as quickly as possible. That is what Senate Democrats are intent on doing. So, tomorrow, the Senate will take a very simple procedural vote on beginning to reopen TSA, which Democrats are leading.

Tomorrow, America will see the matter crystal clear: which Senators want to open up TSA, pay TSA workers, and end the chaos at our airports and which Senators are going to block TSA funding yet again. If you want to open up TSA, vote yes tomorrow.

Every previous vote offered by the Republicans has tied TSA funding to also continue funding for ICE, without any reform of ICE. This is different. This doesn't tie the TSA to ICE funding because ICE funding is controversial. This does not make the workers at our airports or the passengers at our airports hostages.

Republicans are saying: Unless you pass ICE as-is, without reform, we are not going to help the TSA workers get paid and reduce the lines at the airport.

We are saying: Just do it, no ands, ifs, or buts.

Negotiations to rein in ICE and end the violence still have a way to go. There are some very deep disagreements. Republicans still have not accepted that the American people want legislation—real legislation—to ensure the kind of brutality we saw in Minneapolis can't happen again. But in the meantime, Republicans do not need to hold the rest of these Agencies hostage, including TSA.

To my Republican colleagues: We both see the chaos at TSA. We both know and would admit there is a lot more work to do on ICE. There is no good reason to keep holding TSA hostage. There is no good reason to reject our proposal to fund it.

We are going to hold this vote tomorrow, and I urge my Republican colleagues to vote yes.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. President, on SAVE, the Senate is in session today, and all we are really doing is wasting time on a voter suppression bill written only to appease the fringe elements of the MAGA base. With so many problems facing our country, the cost of living so high, with people struggling to make ends meet, with the war going on in Iran, Republicans instead are choosing to spend time making it harder for citizens to vote. This is exactly what the SAVE Act is designed to do. It is designed to make it harder for citizens to vote.

Do not listen to the Republican talking points about voter ID. That is a ruse. Underneath the surface, the SAVE Act is a voter purge bill. Most of its core elements don't even talk about voter ID. They want to make it harder to register to vote than it is to register to buy an AR-15.

MAGA Republicans want to force every single State in America to submit their voter rolls to the Department of Homeland Security. They want

Americans' information to be run through an algorithm that Elon Musk and DOGE could use to kick eligible American citizens off the voter rolls without them even knowing they were kicked off.

When you show up at the polling place, they say: Mr. Jones, Ms. Smith, you are no longer on the registry.

And you say: Why?

They say: Well, you will have to go find out.

That is a disgrace. That is undoing what is deeply American: the right to vote. They want to make registering to vote a bureaucratic nightmare.

They want to end vote-by-mail, end registering online, end registering on college campuses and in churches, and even end registering at the DMV, where, of course, you have to show ID.

That is what the SAVE Act is, and Republicans know it. They know that if the American people are given a fair chance to make their voices heard, Republicans are in trouble.

IRAN

Mr. President, on Iran, thanks to Donald Trump's war with Iran, gas prices are now nearing \$4 a gallon. Experts predict that this weekend gasoline will cross the \$4-a-gallon threshold. In just the last month, gas prices have gone up by \$1 a gallon. Brent crude is hovering around \$108 a barrel, much higher than it has been.

And Donald Trump has the gall to say that prices are "not that bad." Do you hear that, America? Donald Trump is telling you \$4 gas is not that bad. What bubble does he live in? How often does he fill up his car with gasoline? When Donald Trump says that the prices are not that bad, who is he kidding? He is speaking like a billionaire. America is being led into war by Marie Antoinette.

And then Kevin Hassett, the top economic adviser to Trump, says Americans' pain is "the [least] of our concern[s] right now." Can you believe this? The highest economic adviser in the Trump administration says Americans' pain is "the [least] of our concern[s] right now." If there is anything that shows how much Donald Trump and his minions are out of touch, that is it right there. Trump and his acolytes are unbelievable. They are so clueless. They are in a bubble.

Meanwhile, the war with Iran is expanding. Iranian strikes on Qatar's energy structure have knocked out 17 percent of the country's LNG export capacity. QatarEnergy says two LNG trains could be sidelined for 3 to 5 years—a staggering blow to global energy markets. In other words, even if this war ended tomorrow—and there are no signs it is anywhere close to ending—the damage Donald Trump has unleashed will take a long, long time to fix.

Meanwhile, the war in the Middle East is expanding, not shrinking. Donald Trump is sending additional warships and thousands of marines to the region. He refuses to fully rule out

boots on the ground, a step that would mean more American casualties and even higher costs than he now projects. And this week the administration was floating a funding request of more than \$200 billion—\$200 billion—to finance this open-ended war. No way; that will never happen. It is a preposterous and dangerous risk. We should never accept giving Donald Trump a blank check to wage war in Iran in perpetuity. Even a fraction of the \$200 billion is unacceptable for a war without a plan, without an endgame, without the support of the American people. And, of course, the money could be used for so much better—reducing Americans' costs on healthcare and on housing and on electricity and on daycare.

So much could be done with that money instead of a war that Donald Trump has chosen to wage without even a vote in Congress.

Meanwhile, Trump continues to vilify and bash our closest allies even as he publicly asks for their help. Today, he called NATO a "paper tiger" and called our allies "cowards." How does he expect to form a coalition, which he says he needs, if he is just going to spend his time calling them names—calling our allies names?

The damage Donald Trump is doing to our alliances will last a long time and is sickening. He has spent years trashing our allies, insulting them, threatening NATO, undermining the very alliances that have kept us strong for generations. Now, suddenly, after Trump has dragged the United States into a war that is not going his way, he turns around and asks those same allies to jump in and help. What world does he live in? And when the allies don't immediately leap into this open-ended conflict in the way Donald Trump wants, what does he do? He calls them "cowards."

Donald Trump's leadership is pathetic—pathetic.

The war needs to come to an end now. The American people have had enough.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

H.R. 7147

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the Senate will soon confirm MARKWAYNE MULLIN to be the new Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

It is critical at this time that we have a fully functioning and fully funded Department of Homeland Security. The American people need that to keep all of us safe. We are going to do very well having Senator MULLIN's trustworthy leadership in place.

Today, the Department is not fully funded—it is not funded at all—because of the Democrats. We just had the Democrat leader on the floor of the Senate saying he wants to vote against funding the Department of Homeland Security, and he says he plans to do it again today.

Right now, the Department of Homeland Security is shut down, people are

unpaid, and the Democrats are the ones that continue to proudly say that they are the ones defunding it. For 35 days, they have blocked every effort to reopen the Department of Homeland Security. It is time to vote to get it open again.

Americans need and deserve safety and security. The Democrats are preventing it. Americans all around the country are on high alert because they have seen multiple attacks by radical Islamic terrorists across the streets of this Nation. Americans have died, and blood is on their hands.

A terrorist forcefully rammed his truck loaded with explosives into a synagogue and a preschool in Michigan. There were staff there. There were teachers. There were 100 children inside. Had it not been for the quick-acting security guards, many of those inside would have been killed. We later learned that that terrorist's brother was a commander in the terrorist group Hezbollah.

Here in Virginia, at Old Dominion University, another terrorist shot and killed a decorated ROTC instructor.

In New York City, two terrorists threw homemade bombs into a crowd. The terrorist admitted to authorities later that they had hoped to hurt or kill more people than were killed by the bomber in the Boston Marathon.

In Texas, a terrorist shot into a crowded establishment. He was wearing a T-shirt that said "Property of Allah." Three people were killed, and dozens were wounded.

It is not just the kinetic attacks; it is also cyber attacks. Iran this week launched a major cyber attack on a major medical device company in Michigan. Because of that attack, hospitals around the Nation had to temporarily pause transmitting vital-sign data from patients under treatment.

The attacks continue, and the Democrats continue to defund our Department of Homeland Security.

The Wall Street Journal noted this week that the cyber attack we just witnessed against the medical device company shows the reach of Iran's cyber capabilities.

The Department of Homeland Security was set up after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. They are there to prevent all of these kinds of attacks, and the Democrats have shut it all down. Because of the shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security by the Democrats, our Nation is vulnerable to terrorist attacks on multiple levels—physical, cyber.

Republicans stand ready to end this shutdown today. We want to end it today. We are going to vote today.

The minority leader was on the floor, and he said: Well, tomorrow, we are going to have a vote about trying to change committee assignments and move something over there and move it around, and we will just deal with one part of it.

The country needs to be protected. The American people need to know

that they are safe in their communities.

The White House has outlined an entire list of bipartisan solutions to address the concerns that the Democrats have raised. They include expanding the use of body cameras for officers and making IDs for officers clearly visible. Democrats have rejected all of these good-faith offers. They rejected bipartisan solutions. Instead, they once again are trying to peel apart the Department of Homeland Security.

This is a comprehensive Department put together after a terrorist attacked us in our homeland, and it is to protect the people in this country. Piecemeal Democrat bills cannot hide the fact that Democrats caused this current shutdown. If they think they can avoid blame for this shutdown of American security, they are wrong. The people understand that the Democrats are standing between their own securities in their own homes and the terrorists who are out there.

I think Democrats ought to pay attention to President Obama's Secretary of Homeland Security. His name is Jeh Johnson. We have all worked with him. He had a warning just this past weekend for the Democrats. He said this:

If ever there were a time we needed to fund the Department of Homeland Security, it's right now.

He went on to say:

[We] need all 22 components of Homeland Security functioning all at once, side-by-side.

Not piecemeal, torn apart, which is what the Democrats are trying to do.

This is a statement of a Democrat. He ran the Department for President Barack Obama, and he is telling the Democrats on the floor: Fund all of it.

Senate Democrats have clearly lost their direction, and they have lost the argument. Even Democrats are saying they are wrong.

One of the components of the Department of Homeland Security is something called Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The American people are well aware of that.

Senator SCHUMER was on the floor making a comment about them a few moments ago. He said they are controversial.

Well, just a few years ago, Senator SCHUMER had something very different to say to NBC News. He said:

ICE does some functions that are very much needed.

Apparently, he doesn't think any of it is needed today. Now he wants to abolish ICE. He has said it. Democrats want to abolish ICE. They have said it. They want to defund law enforcement. You have seen the chants. You have seen the people: "Defund the police." "Defund ICE." They don't seem to care about the safety and the security of people in this country. They seem to want to stand more with illegal immigrant criminals than they do with American people. This is a radical position. It is now also the default policy of the Democrat Party.

So what are the necessary functions that Senator SCHUMER might have been talking about a few years ago when he said "ICE does some functions that are very much needed"? Well, one of those is called Homeland Security Investigations. They are part of Immigration and Customs Enforcement—the part he wants defunded. He wants it all gone.

Mr. President, 7,100 special agents work for Homeland Security Investigations. They do vital work that keeps America and Americans safe. This week alone, these hard-working agents helped to seize over 170 pounds of methamphetamine in Utah. Additionally, they arrested a child trafficker in California who was trafficking not one but two children. They helped to investigate and arrest an illegal immigrant in Louisiana who was a member of the terrorist group MS-13. That is this week.

They want that entire Department gone. The American people need them. We need that level of security.

Senate Democrats are now defunding the American heroes who stop drug cartels, who stop terrorists, who rescue children from human traffickers.

The actions of the Democrats continue to make our Nation less safe. It is time for them to join us in protecting the Nation's security.

So we are going to vote again today. We are going to vote to fund the Department of Homeland Security, and we will fund it right away today, fully, immediately. The Democrats are going to have to say whether they are going to stand with us and the American people or they are once again going to stand against safety and security. They are the only ones standing in the way, and blood is on their hands. The American people will hold them accountable.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, a woman named Kristi Noem came and appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee. We had been asking her to come in and explain her management of the Department of Homeland Security for months. She said she was too busy; we knew better.

We watched one aspect of what that Department was doing with the ICE agents not only in Chicago, which I am honored to represent, but also Minneapolis.

Finally, she weakened and succumbed to our request and basically said: I will come. I will do the Senate on Tuesday, I will do the House on Wednesday, and then don't bother me for a while.

It didn't work out as she planned.

She appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee and wouldn't answer questions directly to her about the management of the Department and things she had said and done.

The Achilles' heel turned out to be a \$200 million publicity stunt, which she had bilked the taxpayers out of, so that

she could travel around the country by television, by social media, riding horses, appearing before Mount Rushmore, and she said the President approved it.

The next day, she appeared before the House Judiciary Committee and had a similar experience.

By the end of the day, she was finished. Two weeks ago, the head of the Department of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, was fired by President Trump.

Clearly, there is something wrong in that Department, and it starts with ICE, this paramilitary force that showed up in the city of Chicago and across the United States and has killed at least two, maybe three innocent American citizens.

Their charge was to go after criminals who managed to sneak across our border and live in the United States. You heard the President's speech over and over again: We are going to get the "worst of the worst." Remember he said that?

The terrorists, the murderers, the rapists, the criminally insane, that is what we are going after. But the record of the ICE Agency is much different. When they take a look at all of those that they have deported and taken into some kind of a holding cell, it turns out that only one out of seven have any kind of criminal record—one out of seven.

So six of the people that they are arresting and detaining and moving off to different detention camps have no criminal record at all. They are not the worst of the worst. They are folks that overstayed a visa into the United States, period.

So she came and appeared before us, and we have said repeatedly on our side, we want to work with the administration to change the standards for ICE so that they are basically the same standards that apply to your State troopers and your hometown police, basic standards of law enforcement that professionals follow. ICE is a far cry from that today, but what we are looking for are changes that makes them comply with the law and the Constitution.

There is a question of funding the Department of Homeland Security. Two weeks ago, the Democrats said: Here is our position. We will fund everything in the Department of Homeland Security, all of it, including TSA, except for ICE, and we are negotiating with the White House. Let's get it done.

Nine times we have come to the floor. Nine times Democrats have come to the floor and said we will fund the entire department, including TSA, including FEMA, including the Coast Guard. ICE, let's resolve by negotiation. We are in the middle of that right now.

Nine times the Republicans objected to that proposal from the Democrats. So to come to the floor now and blame the Democrats because people in TSA are not being paid doesn't reflect the reality and what happened on the floor.

SAFEGUARD AMERICAN VOTER ELIGIBILITY ACT

Madam President, now there is also a matter pending on the floor. I will see if I still have a copy of it here. This is the matter that is before us on the floor of the U.S. Senate. It is entitled "SAVE America Act." What this proposes to do is a dramatic change in registering to vote in America.

Let me be specific. With this proposal, the proof that you have to present of your identity when you register to vote changes dramatically.

When you look at the second page of this, they start listing what you have to bring in to prove that you are eligible to vote. The first suggestion is a passport. Well, half of the people in America, roughly half, own a passport and half do not. So if you decide you want to get a passport to make sure that you or your son or daughter who has turned 18 get a chance to vote, how do you get a passport?

Well, there is an Agency of the government, the State Department, and you come and pay a filing fee of \$165. You can get an expedited approval in a matter of days and weeks for an additional \$60, but it is basically \$165 for a passport. Let me remind you, half of the people in the United States do not have a passport.

Creating this as a standard of the election in November, can you imagine what is going to happen at the passport office? How many Americans register to vote each year? About 50 million—50 million.

How many passports are currently being issued by the Department of State without this law passing? Twenty-five million. So you are going to triple the workload at the Department of State for people who want to be registered to vote in time for November. How is that going to work? No explanation.

The second opportunity you have to prove you are really an American is to present your birth certificate. Problem: Turns out a substantial number of Americans don't have a birth certificate; they have to obtain one. And, secondly, there is a problem when the birth certificate reflects a maiden name of a woman before she was married or in a hyphenated relationship. And so there has to be a change made there.

In each State there is a cost and a time involved in that process. So this is supposed to make it easier to vote? No, not at all.

What is it that has changed in America that makes us want to dramatically change the laws on registering to vote? Well, voter fraud, according to the other side of the aisle—people who are ineligible; they don't even profess to be Americans; and they are going to try to vote.

And you say to yourself: Well, that must be a terrible problem. They say millions and millions and millions of people are involved in that. So let's take a look at the record.

From 1999 until 2023, 24 years, do you have any idea how many people who

didn't have American citizenship were prepared to violate the law and try to vote? Well, each year we are talking about some 50 million people registering, 24-year period of time, the number must be huge. Seven million? No. Seven hundred thousand? No. Seventy thousand? No. Seven hundred? No.

The number is 77 people in 24 years attempted to register to vote in the United States and weren't legally American citizens. Seventy-seven of the millions that were trying to register during that period of time.

So the Republicans are proposing changing the law for everyone, no matter where you are from, no matter what your political affiliation may be for a new standard of proof. It is not necessary. In fact, to charge \$165 for a passport so I can prove I can vote is in the nature of a poll tax.

What does the Supreme Court have to say about poll taxes? In the case of Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that any poll tax was unconstitutional.

The Nation had already ratified the 24th Amendment, which declared citizens' rights to vote in Federal elections "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax."

The Harper case involved a poll tax in the State of Virginia. The Supreme Court threw it out. Do you know how much the poll tax was in Virginia when this case was decided? One dollar and fifty cents.

Now, compare that to going out to have a passport issued to you and paying \$165. That is a lot of gasoline, \$165.

In striking this fee down, Justice William Douglas said, "the right to vote is too precious, too fundamental to be . . . conditioned" on whether somebody has \$1.50 in their pocket.

Yet the Republicans are trying to make this the basic standard, a passport, the most acceptable standard under their rhetoric.

IRAN

Madam President, let me conclude by saying a word about the situation in Iran. We kept asking the administration what their goals were with the invasion of Iran. Do you remember the public hearings, the congressional hearings where they sent in the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, they were interrogated by Senators and Congressmen from both political parties and asked to explain why we invaded Iran?

The reason you don't remember is because it never happened. We invaded this country without any congressional debate.

We are bound by the Constitution, which says in article I, section 8, it is Congress that declares war, and yet we have no explanation formally from this administration and no opportunity to ask basic questions.

I will close with this: 22 years ago there was a vote in this Chamber, a vote to invade Iraq. If you remember,

we had a fulsome debate before that happened, and the administration under President George W. Bush explained they had weapons of mass destruction which threatened our allies and friends and even the United States, and that is why we had to invade.

I was skeptical of that. I was one of 23 Senators who voted against the invasion of Iraq 22 years ago. It was 1 Republican and 22 Democrats, we voted no. It turned out to be the best vote I ever cast. When we sent our forces in there, Saddam Hussein was swept aside quickly, and then they started looking for weapons of mass destruction and found none. None.

And here we go again. A \$200 billion first appropriation for this war—\$200 billion. If just a portion of that money had been saved for health insurance premiums, helping people pay them in the United States, some 24 million Americans wouldn't be facing a dramatic increase that they can't afford in their health insurance premiums. Madam President, \$200 billion is what President Trump is asking for. It is time for us to have that debate we didn't have before the invasion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MOODY). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, we are negotiating right now over much-needed reforms for ICE and Border Patrol. The reality, which I think we do all understand is that we are still very far apart; but as negotiations continue, Democrats have tried again and again to give paychecks to TSA and CISA and the Coast Guard and FEMA, Agencies that are doing really important work right now.

In fact, we have tried nine times to get those paychecks moving, both a full-year CR, which Republicans have blocked multiple times now, and after those were rejected, targeted efforts such as the repeated attempts we have made to try and pay TSA workers.

The only reason these workers are going without pay right now is because Republicans are holding their funding hostage so they can try to give ICE even more money, without including any necessary reforms.

That is what the bill Republicans have once again teed up for a vote would do. So Republicans are saying: We will not let you give TSA or other important Agencies a single dollar unless you let us shell out billions of dollars to ICE and Border Patrol, which are already sitting on billions of dollars. Think about how absurd that is.

Republicans won't let us give more funding to TSA, which can't pay its employees right now, unless they can give more money to ICE and Border Patrol, even when Republicans know ICE officers are still getting paychecks because Republicans know Border Patrol agents are getting paychecks.

They know they already shoveled billions of dollars at these Agencies in their "Big Ugly Bill." Secretary Noem went out and blew hundreds of millions

of dollars to cut ridiculous ads and plaster her face all over TV. She blew hundreds of millions on new private jets. ICE wasted millions on souped-up SUVs with flashy paint jobs, and they can't even use them.

So what ICE and Border Patrol need is not more money, what they need is accountability. Democrats have been very clear what we are asking for here since late January, and our asks have not changed. We are talking about incredibly basic, necessary reforms. Taking off masks, requiring body cameras and IDs is not some extreme thing. Requiring judicial warrants is not some extreme thing.

It actually is the same procedure the local police use, and we need these reforms because they directly respond to the abuses that have been happening.

With warrants you won't have a random American citizen getting dragged out of their car on their way to a doctor's appointment. With warrants, you don't have so much profiling where ICE and Border Patrol haul the same American citizen away from his worksite twice, not charged with a crime, not part of a targeted action, just hauled away by masked thugs.

With warrants, you don't have so many cases of mistaken identity where ICE drags a man out of his house in his underwear and even refuses to look at his ID. Now, the DHS Secretary nominee just this week said they would use them. That is a welcome surprise, but we need to see that in legislative text now.

And let's talk about why it is important to have ICE follow the same basic use of force standards as our local police.

If Federal agents were following proper use of force, maybe families on the way back home from a basketball game wouldn't get tear gassed and parents wouldn't have to bring their baby to the hospital when they stop breathing.

If Federal agents were following proper use of force, maybe citizens like Marimar Martinez and Carlos Jimenez would never have been shot by Federal agents, and maybe citizens like Ruben Ray Martinez, Renee Good, and Alex Pretti would still be alive.

There is a reason we have been demanding Republicans work with us to rein in ICE and Border Patrol. Have Republicans looked around? They gave ICE and Border Patrol unprecedented sums of money, and then Donald Trump and Stephen Miller turned them into rogue Agencies.

Republicans don't want to talk about that. They don't want to even address that. But the American people have had enough of this rogue Agency. We need to rein it in, and we are negotiating right now over how to do that. But it is clear it is going to take more time to get there, and we need the White House and we need Republicans to finally address these key reforms.

But there is no reason to make TSA wait for their paychecks. Absolutely

none. Democrats are eager to break the logjam and fund Agencies like the TSA and Coast Guard and FEMA and CISA. The offer to fund these while we keep negotiating stands.

I am even ready to make it happen on a temporary basis while we continue working on reforming ICE and Border Patrol if that is what is needed, but so far, Republicans have responded to that offer with the same message they are going to send today. Republicans are saying: No, we will not give you any TSA funding, none, unless you shove billions of dollars at an Agency that we already gave billions of dollars to.

"No," they are saying. "We will not let you send out TSA paychecks unless we can give a blank check to ICE," which is already sending out paychecks.

Well, let me be clear: We are not going to give Stephen Miller a blank check, as this bill would do. I am not going to stand by and let Republicans shovel more money at a rogue Agency without having real change in legislative text.

Americans are demanding serious reforms, and we are putting our foot down. So I will be voting no, and I urge my colleagues to join me as well.

Now, I will say we had an effective meeting this week with the White House and some of our Republican colleagues, but the basic challenges remain: The White House and Republicans need to work with us to address these key reforms. To that end, my colleagues and I remain focused on the White House's coming forward with a proposal that really addresses the major concerns I have outlined here today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

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

Mr. SCHATZ. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Mrs. MURRAY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington objected.

The objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. I will be back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I hear you.

The majority leader.

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

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

MOTION TO PROCEED TO THE MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to the motion to reconsider the cloture vote from February 24 on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 311, H.R. 7147.

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

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to reconsider the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 311, H.R. 7147.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

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

John Thune, Mike Crapo, Marsha Blackburn, Bill Hagerty, Tim Sheehy, Roger F. Wicker, Susan M. Collins, Todd Young, Jim Banks, Bernie Moreno, Jon Husted, Eric Schmitt, John Hoeven, John Barrasso, Pete Ricketts, Roger Marshall, Katie Boyd Britt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 7147, a bill making further consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close, upon reconsideration?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Montana (Mr. SHEEHY), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF), the Sen-

ator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 59 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Banks	Graham	Moody
Barrasso	Grassley	Moran
Blackburn	Hagerty	Moreno
Boozman	Hawley	Mullin
Budd	Hoeven	Murkowski
Capito	Husted	Ricketts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Collins	Johnson	Rounds
Cornyn	Justice	Schmitt
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Cruz	Lummis	Thune
Curtis	Marshall	Tillis
Ernst	McConnell	Young
Fetterman	McCormick	

NAYS—37

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kim	Schatz
Blumenthal	King	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Lujan	Slotkin
Booker	Markey	Van Hollen
Cantwell	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warnock
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Durbin	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	
Heinrich	Reed	

NOT VOTING—16

Britt	Kelly	Smith
Coons	Klobuchar	Tuberville
Daines	Paul	Whitehouse
Fischer	Schiff	Wicker
Gallego	Shaheen	
Kaine	Sheehy	

The motion was rejected.

(Mr. RICKETTS assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MCCORMICK). On this vote, the yeas are 47, and the nays are 37.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, upon reconsideration, the motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 696.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of MARKWAYNE MULLIN, of Oklahoma, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

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 legislative 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. 696, MARKWAYNE MULLIN, of Oklahoma, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, John Barrasso, Pete Ricketts, Bernie Moreno, John Cornyn, Lindsey Graham, Jim Banks, Marsha Blackburn, Thom Tillis, Chuck Grassley, Bill Hagerty, Rick Scott of Florida, Shelley Moore Capito, Jon Husted, Joni Ernst, James Lankford, Ted Budd, Katie Boyd Britt.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. MORENO. Mr. President, today marks the fifth time that Republicans have asked to end debate and allow us to discuss funding the Department of Homeland Security.

So for the people at home that don't keep up with Senate procedures, what the Democrats have actually done again, for the fifth time, is not even let us get on the bill and actually debate it. They have refused to allow us to consider the bill, which is a pretty remarkable scenario when you think of the effects.

For those who aren't as familiar, the Department of Homeland Security was created right after 9/11, the attacks of 9/11. I don't know about you, Mr. President, but I know exactly where I was when that second plane hit the tower, because that is when we knew we were under attack.

We took a bunch of the Agencies that are charged with protecting this country and put them into this very, very large Agency that today employs 260,000 Americans. If this was a private company, it would be absolutely a Fortune 50, maybe even a Fortune 25 enterprise—huge, huge organization.

The one part of the Constitution that is crystal clear is that our responsibility is to fund the government. Yet, for the third time, we now are in either a full or partial government shutdown that the Democrats have initiated because they refuse to do the basic work—funding the government.

Now, you will see a lot of noise from the Democrats when they say: Well, we have—they acknowledge that they have not funded the entire Department, so they will say: But we want to fund this Agency or this Agency within the Department of Homeland Security.

What they won't tell you—because obviously then they would have to admit what it is they really want—is they don't want to fund Customs and Border Patrol and they don't want to