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Senate

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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 Husted) amendment No. 4732 (to amendment No. 4420), to require voters to provide photo identification.

Thune motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Rules and Administration, with instructions, Thune amendment No. 4772, to change the enactment date.

Thune amendment No. 4773 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 4772), of a perfecting nature.

Thune amendment No. 4774 (to amendment No. 4773), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, you remember the tragic loss of life, about 3,000 Americans, as a result of the attack we had in New York and Washington, DC, on 9/11. One of the conclusions we came to afterward of how drastic things like that can happen in America is that there wasn't cooperation and communication between the FBI and the CIA. In fact, it was prohibited by law. Now, that has changed; so there is supposed to be that communication going on between the dual Agencies so 9/11 never happens again.

I am here to talk about a couple of other Agencies that need to cooperate to make sure that the policy of our Federal Government is carried out properly.

So, last December, I spoke about one of my long-running oversight projects. That oversight project is ensuring maximum coordination between the Department of Health and Human Services Agency entitled Office of National Security, or ONS for short, and the intelligence community. By coordination, at the very least we ought to have dialogue and cooperation.

Part of ONS's responsibility is to protect against foreign threats that undermine tax-funded search. Now, to be effective, ONS must collaborate closely with national security partners.

So as part of my oversight, I wrote to HHS Secretary Kennedy and Director of National Intelligence Gabbard to learn about their recent efforts to ensure robust information sharing and that it is done in an effective way.

Last week, my investigate staff hosted a classified briefing with both ONS and the intelligence community staff. I am told that the meeting was very productive, that both parties have a like-minded approach to information sharing, and that improvements have been made.

I have also been told that more can be done to enhance information-sharing capabilities between ONS and the intelligence community.

So, today, I urge the administration to make that cooperation and coordination and information-sharing to be enhanced. Doing so will further help detect and deter adversaries trying to take advantage of American research and innovation.

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.

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.

Lord, You are our light and salvation. So we have no reason to fear. We ask that, through Your gracious intervention, You convey Your marvelous wisdom, knowledge, and strength to the lawmakers of this great Nation.

We place our trust in Your powerful providence, entreating You to send Your divine inspiration in order to empower our legislators to do Your will. May, through this empowerment, You provide them with the ability to calm this restless Nation and world.

Lord, let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with us.

We pray in Your adored 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.

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



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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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 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.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, enough is enough. Republicans have bent over backward to negotiate with Democrats, and now Democrats need to get serious about funding the Department of Homeland Security.

Now, let's just review things for a minute here.

In January, Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate reached an agreement on the Department of Homeland Security funding bill, including a number of reforms: de-escalation training for Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, increased funding for body cameras, and increased oversight of border security and immigration enforcement funding.

Then Democrats reneged on that agreement.

Republicans said: OK, we will reopen negotiations.

The White House offered up a robust list of additional reforms. The Democrats said no.

And then, over the weekend, Democrats suggested that they would agree to fund the entire Department with the exception of immigration enforcement operations, and we offered them a bill to do exactly that. And Democrats still refused.

It seems that Democrats have no interest in reaching an agreement. Many of them are perfectly willing to leave the Department of Homeland Security unfunded for the long term.

They claim that they want to fund the Department. They claim that they are concerned about TSA officers and others working without pay. But talk is cheap, and their actions belie their words.

If Democrats cared about TSA officers, if they cared about Coast Guard employees, if they cared about the vital work of the Department of Homeland Security, then they would be getting serious about closing a deal, not ceaselessly offering up the same unchanging list of demands, like a broken record or a particularly nightmarish version of "Groundhog Day."

Last fall, Democrats shut down the entire Federal Government for a rec-

ordbreaking 43 days. Their Department of Homeland Security shutdown is now on its 41st day, which means that, thanks to Democrats, TSA agents have spent almost half—almost half—of the fiscal year working without pay.

Let that sink in for a minute. Thanks to Democrats, TSA agents have spent almost half of this fiscal year working without pay.

It is no wonder they are quitting in droves or that, as an NBC article yesterday reported, they have been reduced to things like selling blood and plasma—yes, blood and plasma; that is from an NBC article—just to get by.

And all of this—all of this—is because Democrats have been unwilling to consider anything other than what they think will serve them politically.

Republicans are at the table. We have been at the table. Now it is long past time for Democrats to get serious. How much worse do things have to get? How many more Americans have to suffer before Democrats do their job and work with Republicans to fund the government?

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Just where do Democrats stand on voter ID? It is pretty darn hard to tell. I mean, we spent years hearing from Democrats how voter ID is a tool of voter suppression. As recently as mid-February, the Democrat leader was decrying voter ID, and then suddenly Democrats started hedging their bets.

Wait. Of course, Democrats support voter ID, Democrat after Democrat has been claiming—and photo ID specifically. The Democrat leader said last week:

Our objection as Democrats is not to a photo ID.

Except, is that true? Is that really true? Because on Tuesday the Democrat leader came down to the floor and made it very clear that he, at least, does object to photo ID. We need, in his words, "inclusive" voter ID options, like leases or utility bills or debit cards or photocopies thereof. He is apparently OK with a demand for photo ID in a million other situations—from boarding a plane to signing your kid up for school to opening a bank account—but heaven forbid that we ask Americans to produce the same ID they produce all over town when they go to the polls. It is not inclusive.

Other Democrats have acted similarly, paying lip service to voter ID and photo ID, in particular, but backpedaling the minute actually supporting voter ID legislation comes into question.

The senior Democrat from New Jersey was on CNN Tuesday and said that he would support a voter ID bill, until he was pressed on that commitment, and then he suddenly started avoiding the question. The junior Democrat Senator from Georgia boldly claimed:

I think you should have to prove that you are who you say you are before you vote. I support voter ID.

Then he went on to knock the voter ID requirements under discussion.

And just to give the Presiding Officer an example of some of the—I mean, this actually is quite revealing. Here are quotes from one, two, three, four, five Democrats. This one:

Who could be against that, requiring an ID to vote?

That from a couple of days ago. Here is the Senator from Arizona:

If people want to adopt the Arizona way, which is strict voter ID, I think that would be fine.

That was about a week ago.

The Senator from Rhode Island:

I represent a State that has a sensible voter ID law and that regularly reviews its voter rolls. This approach has been extremely effective.

That, again, just a few days ago.

And as I said, the Democrat leader—and this is 10 days ago:

Democrats support voter ID.

The Senator from Michigan:

[H]opefully all Americans are in agreement about [voter ID].

That from a week ago.

Here is the other Senator from Georgia:

We have voter ID laws in my State. You should have to prove that you are who you say you are before you vote. That is basic.

That also from about a week ago.

So the question is will Democrats vote the way they talk. Well, today, they are going to get a chance to support voter ID without supporting the SAVE America Act. We are going to have an amendment. We are going to have an amendment vote on a clean voter ID bill. The only thing—the only thing—the amendment would do would be to require photo ID at the polls: a driver's license, a Tribal ID, a military ID, a veteran ID, a passport. That is all it would say—and something that a lot of Democrats have been out there openly advocating for.

And, again, supporting this amendment doesn't require Democrats to support the overall SAVE America Act. It doesn't obligate them to vote in any way on the final bill. They can vote for this amendment and vote against the SAVE America Act.

What this amendment will do, however, is force Democrats to come clean on whether or not they actually support voter ID in a real way—not photocopies of debit cards or utility bills, as Democrats once proposed—REAL IDs, with photos, issued by States or the Federal Government; the kind of IDs Americans use all the time in their daily lives; the kind of IDs that polls show Americans overwhelmingly support.

Democrats have been trying to have their cake and eat it, too, pretending that they stand with the overwhelming majority of Americans, who support photo IDs at the polls, while declining any occasion to put their money where their mouth is and support actual legislation. So here is their chance. If Democrats are being honest, if they really think that showing an ID is "reasonable," as the Democrat whip