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## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TED BUDD, a Senator from the State of North Carolina.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Sovereign God, thank You that Your mercies endure forever. Show us Your ways and teach us Your paths as You lead us with Your truth. Today, set the hearts of our lawmakers on Heaven's way. In all of their actions, may they seek Your celestial approval. Remind them that You are the only constituent they absolutely must please. May our Senators stand on Your promises, lean on Your grace, and trust in Your guidance. Lord, thank You for Your mercy. You lift the lowly, satisfy the thirsty, and fill the hungry with good things. And Lord, continue to comfort Senator WARNER and his wife Lisa as they grieve the loss of their daughter Madison.

We pray in Your loving 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 bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, April 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 TED BUDD, a Senator from the State of North Carolina, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,  
President pro tempore.

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

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

### MORNING BUSINESS

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

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

### TAXES

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, tax day was last week, and I would like to read a brief excerpt from a Washington Post article.

The title of this article: "Tax refunds shoot up as Americans take advantage of new deductions."

And here is the excerpt:

Karen Richardson, 68, has had a predictable tax return since she retired from her job administering government benefits four years ago. She lives on a fixed income and usually owes some money at tax time, so she was surprised to get a \$1,000 refund this year due to the senior deduction. "The Big Beautiful Bill worked for me," she said, "I didn't think it applied to more than the richer people. . . . I really didn't think it applied to me."

Well, as Ms. Richardson and many other hard-working Americans have

discovered, the Big Beautiful Bill, the Working Families Tax Cuts, does indeed apply to them. It worked for them this tax season, and it will work for them in future tax seasons.

In 2017, Republicans overhauled our outdated Tax Code so that it would work better for our economy and for American families alike.

We cut tax rates across the board, doubled the child tax credit, and nearly doubled the standard deduction. And all of this made a significant difference to working families' tax bills. But this relief was scheduled to expire at the end of 2025, which meant that starting this January, Americans would have seen a lot more of their paychecks going to the Federal Government.

Republicans were determined not to let that happen. And so last summer, we passed the Working Families Tax Cut to prevent a massive \$2.6 trillion tax hike on Americans making less than \$400,000.

But we didn't just prevent a tax hike. In addition to ensuring that Americans can keep enjoying lower tax rates, Republicans passed a number of additional tax relief measures. We boosted the standard deduction again. We increased the child tax credit and linked it to inflation so its value will never go down. We instituted no tax on tips. We instituted no tax on overtime and more.

And hard-working Americans are reaping the benefits. This tax season more than 30 million seniors claimed the new bonus deduction for older Americans. More than a million taxpayers bought an American-made car and were able to deduct an average of \$1,800 in auto loan interest on that new vehicle. More than 25 million American workers were able to deduct overtime pay from their taxes, resulting in substantial tax savings.

And more than 6 million workers were able to deduct their tips from their taxes. And that doesn't even count the parents who were able to

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



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take advantage of the enhanced child tax credit or the new tax-advantaged accounts for their child or all the Americans, all of the Americans who benefited from our further increase in the standard deduction.

The Working Families Tax Cut is working for working families. The New York Times recently interviewed a number of taxpayers. The Times reported:

Many of the taxpayers said they had received their largest refund in years, money that is going toward paying down credit card debt, catching up on bills, padding savings accounts or covering the cost of a vacation.

“money that is going toward paying down credit card debt, catching up on bills, padding savings accounts or covering the cost of a vacation.”

That was our goal with this bill, to take some of the pressure off, to free up money that families could use to do things like pay down debt or put away for a rainy day or take a much-needed vacation. Thanks to the Working Families Tax Cut, Americans now have a little more breathing room in their budget.

And whether we are passing tax relief, new measures to make prescription drugs more affordable at the pharmacy counter, or legislation to address the cost of housing, Republicans will continue to work to make life more affordable for hard-working Americans.

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 bill 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### REMEMBERING MADISON WARNER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to express my deepest and dearest sympathies for our friend MARK WARNER, his wife Lisa, and the rest of their family as they mourn the terrible loss of their daughter Madison.

I know how close the family was to Madison, and the depth of that loss is unfathomable. The Warner family should know that we are keeping them in our prayers. We are wishing them strength. May Madison's memory be a blessing.

#### KASH PATEL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on Kash Patel, the American people expect competence from the President's

Cabinet, not the unmitigated and continuing chaos we see every day.

Over the weekend, more damning reports about FBI Director Kash Patel's disorderly, drunken, and deranged behavior came to light. The Atlantic's reporting only confirmed what Senate Democrats have said from the start: Kash Patel is not simply unqualified, he is a grave risk to the rule of law and to American national security.

I have called on Acting Attorney General Blanche to preserve all records, all communications, and other evidence regarding Kash Patel's dangerous behavior before the Trump administration tries to brush it under the rug again.

We are asking—we are calling on Acting Attorney General Blanche to preserve all records, communications, and other evidence regarding Kash Patel's dangerous behavior before the Trump administration tries to brush it under the rug.

The Atlantic interviewed dozens of people who have observed Patel's erratic behavior, his excessive drinking. Apparently, Patel frequently misses key briefings and meetings because he is too hungover to attend. Patel's security detail often struggles to wake him up after his nights of partying and once even had to ask for breaching equipment because Patel was unresponsive behind a locked door.

All of this is made even worse by the reports of Kash Patel's constant jet-setting on the taxpayers' dime, his illegal crusade against Trump's political enemies, and his purge of countless counterintelligence officers focused on Iran just days before Trump launched this reckless war.

Americans deserve steady, sober leadership from their FBI Director, and they are not getting it—it seems—in any way.

Kash Patel's job is to protect the American people and our Constitution, not to party on the job. Patel must resign immediately. Every day he remains in office subjects America to serious and unnecessary risks.

#### IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Donald Trump continues to demonstrate that he has no plan to end his disastrous war of choice with Iran and no idea just how badly the American people are hurting because of him.

Companies and airlines are charging Americans an Iran war surcharge. Mortgage rates are climbing. Gas is still over \$4 a gallon.

Over the weekend, Trump's Energy Secretary said that gas prices won't be normal until 2027. If you don't believe Chris Wright, believe Donald Trump. Trump said gas prices will be “around the same” or “maybe a little bit higher”—his quote—by November—his words, not mine.

Just the other day, Trump said that \$4 for a gallon of gas is “not very high”—that is what he said—and that “everything's doing really well.”

Really, Mr. President, spoken like a man who doesn't have to fill up his own tank.

Try telling the American people, who will spend an average of \$740 more this year on gas because of this war, that “everything's doing really well.”

And, unfortunately and sadly, there is no end in sight. The Strait of Hormuz remains closed. Iran fired on commercial ships over the weekend. The United States seized an Iranian vessel.

According to Trump, JD VANCE will be on his way to Pakistan soon. But it is unclear whether the Iranians will even agree to meet with him, let alone agree to open up the Strait.

Mr. President, 51 days into this war, and Donald Trump still does not have an objective, strategy, or exit plan. The American people have questions. Congress must demand answers.

Last week, Senate Republicans had their fourth opportunity to support our War Powers Resolution, and for the fourth time, Senate Republicans acquiesced to Donald Trump and gave this historic blunder their stamp of approval.

Tomorrow, Senate Democrats will force a fifth vote on our War Powers Resolution. We will continue to force votes on our resolution every single week that Trump's war continues.

The most important vote a Senator can take is whether to go to war. Senate Republicans cannot sit on the sidelines while our servicemembers are risking their lives on the frontlines.

I don't know how Trump's war will end, but I do know that Trump's war cannot end soon enough.

#### RECONCILIATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, what does this majority choose to spend our time on instead?

Any hour now, Republicans are expected to release a budget resolution that adds tens of billions of dollars to the national debt and pumps colossal sums into ICE and Border Patrol without any reforms, all while doing absolutely nothing to lower costs for hard-working Americans.

We need to pause and examine how we got to this moment, because in a well-functioning Congress, the majority focuses on solving people's problems, not constantly cleaning up their own messes and shoveling tens of billions more into unaccountable rogue Agencies.

Remember, last year, in Donald Trump's “Big Ugly Betrayal,” Republicans rammed through \$75 billion for ICE and tens of billions more for Border Patrol, with virtually no guardrails, minimal training standards, and no real idea of what they were unleashing. Well, that led to disaster, as could have been predicted.

In January, Federal immigration officers in Minneapolis murdered two American citizens in broad daylight, triggering a reckoning across the country. After the murders of Alex Pretti