

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 727.

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 senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Kevin Warsh, of Florida, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

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 senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 727, Kevin Warsh, of Florida, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

John Thune, Ted Budd, Mike Crapo, Mike Rounds, Kevin Cramer, Bill Cassidy, Katie Boyd Britt, Ashley B. Moody, John Boozman, Jon A. Husted, Roger F. Wicker, Tom Cotton, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, James Lankford, Steve Daines, Shelley Moore Capito.

Mr. THUNE. I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

INFLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning, America received another gut punch about the rising costs that they have to pay because we learned that inflation rose to 3.5 percent in March—the highest rate in almost 3 years. Do you know what that means? A 3.5-percent increase in inflation means Americans are paying more and more and more; and it means, at a time of rising costs that people hate, Donald Trump is making things worse, not better.

The historic blunder in Iran is compounding the increase in prices. There was an increase in prices before this bad war that Trump never should have called to begin with. Prices were going up for groceries. Prices were going up for electric rates. Prices were going up for healthcare. Prices were going up for childcare. Prices were going up because of tariffs—and then the war. Gasoline is over \$4 a gallon, higher than it has been. The price of crude oil is higher than it has been in a very long time, all because of a war

where Trump seems to have no direction, no aim, no purpose, no conclusion.

Let me repeat: Inflation rose 3.5 percent. There are higher costs on everything. There are higher costs on groceries, on household essentials, on everything Americans need just to get by. When oil costs go up, so does fertilizer, so does food, so does anything that travels by truck or train. So these costs are hurting everybody, and it is getting worse.

Donald Trump, do you see what the inflation number means? Costs are getting worse. Affordability is getting tougher. People are paying more, all because of you, Donald Trump.

Trump said he would bring costs down on day one. Well, here we are—15 months after Trump took office—and costs are skyrocketing so fast they are breaking records. As to the war, which is compounding the increases in inflation, Trump has no plan to show us how to get out of this quagmire just as he had no plan when he got us into this mess.

After weeks of leaving Congress in the dark about the state of Trump's disastrous war, Hegseth came to the Capitol to testify yesterday. What he said was disgraceful.

Here is what he said:

The biggest challenge, the biggest adversary we face at this point are the reckless, feckless and defeatist words of congressional Democrats and some Republicans.

Give me a break. You caused the war and your boss Donald Trump. You got us into this mess, and you can't get us out of this mess, so you try to point a finger. People don't buy that. Maybe a few MAGA listeners of FOX News do but not anybody else.

So I say to Hegseth, take a look in the mirror.

Our greatest challenge in Iran is Donald Trump and Secretary Hegseth, and Americans know it. The war is unpopular. They blame Trump for it, of course. The greatest obstacle to peace is the incompetence of the Secretary of Defense and of the President of the United States.

Hegseth said the war has been an astounding victory and that the American people support it.

Your intel is off, Secretary Hegseth. Fewer than one in four Americans thinks this war has been worthwhile. Let me repeat that to you: Fewer than one in four Americans thinks this war has been worthwhile, and a huge number of Republicans and Independents, not just Democrats, agrees. So stop being partisan. Stop pointing fingers. Roll up your sleeves and come to an end with this mess, this quagmire.

As for an astounding victory, of course, our servicemembers perform impressively—they always do—but they are saddled with the bad decision making of this President and his Cabinet, as 13 American servicemembers have been killed, nearly 400 have been wounded, and the Pentagon says it has spent at least \$25 billion on this war so

far. Meanwhile, American families are hurting every time they go to the gas station or grocery store, all with no strategic aim.

Is that what Pete Hegseth thinks is an astounding victory?

Are you going to take out a brass band and salute that inflation is up 3.5 percent? salute that the Strait of Hormuz is still closed? salute that we still haven't found the nuclear facilities and potential weaponry that Iran has?

None of that has been advanced. So this is not an astounding victory.

It is past time that Senate Republicans joined Democrats on our War Powers Resolution. We have forced votes on our resolutions five times and we are going to force it a sixth time today and it is going to come back week after week.

Republican Senators, you can't escape this. You are culpable. You are preventing an end to this war, and Americans want to see an end to the war.

Tomorrow marks 60 days since Donald Trump officially notified Congress about his attack on Iran. After we cross that 60-day threshold, there can be no more doubt that he is violating the War Powers Act. Republicans are out of hollow excuses. They are out of hiding places.

End this war, Republicans. Bring our troops home. Stop bleeding taxpayers dry. Support our War Powers Resolution.

EN BLOC NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on the noms package, this is another incredible thing as to the new lows that this administration goes to. Every day, there is a newer one. It is amazing. It is no surprise that Donald Trump's popularity ratings are in the mid-thirties. He does such profoundly crazy things, bad things, almost evil things. To pick somebody for the Federal court who was there on January 6, that is evil. That is not just supporting insurrection, that is elevating insurrection. But that is what is happening here. Republicans continue to force through some of the shadiest, most unqualified nominees I have ever seen. The loyalists—the Trump loyalists—in today's package are awful.

Darin Smith—Trump's pick for the district court of Wyoming—has no criminal or Federal court experience, opposes same-sex marriage, and supports teaching creationism in the public schools, but that is not the No. 1 thing against him. Smith was present at the Capitol on January 6, and now Trump wants him to uphold law and order. What hypocrisy. What fakery. How disgusting.

Donald Trump, you reach a new low every day—a new low every day—to make those who tried to take over the Capitol and create an insurrection heroes and elevate them to judgeships. That is why you are so unpopular, Donald Trump. You are in this bubble, and you have too many people in this

Chamber who shrug their shoulders and go along and support you.

Another nominee, Phillip Williams, the nominee for the Northern District of Alabama, has a dearth of criminal and Federal court experience and compared the prosecution of the January 6 insurrectionists to the Salem Witch Trials—the Salem Witch Trials. He also called abortion “nothing more than industrialized slaughter.”

For the Middle District of North Carolina, Trump nominated Dan Bishop, Russell Vought’s former top lieutenant at the OMB. He helped orchestrate the Trump administration’s crusade to cut crucial services to the American people. People hate Vought. They hate what he has done. Yet here we are, elevating one of the chief henchmen of Russell Vought. Bishop also said he disagreed with the Obergefell v. Hodges decision that legalized same-sex marriage and supported national abortion bans on multiple occasions as a legislator.

Finally, I want to say a word about Richard Kloster, nominated to serve on the Surface Transportation Board. Kloster has shown a troubling lack of basic understanding of what the Board does. He is, however, a die-hard MAGA loyalist—good enough in Trump’s eyes.

Kloster’s nomination comes as Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern are set to refile today their \$85 billion—\$85 billion—merger application with the Surface Transportation Board. If Kloster helps clear the deal, it will mean higher costs for the American people.

Hear that, Americans? Trump is putting people on the Board who are so, so obsequious to industry that he is going to raise your costs. The more the railroads merge, the less competition, the more the consumer—the more the American people—pays. And if Kloster is on the Board, we are kidding ourselves to think he would side with workers and consumers over the interests of Wall Street-backed railroad oligarchs.

I could go on and on, but Americans get the picture: Trump wants to stack the Boards of his administration with MAGA loyalists who are hell-bent on threatening our freedoms, our economy, and our democracy. And Republicans—even worse—don’t even want to put each of these up for a vote. They can lump them all together because they are embarrassed to vote for some of these people, I am sure.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. President, on DHS, in a very rare moment, I am asking Republicans to actually listen to Donald Trump on a particular issue. He is not right very much. He is wrong almost all the time. But on this issue, House Republicans should do what he says: Pass the Senate’s DHS bill.

Two days ago, Trump’s OMB issued a memorandum that basically admitted what Democrats have been saying all along: It is because of House Republicans that the Secret Service, FEMA, Coast Guard, TSA, and CISA remain

unfunded. Thirty-five days. It has been 35 days since the Senate unanimously passed DHS funding. Every single Democrat supported it not once but twice.

Democrats are not the holdup, and frankly, in this case, Senate Republicans are not the holdup. Speaker JOHNSON and radical House Republicans are the holdup, and everyone knows it. Even the White House knows it, so they said something yesterday.

Republicans, stop dithering. Get your act together. Pass this legislation today before you leave for a week, and send it to the President’s desk so he can sign it tonight.

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.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture vote on S. Res. 690.

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

STRATEGIC SUBSEA CABLES ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today—and you certainly know this as a Navy SEAL, that life would be very different without the internet. It raises an important question: How does the internet get into our homes? For most users around the world, the internet travels to them from the ocean floor. More specifically, it travels through fragile, largely unprotected fiber optic cables that sit on the ocean floor. They are called undersea cables, and hundreds of these cables crisscross the world’s seabed. On average, they rest about 8,000 feet below sea level. They are essential, and they are exposed.

Stretched end to end, these cables would reach nearly 1 million miles. That is far greater than the distance the Artemis II traveled from the Earth to the Moon and back again.

Here on Earth, the undersea cables are important for a variety of reasons. They carry 99 percent of the world’s internet traffic. They also support \$10 trillion in financial transactions each and every day. Undersea cables are essential for our economy, our military, our communications, and our daily lives.

I am a doctor, and a map of these undersea cables reminds me of an anatomy textbook when you look at this thing, Mr. President, and you see all of these cables all around the globe. A map of these undersea cables reminds me specifically of my time in medical school and the nervous system.

Here is how I see it: Imagine that the Earth is a human body and undersea cables are the nervous system of modern life. All of these connections make

the world more prosperous, and it is especially true as America develops innovative, new technology.

Yet there is a serious problem. The world’s undersea cable network is facing growing threats from our foes around the world. Specifically, the danger comes from Russia and China. Our adversaries seek to hold our connectivity hostage. They are trying to do so by mapping, by splicing, and by sabotaging our system of undersea cables. This can be done simply by dragging an anchor across the cables or having submarines attack them.

China has been especially aggressive, specifically regarding Taiwan. According to Taiwan’s own National Security Bureau, over the last 4 years, there have been over 30 subsea cable incidents. In one, Chinese vessels allegedly cut cables to the Matsu Islands. They are controlled by Taiwan. The islands are connected to the rest of the world by two tiny undersea cables. Both of the cables were cut. It took months—yes, months—to repair them and to restore connectivity to the rest of the world. Such operations disconnect and disrupt communications, and they undermine national defense and global security.

Not every instance of cable cutting is deliberate. We do know that cable-cutting incidents are becoming more frequent and increasingly more suspicious.

So what can we do to prevent them? For the past several years, NATO has responded with military patrols. These ongoing missions have been successful. Still, more needs to be done, and the next step is to target bad actors and do it economically.

Today, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is—right at this moment—holding a hearing on recent attacks against critical infrastructure, and this includes undersea cables. It also includes energy pipelines.

I am a member of the committee, and Senator SHAHEEN and I have introduced legislation to address these vulnerabilities. It is called the Strategic Subsea Cables Act. It is a bipartisan bill. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed it in January by an overwhelming margin.

Our bill mandates tough penalties against individuals and vessels that attack these undersea cables. The penalties include blocking violators from our markets and revoking their U.S. visas. Our bill also has America deploy more resources to secure and repair undersea cables. At the same time, it requires a report to Congress in 6 months specifically on what Russia is doing and what China is doing in terms of sabotaging the undersea cables. These actions put our adversaries on notice that their actions are going to face stiff and severe consequences.

Private companies are already hardening cables where they can. Congress ought to act as a backstop in these defenses and make them more deliberate in terms of this aggression we are seeing from China and Russia. These are