

What else have they done? In the Rural Health Transformation Fund, they have invested another \$50 billion, and, again, with all Republican—Republican-only—votes. That fund is available to help improve many health issues, but, especially, there are opportunities to improve maternal health in rural America, as well, just like the ones where I served and was the only OB for many, many years in the middle of some 50,000 patients.

Of course, we just celebrated Mother's Day this past weekend, and I can't help but emphasize that strong families are the foundation of America and one of the pillars that this country is founded upon.

So I would ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us and cosponsor our legislation expanding fertility coverage and to continue to support rural maternal health funding. And let's make sure having a family in America is never out of reach because of cost. Hopeful moms and dads are counting on us. Now, let's get that done.

SAFEGUARDING THE OVERALL PROTECTION OF MINORS ACT

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I would like to rise and talk about the STOP Act, Safeguarding The Overall Protection of Minors—Safeguarding the Overall Protection of Minors, the STOP Act.

Now, I wish we didn't have to introduce this bill. You know, as I pointed out earlier, I got to deliver over 5,000 babies. I just took care of countless adolescent girls, young women as well. So this is a group of patients that I think I understand pretty well and the challenges in their lives. And I certainly understand what irreversible medical interventions do when applied too early, without the maturity for this young lady to understand the consequences. In many cases, the parents don't understand the consequences, and in other cases, the parents may not even know this is going on.

Now, across this country, minors are being placed on pathways toward puberty blockers. So it keeps a boy from becoming a man. It keeps a girl from becoming a woman. And we will leave it that simple. There are medications out there that delay puberty, and, by the way, they have significant consequences and complications as well.

Others are given cross-sex hormones, and, again, these are irreversible. Once a woman starts growing a beard, even though she stops a hormone, chances are that beard is going to continue. If it has caused her to have male baldness, that is probably likely to never return to normal as well.

And, of course, these surgeries are irreversible. They are permanent. They are painful. They cause chronic scar tissue and chronic pain, and, of course, it means they are infertile for the rest of their lives.

Can you imagine letting a 13-, 14-year-old boy or girl decide that they will never have children again?

Well, so how big of a problem is this? Why are Republicans concerned about it? Well, under extreme pressure, 14,000 minors—14,000 minors—have been manipulated into undergoing life-altering sex-change procedures that leave them, as I said earlier, maimed, sterilized, and psychologically damaged.

And my heart pours out to these young men and women. I can't imagine the challenges they go through. And we want to get them the help and the support that they need as well. But these irreversible surgeries and medications are not the answer. Instead they are going to complicate the situation.

Look, you know, this practice of transgender surgeries and medications—it is not medicine; it is not caution. In fact, these actions are not medical care. They are child abuse.

Think about it. Think about it. Who can argue with me that this isn't child abuse? And, sadly, I think when the history books are written, hundreds of years from now, this may be the darkest chapter in the history of medicine.

Our STOP Act—again, the Safeguarding The Overall Protection of Minors Act—simply restores a basic standard. Children should not undergo irreversible procedures they cannot fully comprehend and can't undo. It holds providers accountable and ensures there are real consequences when that line is crossed.

This is about giving children the time, the love, and the compassion they deserve before decisions are made that last a lifetime.

And if I could, I would like to give a big shoutout to those organizations that have bravely stepped forward to support us: the Students for Life of America, the American Principles Project, and the Religious Liberty Commission. And I know there are others. So thank you for that support. Thank you for caring about children and young adults.

So we owe them that protection. We owe our youngsters, our young adults this protection. And I urge our colleagues to support our STOP Act.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, please vote for my S. Res. 526.

I also ask that the vote on S. Res. 526 begin immediately.

I withdraw that motion, but I still want you to vote for my S. Res. 526.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California.

AMENDING CHAPTERS 83 AND 84 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, TO AUTHORIZE AN INCREASE OF THE RETIREMENT AGE FOR MEMBERS OF THE CAPITOL POLICE

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, colleagues, as you know, every year we

recognize—let the RECORD reflect even the U.S. Senate can experience some technical difficulties. We are going to try this again.

Colleagues, as you know, every year we are honored to recognize Police Week with thousands of officers from across the United States descending here on the Nation's Capital to honor those who have fallen in the line of duty.

There are a number of events and ceremonies throughout the week, and the Judiciary Committee in the Senate, among others, is proud to utilize this opportunity to advance policies, legislation, and initiatives in support of women and men in uniform across the country.

And I personally am honored to work closely with State and local law enforcement agencies in my home State of California to advance their efforts by strengthening partnerships with Federal support.

Earlier today, we considered a slate of bills in the Senate Judiciary Committee that would do just that by improving law enforcement and supporting safer communities.

I am proud to say a series of bills came out with overwhelming, mostly unanimous, bipartisan support. That is the Judiciary Committee.

In the Senate Rules Committee, Chairman MCCONNELL and I have the particular special responsibility of overseeing the U.S. Capitol Police and ensuring that they don't just have the right policies in place to do their jobs but advocating for the proper resources for Capitol Police to do their very important and unique job, in not just protecting the Capitol Complex and the campus and not just us as Members of Congress and not just our staff but visitors to the Capitol and the Capitol as an icon of our democracy for current and future generations.

It is a big job, and the women and men of the Capitol Police department do their jobs well. After all, Congress is the first branch noted in the Constitution.

I am grateful for what they have achieved over the course of years, certainly in recent years in the wake of January 6. But as big as their job is, they find themselves in need of reinforcement, and they are working hard to address some staffing shortages. It is not just by the numbers. Let me quote Chief Sullivan, Chief of Police for the Capitol Police, who has shared in testimony recently:

[W]e simply must continue increasing staffing levels.

And he made the reasons for this quote very clear:

[T]he implementation of additional security measures on the Capitol Complex combined with the need to surge resources to address the recent rise in [the] threats has overextended the Department's traditional staffing model.

So the bigger picture, in the longer term, we need to do more to improve recruitment and retention of Capitol Police officers.

But today, colleagues, I offer a modest step that we can take. Currently, the Federal law enforcement retirement age is 57, but the Capitol Police Board can increase that up to 60 for officers who may wish to continue their service, to extend their service.

We are talking about officers who have served for a long, long time and have a tremendous amount of institutional memory, experience, and expertise. They offer immense value to the department.

Senator McCONNELL and I have a bill to increase that retirement age of the Capitol Police Board to be able to extend the retirement age to 62 instead of the current 60. It allows us to all benefit for a few more years for those veteran officers, with their experience and expertise, who desire to continue to serve. This is voluntary but an important element to what the Capitol Police does and needs.

The House unanimously passed a bill just recently—a very similar bill—and after some bicameral and bipartisan discussion, I hope to see this measure signed into law. The Capitol Police union, as well as the department, support these steps, and I believe it deserves unanimous support from the Senate.

Mr. President, that being said, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 4530, which is at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4530) to amend chapters 83 and 84 of title 5, United States Code, to authorize an increase of the retirement age for members of the Capitol Police.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 4530) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 4530

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION TO INCREASE RETIREMENT AGE FOR MEMBER OF THE CAPITOL POLICE.

(a) CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT SYSTEM.—Section 8335(c) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking “becomes 60 years of age” and inserting “attains an age determined by the Board, which shall be not less than 57 years of age and not more than 62 years of age”.

(b) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES’ RETIREMENT SYSTEM.—Section 8425(c) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking “becomes 60 years of age” and inserting “attains an age determined by the Board, which shall be not less than 57 years of age and not more than 62 years of age”.

Mr. PADILLA. I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ARMSTRONG). The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WITHHOLDING THE PAY OF SENATORS IF A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN OCCURS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 296, S. Res. 526.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 526) withholding the pay of Senators if a Government shutdown occurs.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Rules and Administration.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If there is no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 526) was agreed to.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

(The resolution is printed in the RECORD of December 3, 2025, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 735.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Sheria Akins Clarke, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

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 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. 735, Sheria Akins Clarke, of South Carolina, to be

United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

John Thune, Ted Budd, Thom Tillis, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Joni Ernst, Jon A. Husted, Katie Boyd Britt, David McCormick, Mike Rounds, John Boozman, Bill Cassidy, Rick Scott of Florida, Josh Hawley, Cynthia M. Lummis, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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. 737.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Evan Rikhye, of the Virgin Islands, to be Judge for the District Court of the Virgin Islands for a term of ten 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 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. 737, Evan Rikhye, of the Virgin Islands, to be Judge for the District Court of the Virgin Islands for a term of ten years.

John Thune, Ted Budd, Thom Tillis, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Joni Ernst, Jon A. Husted, Katie Boyd Britt, David McCormick, Mike Rounds, John Boozman, Bill Cassidy, Rick Scott of Florida, Josh Hawley, Cynthia M. Lummis, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture motion on the nominations en bloc pursuant to S. Res. 690.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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