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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at 12 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026

The Senate met at 3 p.m. 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.

Eternal God, whose mercy is great unto the heavens, help us to do what is right. May we not forget that You are the judge of the Earth and that we are accountable to You. Lord, protect us from our enemies for we place our trust in You.

Sustain our Senators. Surround them with the shield of Your divine favor as they seek to live for Your glory. Hasten the day when Your just rule shall fill the Earth with health, life, and peace.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let Your glory be over the Earth.

We pray in Your marvelous 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. BUDD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE RESOLUTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the en bloc nominations provided for under the provisions of S. Res. 690.

The Senator from Iowa.

IRAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, this year, at my annual 99 county meetings, I was asked about the operations in Iran and was asked the question of why the administration's actions were necessary.

For starters, there are historic reasons the United States must address the threat of Iran. "Death to America," we hear from over there, and that is death to individual Americans.

Just recently—last week, for instance—there was an Iraqi indicted. He was captured overseas and brought to the United States because his sole purpose was to kill people, including even here in America.

If you go back to 1979, when it started, Iranian revolutionaries almost immediately seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held 52 American hostage for 444 days. One of those Foreign Service officers was a native of Waverly, IA.

Four years later, Iranian-backed terrorist groups carried out a suicide car

bombing at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. They drove two truck bombs into the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut—killing over 250 Americans.

In 1996, the Iranian regime carried out another truck bombing near a United States Air Force housing complex in Saudi Arabia—killing 19 Americans and wounding more than 370.

In 2007, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps carried out a plot in Iraq that killed five members of the United States armed services and wounded three others.

And then we all know how destructive the bomb was that we call the improvised explosive device that was buried and killed about 600 American servicepeople and wounded many others.

Now, what is more is that the regime also continues its efforts to build nuclear weapons.

In 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency, also known as the IAEA, revealed that Iran had engaged in a variety of clandestine nuclear-related activities.

In 2005, the IAEA's Board of Governors found Iran in noncompliance with the Agency's safeguard agreements.

In 2014, the Director of National Intelligence reported to Congress that Iran had made substantial progress with its nuclear program.

In 2025, the IAEA declared that Iran had enough enriched uranium—just short of weapons grade—to potentially make nine nuclear bombs.

So Iran is not a distant or theoretical threat. It is a direct U.S. national security concern. A nuclear-capable Iran

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



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would be able to expand its support for global terrorism, threaten American forces across the region, and put our allies at immediate risk. Over time, Iran's capability could extend beyond the region, increasing the risk to the American homeland itself. This presents a clear threat that the United States could not afford to ignore.

I am happy that President Trump took action to address this threat that seven previous Presidents did not consider necessary, and I remain hopeful that a long-lasting peace agreement can soon be reached.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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.

MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the month of May is dedicated to America's finest. We observed Police Week and Peace Officers Memorial Day last week, and the entire month of May is Military Appreciation Month. Armed Forces Day was Saturday, and next week, we will observe Memorial Day and remember all those who have laid down their lives in America's service. It is an extraordinary thing they do, the men and women who sign up to join our military. They don't simply choose service; they choose a kind of service that may require them to sacrifice everything. And they do it willingly, proudly, for love of their country, for love of their fellow soldiers, and for love of their fellow man.

We live in a country of unmatched blessing, and it can be easy to take that for granted, to take our prosperity, our freedom, our peace, and safety as a given. But they are not a given; they are secured for us and have been secured for us by the men and women of the U.S. military. That is not patriotic rhetoric; that is a fact. None of the blessings we enjoy as citizens of the United States would last long in the absence of the men and women who commit their lives to defending them.

My job as a Senator gives me the privilege of regularly getting to interact with our military men and women. That might be at Ellsworth Air Force Base talking to airmen about recent B-1 or MQ-9 combat operations or the fast approaching B-21 mission. It might be welcoming home South Dakota National Guard troops or our 114th Fighter Wing from a deployment. It might be greeting veterans on an Honor Flight here in Washington, DC. It is a privilege to talk to men and women who have not only chosen to serve a cause greater than themselves but have committed to giving their lives for

that cause if necessary. Their pride, their professionalism, their enthusiasm, their wholehearted embrace of our country's ideals—there is nothing more inspiring and uplifting than meeting the men and women of the U.S. military.

I have talked about our Armed Forces' willingness to sacrifice, to lay down their lives if necessary to protect our country. Across the river from the Capitol Building where we stand, at Arlington National Cemetery, rows upon rows of white markers bear witness to the men and women who have made that ultimate sacrifice. And not just on Memorial Day but every day—every day—we need to remember them, to remember that our freedom has been secured for us at a great cost, and to live in such a way as to honor that sacrifice.

No discussion of the service of our military men and women is complete without mentioning their families. They, too, embrace a cause greater than themselves. They also serve and often without recognition. They endure long absences from their loved ones, missed birthdays and date nights and dinners, frequent moves, new schools, and job changes. And for some, their loved one never comes home. Just as we remember our soldiers this month, we remember their families—their families—and what they, too, have given in the service of our country.

As we celebrate Military Appreciation Month, Armed Forces Day, and Memorial Day, my prayers and gratitude are with the men and women of the U.S. military. God bless and protect them as they stand on guard for us.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, let me first talk about this DOJ slush fund.

As working families shorten their grocery lists, as they struggle to make ends meet, Donald Trump has added a nearly \$2 billion slush fund for his MAGA allies and January 6 insurrectionists to his wish list of pet projects he wants to fund with taxpayer dollars.

Of all the corrupt things Donald Trump has done, this MAGA slush fund at the Department of Justice is one of the most depraved. Trump is shaking hands with himself in order to fund his insurrectionist army to the tune of billions of dollars. Trump is shaking hands with himself, making his own deal with himself, in order to fund his insurrectionist army to the tune of billions of dollars. He is signing a con-

tract with himself to use these funds for illicit purposes.

Can you believe it, America? How low can we go with this President?

Trump pardoned violent insurrectionists who assaulted your Capitol to overturn your votes, and now he wants to give them your hard-earned tax dollars as a reward. Can you believe that? He is taking money out of your paycheck, America, and putting it into the pockets of his cronies, criminals, and cop beaters.

This settlement with the IRS is a farce. Trump sued his own government. He is the President, and he sued the government. He asked for \$10 billion—the gall of this man. And then Trump's own Justice Department, with his own appointed attorneys general, settled with Trump. Trump settled with Trump, and now Trump gets a nearly \$2 billion slush fund as part of that settlement.

What is he going to do with it? He is going to reward his own allies, loyalists, and insurrectionists. How crooked can it be? How perverted? How slanted? How far away from American ideals?

No President—none—should be able to use the Department of Justice as a personal rewards program for the people who helped him attack our democracy.

Again, America, he sued America for \$10 billion, and then he settled with himself and said: OK, I will settle for \$2 billion, and then I can use that to aid my cronies.

America, are you listening? What is this guy doing? We have never seen anything like this. Even in the worst and most corrupt administrations we have had, we have never seen anything like this. It is self-dealing. It is corruption. It is abuse of power. And it is happening in broad daylight.

Where are our Republican colleagues when something so abysmal, so low, so degrading to what America is all about—where are they? Shrugging their shoulders: Whatever Donald Trump wants, let him do, even though we know what a bad human being he is.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on costs, reconciliation, and the ballroom, the list goes on and on. As costs continue to skyrocket, Americans know exactly who is making their lives harder: Donald Trump.

The new New York Times/Siena poll this morning found that just 37 percent of Americans approve of Trump. Only 37 percent of Americans approve of Trump. It was low in January. It is now 4 points even lower. And only 28 percent—28 percent of Americans—only a little more than one in four Americans approves of Trump's handling of the cost of living.

Trump's supposed high floor of approval is crumbling beneath his feet, unable to bear the weight of his complete disregard for the higher costs he is forcing on Americans every time they go to the grocery store, gas pump, or doctor's office. As Donald Trump