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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ALAN ARMSTRONG, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Holy God, Creator and Sustainer of life, thank You for the inward prompting that draws us closer to You.

Bless our Senators today. Make them leaders who are committed, competent, and courageous. Lord, empower them to live lives that are above reproach. Give them self-control, gentleness, and humility. Remind them that You do not ask for success but faithfulness. Help them to set exemplary standards in their speech, conduct, and purity. Give them a productive persistence that will keep them from weariness as they fulfill Your purposes. Bless their families, and surround their loved ones with Your favor.

We pray in Your mighty 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 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 ALAN ARMSTRONG, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday on the floor I discussed some of our accomplishments here in the Senate, and one of those accomplishments is restoring regular order consideration of appropriation bills.

Unfortunately, in fiscal year 2025, we were forced to do a full-year CR after the failures of the previous Democrat majority and the Biden administration to enact full-year bills in a timely manner.

But at the start of this year, we were on the verge of concluding an open, Member-driven, and bipartisan appropriations process and passing the full compliment of 12 full-year appropriations bills. It is what I said I wanted to do when Republicans took the majority last year, and we were about to get it

done—that is, until Democrats reneged on our bipartisan DHS funding bill. A bill, I might add, that included bipartisan reforms and money for additional body cameras for immigration enforcement. When they backed out of this deal, Democrats said they just needed two more weeks to negotiate additional reforms on immigration enforcement. Republicans were willing to do that, and we began negotiations.

But then that 2-week deadline came and went without much progress. And pretty soon it drug on into 40, 41, 42, 43—45 days. Instead of agreeing to fund the Department of Homeland Security while negotiations continued, Democrats shut the department down.

Meanwhile, the White House implemented reforms of its own. As negotiations continued, the White House repeatedly offered Democrats a robust package of legislative reforms. But as the weeks dragged on, it became clear the Democrats weren't interested in reforms at all. And, eventually, they just walked away.

Now why would they do that? If reforming immigration enforcement is as important as Democrats were claiming, why would Democrats choose to walk away from reforms? I suspect it is either that the reforms that the Trump administration implemented were adequate to solve the problem at hand—and I think this is the real reason—Democrats weren't interested in reforms at all. They wanted a political issue, something that would please the far left.

And apparently they decided that defunding law enforcement would be a winner for them because that is what we are talking about here. Democrats voted to defund border security. They voted to defund immigration enforcement—not reform, defund, and defund completely. It is really quite shameful.

A few weeks ago on the floor, the Democrat leader said that ICE and Border Patrol are two agencies that “nobody respects in this country.” Nobody

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



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respects Border Patrol and ICE; those are the Democrat leader's words.

Apparently, the fact that there are men and women risking their lives against drug cartels and gang members doesn't merit respect from Democrats. Not only that, but Democrats apparently don't think we should have these Agencies that go after criminals, stop illegal drugs from entering our country, fight human trafficking, and enforce our Nation's immigration laws.

And that last one is, I think, the real issue here. Do Democrats believe we should enforce our immigration laws? It really seems like they don't.

For years now, Democrat-led cities and States have implemented sanctuary policies to prevent their law enforcement agencies from cooperating with immigration authorities. Those policies have had deadly consequences. The murder of Laken Riley is just one example. Yet Democrats still defend these misguided policies.

Then, under President Biden, Democrats' embrace of open border policies reached its zenith. The Biden administration clearly did not believe in enforcing our immigration laws, and the result was year upon year of record-breaking illegal immigration. As even the New York Times has reported:

After Mr. Biden became president, migrant encounters at the southern border quickly doubled, then kept rising. New arrivals overwhelmed border stations, then border towns, and eventually major cities like New York and Denver.

Still Democrats embrace open borders. And make no mistake, that is exactly what Democrats are embracing when they opt for giving no funding—zero funding—to Border Patrol and ICE. What they are suggesting is that we have no physical presence at our borders. They are suggesting that we don't have law enforcement officers taking criminal illegal immigrants off of our streets.

And I really have to wonder who they are doing this for because letting illegal immigrants enter our country unchecked and allowing criminal illegal immigrants to roam free is certainly not putting the American people first.

Democrats have made their choice. They would rather have applause from the far-left "defund the police" crowd than keep the American people safe. They would rather have a political issue this November than do their jobs.

As I say, they have made their choice. Fortunately, Republicans can fund these critical Agencies without Democrats' assistance. And we will be moving forward with the final steps of that process shortly.

As I said at the top of my remarks, I wanted to restore regular order, bipartisan consideration of funding bills, and we were doing that. And despite Democrats' partisan games, we are still going to get the entire Federal Government funded. We are going to ensure our immigration laws are enforced and criminal illegal aliens are not allowed to live freely in our country.

And if Democrats want to play partisan games and vote against border security, well, they are free to do that. But Republicans are going to do our jobs and ensure that law enforcement can do theirs.

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 legislative 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.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it has been a hell of a bad week for Donald Trump and his Republicans, maybe the worst week they have ever had. Bugged down by Donald Trump's stunningly corrupt MAGA slush fund, Trump's billion-dollar, taxpayer-funded ballroom, and the recordbreaking gas costs as we approach the Memorial Day weekend, Republicans are having a terrible, terrible week—one that may even rival the week they had when they passed their so-called Big Beautiful Bill, which America hated. And it is only Wednesday. It is only Wednesday. But however bad this week is for Republicans—and, believe me, it is bad—it has been even worse for the American people.

First, on Trump's nearly \$2 billion MAGA slush fund—credible depravity, disgusting selfishness—yesterday, Trump's Department of Justice expanded the settlement he made with himself, granting him and his family immunity from tax audits.

Did you hear that, America? Trump just gave his family a license to commit tax fraud to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, if not more. He is using nearly \$2 billion, America, of your taxpayer dollars that he has placed in a slush fund to enrich his MAGA loyalists. Trump doesn't have to pay his taxes, and meanwhile, he is using your tax dollars, America, to line the pockets of his family and his far-right cronies.

The naked corruption, something as low and depraved as we have ever seen, is absolutely egregious. Only in Trump's Washington could a President sue himself, settle with himself, and somehow stick the American people with the bill. Who would have thought that even a man as depraved and low as Donald Trump, as dishonest and as selfish, would do something like this? Trump's slush fund is a heist where the robber owns the bank, runs the police

department, and gets to pardon himself on the way out.

Just as egregious as how Trump stole this money is who he plans to give it to: his billionaire cronies, convicted criminals, and the cop beaters who maimed our brave U.S. Capitol Police on January 6. Meanwhile, Trump is making a deal with himself, shaking hands with himself on a corrupt deal as he shakes down the American people.

Republican Senators should make no mistake—Democrats are going to force Republican Senators to vote on this slush fund on the floor in the upcoming reconciliation bill in the next day or two. Republicans will not be able to duck or hide.

Republicans, are you for the slush fund—this evil, corrupt slush fund—or are you against it? Are you going to bow down to Donald Trump when you know how egregious, how despicable, how nasty, how disgusting this slush fund is? Will you bow down to Trump? Will you vote for the slush fund or against it?

Democrats are going to force Republicans to take a stand in the next day.

Now, a second chapter—the next chapter that is part of Trump's terrible, terrible week is the ballroom. Yesterday, Donald Trump defended his billion-dollar, gold-plated, taxpayer-funded ballroom, calling it "a gift to the United States of America." A gift? Let's call Trump's ballroom what it is: a boondoggle, a vanity project, an insult to every American—especially those struggling to make ends meet right now. This ballroom is no gift to the American people; it is a congressional Republican personal gift to Donald J. Trump—right. It is the Republican Senators here in this Chamber giving Donald Trump the personal gift of a billion-dollar ballroom.

Trump said yesterday—again, he just lies—Trump said yesterday that the ballroom is not going to be paid for by the taxpayer. Then why have Americans watched Republicans work around the clock on proposal after proposal to grant \$1 billion to build Trump's ballroom, all at the taxpayers' expense? When Trump says it "is not going to be paid for by the taxpayer," it is flagrant, shameless lying. He is very good at that.

Fortunately, Democrats stopped Republicans' first attempt to fund the ballroom through reconciliation, but rest assured the Senate GOP is working to take money out of your paycheck to finance Trump's palace, America.

Republicans are in such disarray as they scramble over the ballroom, now they are slow-walking the whole process. We still don't have a reconciliation bill on our desks.

Regardless of whether the ballroom funding makes it into the reconciliation bill—and Democrats will keep fighting to ensure that it doesn't—Republicans have already showed America their true colors. While Democrats are fighting to lower Americans' costs,