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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TIM SHEEHY, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Everlasting God, may the work of our Senators be done to glorify You. Empower them to strive to make our Nation and world stronger, more just, and better for all people. Grant our lawmakers wisdom to discern what is right, courage to pursue it, and humility to place Your desires above their personal ambition. Help them to lead with integrity, to seek truth in their deliberations, and to respect the dignity of every person. May their decisions promote peace, protect freedom, and provide hope for future generations.

Lord, as millions prepare to celebrate the Juneteenth holiday, unite us all for Your glory.

We pray in Your triumphant 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 executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 18, 2026.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TIM SHEEHY, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SHEEHY 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

21ST CENTURY ROAD TO HOUSING ACT—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 6644, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 6644, a bill to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Thune motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill, with Thune (for Scott (SC)-Warren) amendment No. 5823 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), in the nature of a substitute.

Thune amendment No. 5824 (to amendment No. 5823), to change the enactment date.

Thune motion to refer the message of the House to accompany the bill to the Com-

mittee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, with instructions, Thune amendment No. 5825, to change the enactment date.

Thune amendment No. 5826 (to the instructions (amendment No. 5825) of the motion to refer), of a perfecting nature.

Thune amendment No. 5827 (to amendment No. 5826), of a perfecting nature.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

H.R. 6644

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this week, the Senate takes a big step forward on an issue that is important to many Americans, and that is homeownership.

Whether you read about it in the news or hear about it in conversation with friends and family members, most people know that the dream of homeownership is out of reach for too many people in our country. Limited housing supply and burdensome regulations have contributed to higher prices, and many Americans are simply being priced out of the housing market. That is a problem, and it is a problem we aim to address with the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act.

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act tackles some of the causes of the higher prices that are preventing too many Americans from realizing the dream of homeownership.

As much as 25 percent of the cost of building a new single-family home comes from regulations. That figure rises to 40 percent for multifamily construction. As you can imagine, that contributes quite a bit to the price that Americans pay for that home.

So this bill cuts unnecessary redtape that is delaying construction and driving up prices. For example, it removes the outdated chassis requirement for manufactured housing, which will not only reduce the cost of manufactured homes but allow for more innovation in manufactured home design.

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



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S2913

And then there are the costs and delays associated with the environmental review process. This bill enables State, local, and Tribal governments to streamline environmental reviews. It rightsizes the NEPA process and exempts certain rural housing projects from these extensive and often burdensome reviews, and it directs the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the USDA to coordinate joint environmental reviews for housing projects funded by both Agencies. It should go without saying that if it is one project, there should be one review.

And because Federal regulations are only one layer of the costs and burdens placed on new home construction, this bill also encourages local governments to reform zoning laws to encourage home construction.

Lifting regulatory burdens will do a lot to bring down housing prices and encourage more construction, but it is not the only aspect of encouraging homeownership. The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act also takes meaningful steps to support financing the purchase of a new home. It lifts regulatory burdens on community banks and credit unions to ensure that these local lending institutions can be focused on people rather than paperwork, and it tailors regulations for smaller and new financial institutions, which will help increase competition that benefits the American people.

This bill is the result of years of hard work by many of our colleagues, as well as months of negotiations with our colleagues in the House. They have worked tirelessly to produce a bill that addresses some of the barriers to homeownership in this country.

I am grateful for the work of Senators ROUNDS and RICKETTS to support housing in rural areas, for Senators MORENO and HAGERTY's contributions to the financial institutions component of this bill, and for Senators KENNEDY and CRAPO's efforts to support work at the local level to build more housing.

Thanks to all of their hard work and that of many others, this bill is almost across the finish line. But no one has been more committed to the success of this legislation than Chairman TIM SCOTT, and I am especially grateful to Chairman SCOTT for his leadership in getting this landmark bill on a path to becoming law very soon.

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act is a significant bill to make life more affordable for hard-working Americans, and it is just the latest item on Republicans' agenda to address the cost of living.

Last year, Republicans passed the Working Families Tax Cut, another landmark bill which cut taxes for lower and middle-income Americans. This year, these hard-working people saw larger tax refunds and larger paychecks, and I wouldn't be surprised if many of them put some of that money away to save for their dream of buying a home—a dream that the ROAD to Housing Act will help put within their reach.

Plus, the Working Families Tax Cut provisions like immediate, 100 percent expensing for investments are also contributing to addressing housing shortages by making it easier for builders to—well—build.

Our legislation gave a boost to affordable housing construction as well.

As one realtor in Sioux Falls wrote last year:

Developers now have stronger incentives—and fewer barriers—to build more affordable units. . . . For Sioux Falls, where we see steady population growth and a strong workforce influx, this is a game-changer.

A recent poll shows that the overwhelming majority of Americans see housing affordability as a major issue, and they want to see Congress address it. The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act does just that. I am proud that it garners support from a similarly overwhelming majority here in the Senate, and I expect it will in the House as well.

I look forward to getting this bill through Congress in short order, sending it to the President's desk, and delivering another major win for the American people.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, everyone who bought Trump's book "The Art of the Deal" ought to ask him for a refund because what Trump has done in Iran is the "art of the disaster."

The United States is worse off because of Trump's incompetence, his ego, his inability to listen to facts. Iran took Trump to the cleaners with this so-called understanding.

Iran doesn't have to cut off support for its terrorist proxies. Iran doesn't have to give up ballistic missile production. Iran doesn't have to make any hard commitments on its nuclear program now, and there is no guarantee they make any in 60 days. But Iran does get to rake in billions of dollars in oil sales, hundreds of billions in reconstruction aid, and God knows how much more in potential fees Trump may let it impose on ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

Not to mention the benefits Iran will get from the sanction relief that Trump has promised with no idea of what he will get in return.

Again, Iran took Trump to the cleaners. In Iran, "the art of the deal" has turned into the "art of disaster."

If Trump wants to send hundreds of billions of dollars to Iran, then he will

need to do it with Republican votes because I will tell you, Democrats certainly won't be helping Trump send \$300 billion to Iran.

Are my colleagues on the other side of the aisle prepared to send Iran \$300 billion when economic needs are so severe here at home? But that is what Trump wants them to do.

Now, back in 2015, Trump said that America's "deal with Iran will go down as one of the most incompetent ever made. The U.S. lost on virtually every point. We just don't win anymore!"

Trump is eating these words on a silver platter served up by Iran. Again, in 2015 he said the "deal with Iran will go down as one of the most incompetent ever. The U.S. lost on virtually every point. We just don't win anymore!"

He is eating those words now because those apply so aptly to the deal that he just announced, so-called understanding, with Iran. He is eating those words on a silver platter served up by Iran.

Even members of the Trump administration seem to be trying to put some distance between themselves and this so-called understanding, telling the public not to read too far into the text and that there are secret deals in the works. Well, I will tell you right now, Trump needs to reveal any secret deals to Congress and the public immediately. He has got to do it right away.

If the secret deals are anywhere near as bad as the understanding we have seen, we need to know about them.

This war needs to end permanently. Americans need to know how Trump plans to do it. Crucially, Americans are wondering what they got out of this war because Trump's blunder has left our country worse off by every measure. Thirteen Americans have been killed and hundreds more wounded. The Iranian regime is richer and more radical than before Trump's war. Iran has greater control over the Strait of Hormuz than before the war began.

Gas prices are still much higher than before the war, with families having paid hundreds of dollars extra to fill up their tanks these past few months.

The cost of everything from groceries to basic household necessities are higher than before the war as well. Trump's so-called understanding is the culmination and representation of his ruinous strategy in Iran since day one and his inability to govern in general.

In Iran and in so much else he does, Trump leads by whim, by ego, by greed. His strategy doesn't work in the time of peace, and it certainly doesn't work in the time of war.

He is about the most incompetent President we have ever seen. In Iran, as in everything, the American people pay the price for Trump's incompetence.

So as I have been saying for months, it is long past time that Trump end this war, which never should have started in the first place.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT

Mr. President, on FISA, Trump has made it clear beyond a shadow of a

doubt that he doesn't care about our national security and cares even less about reauthorizing FISA. Trump has embarrassed Republicans, pulled the rug out from under them, and blown up the FISA negotiations at every step.

Trump has lobbed a grenade into Jay Clayton's nomination. Insisted on making his personal fixer, his own attack dog, Bill Pulte, the Acting DNI. And he is demanding to tie FISA to the extreme SAVE Act to attack Americans' voting rights.

Trump is so hell-bent on taking away Americans' voting rights that he is willing to put them in danger to do it. Trump would rather have our intelligence community go after his political opponents than protect the American people.

Can Trump get any more reckless?

Make no mistake, Donald Trump is holding America's national security hostage for his own political gain. Republicans can point fingers at Democrats all they want, but Trump has himself owned up to blocking FISA.

Here is what he said, this is Donald Trump:

I will not approve FISA . . .

We are canceling the Senate hearing . . .

[Bill Pulte will remain as the Acting Director of National Intelligence.

Trump will own any and all consequences that come from his undermining America's intelligence community and our national security.

H.R. 6644

Mr. President, finally on housing, Donald Trump may show Americans how government should not function, but our bipartisan housing bill shows Americans how we should govern. The housing shortage in the United States is nothing less than an existential threat to the American dream.

The fact that Democrats and Republicans were able to come together on the ROAD to Housing at a time of such division shows just how dire America's housing crisis is today.

Americans feel financially stuck as renting and buying a home keeps getting more and more expensive and more and more out of reach. One of the most effective ways to meaningfully lower housing costs for Americans is to build more, build faster, and build everywhere.

The ROAD to Housing is a crucial first step toward ending the affordability crisis and ensuring Americans don't have to break the bank to keep a roof over their head.

The legislation starts to tackle the zoning and permitting bottlenecks that have slowed construction from one end of this country to the other. The bill supports new manufactured and modular housing that makes building cheaper, faster, and easier.

It also advances the effort to convert blighted buildings into new housing.

Crucially, ROAD to Housing makes sure institutional investors don't squeeze American families out of buying a home.

Now, let's make no mistake about it—ROAD to Housing isn't the end of the road; it is just the start.

Congratulations to Senator WARREN for her leadership on this bill and to all my colleagues, both Democrat and Republican, who supported it. I am pleased we have seized this opportunity to come up with a reasonable, bipartisan solution to help the American people—opportunities that have become few and far between thanks to the chaos coming out of the White House.

This is how Americans want Congress to govern.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture motion with respect to the House message to accompany H.R. 6644.

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

H.R. 6644

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to say that Republicans believe Americans who work hard and who play by the rules deserve to have a good life.

Republicans passed the Working Families Tax Cut law to promote the American dream.

Americans deserve to keep more of what they earn. The Working Families Tax Cut law put more money into their pockets. It means financial relief not just tomorrow but today.

Over 60 million Americans benefited from at least 1 of the Republicans' new tax cuts. Tax refunds were supersized this year. The Department of Treasury has confirmed that 97 percent of Americans received a tax cut this year. They went on to point out that the people who benefited the most were Americans earning less than \$200,000 a year. Republicans cut taxes for working families all across America. Families can use the money however they want. They can use it to pay down debt, to cover everyday expenses, or to save for the future.

Every single Democrat in this Chamber—every single one of them—voted against the Working Families Tax Cut law. Democrats instead voted to raise taxes by \$4 trillion. Had Democrats gotten their way, everything would cost much more.

Democrats talk about affordability; Republicans delivered. We delivered more money into the pockets, the purses, and the paychecks of the American people. For most Americans, this money is for their families, not for the government.

At the State of the Union, Americans heard the story of a mother who homeschools two children during the day, and in the evening, she goes out and waits tables. Her husband operates heavy machinery, and he works a lot of overtime. The Working Families Tax Cut law was written for families like theirs. The family is going to take home an extra \$5,000 this year. Why? Well, no tax on tips, no tax on over-

time, and the expanded child tax credit—all three of those advantages passed in the Working Families Tax Cut law.

The Working Families Tax Cut law helps families today, and it builds more opportunities for families tomorrow. And this is only the beginning. This week, the Senate is going to move to address the cost of housing.

Buying a home in America costs too much. Building a home in America takes too long. Everyone from President of the United States to the mayor of New York City agrees housing is too expensive. Americans who want to buy a home worry they won't ever be able to afford a home. That must change.

Today, the median age of first-time home buyers is 38 years old. Young Americans should not have to wait nearly four decades to buy their first home.

A headline from USA TODAY illustrates the problem. It says: "Why is housing so expensive? There simply aren't enough homes." Supply and demand.

Well, then, what is the reason there aren't enough homes? The reason is burdensome government regulations.

Regulations account for a quarter of the cost of a new home. This is the cost of applying for zoning permits from the local government, the county government, and even the State government. It causes delays and money expense. There is the cost of studies on environmental impact and on the impact on traffic. There is the cost of energy efficiency mandates for home appliances. Then there is the cost of Federal workplace regulations.

Of course, there is the cost of delay created by all of these problems, all of these regulations, many of which are duplicative. By some estimates, regulators add an extra \$130,000 to the cost of a home.

Fortunately, we have on the floor this week a solution to unlock the American dream. It is called the ROAD to Housing Act. Senator TIM SCOTT of South Carolina has led the effort.

This bipartisan bill includes dozens of Member-driven policies. It is going to increase the supply of housing, it will lower the cost of housing, and it will expand the ability of families to own a home. It does all of this the right way without imposing one-size-fits-all Washington mandates.

The American dream should not be regulated out of reach; it should be within reach for every American willing to work for it. And the Senate is ready to get the ROAD to Housing Act signed into law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask for consent for 10 minutes prior to the scheduled vote.

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

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today as the Senate takes the next important step toward passage of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act.

This legislation is probably the most important bill Congress has passed in decades to lower housing costs and boost the construction of homes for Americans.

We all know that without a safe, comfortable, affordable place to live, nothing in your life works—not your job, not your family, not your education, not your health. Our homes are a source of stability and comfort and dignity, and they give us the freedom and the opportunity to build the lives we want to live.

Today in America, people are trying to figure out how to afford their lives and how to hold it together as prices skyrocket and paychecks aren't keeping up. Millions of people in big cities and small towns and rural communities that we all represent stretch to pay their mortgage or make their rent payment. And the American dream of owning your own home? It feels like a pipe dream to working families. I hear from young Minnesotans who tell me they can't even imagine a future where they own their own home.

So why is this happening? There are simply more people who need a place to live than there are houses that people can afford to rent or buy. And affordable places to live for people working in low-wage jobs, for veterans, or for folks living on a fixed income? We don't have nearly enough places for these people to live.

The result is that the cost of housing is soaring higher and higher. Over 22 million people in this country are paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent, which means that they don't have enough money for the other necessities in their lives. Over 12 million people pay more than half of their income on rent. In Minnesota alone, there is a shortage of 100,000 affordable homes.

Home ownership, as we have heard today, is increasingly out of reach. Mortgage payments are roughly 40 percent higher than they were in 1990, and that is even after adjusting for inflation. And in the past few years, the median home price has reached \$400,000.

So all of this is why the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act will make such a difference. This bill will boost housing supply by cutting redtape and empowering local governments to make it easier and less expensive to build good places for people to live. It creates incentives for cities and towns to build more housing. It removes regulatory barriers to help streamline environmental review and to speed up construction and make it less expensive. It strengthens existing programs that help local communities address their housing and infrastructure needs—especially when it comes to natural disasters.

This bill also takes several important steps to promote high-quality modular and manufactured housing, including doing away with outdated chassis requirements for manufactured homes that add thousands of dollars in costs

but no value. And thanks to the important work of Senator CORTEZ MASTO, this bill will also help preserve and upgrade manufactured home communities.

Very importantly, this bill cracks down on large institutional investors who swoop in, make all-cash offers on homes, and then buy up single-family homes as investments and rent them back to people for a profit. Out-of-State landlords have gobbled up homes, leaving properties in disrepair, tenants in the lurch, and jacking up the rent.

For the first time, in this bill, we are banning big private investors from buying up the American dream of home ownership, because homes should be for people, not corporations.

But I want to focus for a minute on reforms in this bill to the Rural Housing Service to preserve over 400,000 very affordable homes in rural communities. This has been a project I have been working on for quite a few years, and I am so excited that it is included in this big bill.

You know, I began working on this issue when I first came to the Senate over 8 years ago, and people in Minnesota were telling me that they couldn't find an affordable place to live. Businesses were telling me that housing shortages were making it impossible for them to recruit talent to their communities. Mayors told me that the housing shortage was hurting the vitality of their communities. Homebuilders were telling me it was too complex and expensive to build new homes.

In 2018, Senator SHAHEEN and I went to work, and we figured out how the USDA could do a better job of preserving affordable rural housing.

Then, starting in 2022, when I became chair of the Housing Subcommittee, Senator MIKE ROUNDS and I started to hold hearings that dug into the challenges that faced the Rural Housing Service at the USDA.

The Rural Housing Service—a lot of people probably haven't heard of it, but it has played a vital role across the country for decades in helping to finance very affordable places for people to live in rural communities. We are talking about elders living on a fixed income who want to stay in the places where they raised their families. We are talking about people living with disabilities and working families, folks working in low-wage jobs that can't afford a place to live.

Many of these properties built through the Rural Housing Service were built in the 1960s with the help of Federal mortgages to finance them, and often, they are literally the only affordable place to call home in many rural communities.

Today, all these years later, many of these homes are in disrepair, and the Rural Housing Service is in desperate need of reform and modernization. So Senator MIKE ROUNDS and I got to work. Our bill, the Rural Housing Service Reform Act, makes simple, commonsense improvements.

We cut redtape to make it easier for nonprofits to assume the mortgages of these properties when the private sector can't manage them anymore and then go ahead and fix them up and preserve them for low-income renters for years to come.

It simplifies the foreclosure process to save the government money and protect tenants so that properties can be transferred to new owners.

It gives the Rural Housing Service more capacity to work with local banks on financing and helps them to modernize their computer systems.

Here is what all this work can look like. Last August, I visited the Maplewood Apartments in Saint Peter, MN, which is a small and wonderful community in southern Minnesota. Maplewood needed a lot of TLC to be a decent place for people to live, and so local nonprofits and public partners joined together to fix it up.

I had a chance to see what this place meant for its residents and one resident in particular, Lisa Gallegos, who welcomed me to her new home in Maplewood. Lisa told me about how in her apartment she finally had the space to be able to focus on her life instead of worrying each month about how she would make rent.

I have visited so many of these properties and heard from so many of these residents about how important this is.

So this bill, our Rural Housing Service Reform Act, which will be included in the larger ROAD to Housing Act, will recreate the success in Saint Peter across the country, and 400,000 apartments and homes in rural communities will remain available, high quality, and affordable.

I especially want to thank MIKE ROUNDS, my colleague from South Dakota, for being such an excellent partner and friend in this work.

I want to thank Senator SHAHEEN for her work on preserving rural housing.

I also want to thank the many advocates who helped us put this bill together. This has been a yearslong labor of love, and with the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, we are going to get it done.

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act will do a lot of good. Of course, there is always more work to do. There will be more work to make it possible so that, every day, every American will have a home that they can afford, but this bill is an incredible step forward.

I want to again thank Senator SCOTT and Senator WARREN and their staffs for their creativity and diligence and optimism to put this bill together at a time when Congress needs more bipartisan work.

I also appreciate Representatives WATERS and HILL for their partnerships with the Senate to get this bill done.

Passing the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act will improve people's lives and help them afford a decent place to live, and that is well worth our effort. I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair

lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

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 motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 6644, a bill to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes, with amendment No. 5823.

John Thune, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Katie Boyd Britt, Pete Ricketts, John Barrasso, Bernie Moreno, Tim Sheehy, Mike Crapo, Joni Ernst, John Cornyn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Jon Husted, Mike Rounds, John Boozman, Jim Banks, John R. Curtis, Lindsey Graham.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 6644, a bill to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes, with amendment No. 5823, offered by the Senator from South Dakota, Mr. THUNE, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 84, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 180 Leg.]

YEAS—84

Baldwin	Gallego	Merkley
Banks	Gillibrand	Moody
Barrasso	Graham	Moran
Blackburn	Grassley	Moreno
Blumenthal	Hagerty	Murkowski
Booker	Hassan	Murphy
Boozman	Hawley	Murray
Britt	Heinrich	Ossoff
Budd	Hickenlooper	Padilla
Cantwell	Hirono	Peters
Capito	Husted	Reed
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Ricketts
Collins	Justice	Risch
Coons	Kaine	Rosen
Cornyn	Kennedy	Rounds
Cortez Masto	Kim	Sanders
Cotton	King	Schatz
Cramer	Klobuchar	Schiff
Crapo	Lankford	Schmitt
Curtis	Lujan	Schumer
Daines	Lummis	Scott (SC)
Ernst	Markey	Shaheen
Fetterman	Marshall	Sheehy
Fischer	McCormick	Slotkin

Smith
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis

Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren

Welch
Whitehouse
Wicker
Wyden

NAYS—8

Armstrong
Cruz
Johnson

Lee
Paul
Scott (FL)

Tuberville
Young

NOT VOTING—8

Alsobrooks
Bennet
Blunt Rochester

Duckworth
Durbin
Hoeven

Kelly
McConnell

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. On this vote, the yeas are 84, the nays are 8.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment with an amendment numbered 5823 is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE REAFFIRMATION ACT OF 2026

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, on July 4, 1776, 56 men crossed a line from which there was no return. These men knew the King they defied. They knew the empire would come for them. They knew the prisons that could hold them and the gallows that could take them. They had wives, children, homes, names, property, and honor. They signed anyway. They made a bold declaration to the world that had never been made before. It was, in fact, revolutionary.

Our rights come from God. Government rests on consent. Citizens are not subjects. America is a nation. Those truths made America possible, and every generation that inherits America must decide whether or not those truths still command it. That is why I rise today in support of repassing the Declaration of Independence.

The declaration is America's birth certificate. It is the first great act of an American union. It is the character of a free people. It is the public oath by which 13 Colonies became one American nation. It presupposes America is one people, and that matters because a people is more than a population. A people has memory. A people has duties. A people receives an inheritance and decides whether to defend it.

The declaration is the public oath of a people who knew it had received an inheritance and would have to defend it. It is an oath of liberty under God. It is an oath of self-government under law. It is an oath of one people bound across generations, accountable to the Creator, responsible for the Republic, and charged to carry freedom forward. That oath still binds us. That errand has not expired.

America's deepest crisis is a loss of memory. We do not lack experts; we lack fathers. We do not lack managers; we lack patriots. We do not need more people trained to administer decline. We need citizens formed to love and defend the good.

The Constitution can divide power. It cannot supply virtue. That is why the declaration still matters. It tells every King, every court, every Agency, every President, every Congress, and every officeholder the same exact thing: Your power is borrowed. Your authority is limited. Your office exists to serve a people whose rights you did not create and cannot erase.

A Congress that forgets the declaration forgets why Congress has power at all. The truths of the declaration entered history through flesh-and-blood men—men with names, men with families, men with property, reputations, and everything to lose.

Adams saw the break before others would name it. Jefferson gave cause its words. Franklin faced danger with wisdom and wit. Hancock signed with a boldness that made caution look small.

They were men in danger. They acted when delay would have been easy. They acted when fear could have been dressed up as prudence. They acted because the hour had arrived.

Heroes see that line. Then they cross it. The first American heroes chose sacred honor over safe submission. They acted when the safe men counseled waiting.

Heroes do not wait for permission from the powerful. Heroes do not ask whether courage is fashionable. Heroes do not poll cowardice before obeying duty. Liberty was won by men who risked everything. America was born from courage, conviction, duty, and faith in almighty God.

The oldest lie in politics says that the many exist for the few. The declaration broke that lie. Once they signed, the words had to travel. A declaration made in the name of people had to reach the people. Then the declaration moved. Copies went out on a rider. They entered churches, courthouses, taverns, army camps, town squares, and homes. The declaration belonged to the people before it belonged to the archives.

Americans had to hear they were free. They had to hear what freedom would require. One of those copies reached George Washington in New York, where he was preparing to face the empire the signers had defied. He had it read aloud to the army. His men already knew what they were fighting for. They had left their farms, their shops, their families, and their homes because they knew liberty was worth the cost.

But now Congress has spoken for the country. Now their cause had been declared before the world. The British were coming. The army was raw, exposed, and outmatched. So Washington put the words before his men. He let them hear from the voice of their own Congress that they were no longer fighting for grievances; they were fighting for a nation of their own.

At Valley Forge, men endured because liberty demanded endurance. They endured because their children deserved more than submission. They