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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 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, we thank You for a new year with all its hurdles, hardships, and hopes. We pause to express our gratitude, for You have been better to us than we deserve. Lord, You have been bread for our hunger, water for our thirst, and hope for our times of despair. Guide our lawmakers during these turbulent times until Your will is done on Earth, even as it is done in Heaven. Give them wisdom to discern sanity from derangement, truth from falsehood, and light from darkness.

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.

SECOND SESSION OF THE 119TH CONGRESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today being the formal convening of the 2nd session of the 119th Congress, in my capacity as President pro tempore of the Senate, I wish to remind all Senators

and staff of the rules and precedents regarding proper decorum in debate in the Senate Chamber.

Rule XIX, paragraph 2 reads:

No Senator in debate shall, directly or indirectly, by any form of words impute to another Senator or to other Senators any conduct or motive unworthy or unbecoming a Senator.

In addition, the precedents of the Senate require Senators, when addressing each other, to do so in the third person and through the Chair.

Senators shall address and refer to one another using proper titles such as "the Senator from Iowa," "the chairman," or "the majority leader," and refrain from using first names and other monikers.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, Happy New Year. Congress has a full plate of issues to work on this year. I look forward to rolling up my sleeves

and continuing my work for the people of Iowa this year, as I always do.

One issue that is on my mind is lowering healthcare costs, expanding access to high-quality care, and supporting research and innovation. The U.S. healthcare needs more reform and accountability, but we don't need to turn it into a socialized, government-run healthcare system.

I would like to point out another example, as I have before, of how socialized medicine fails patients. Recently, a Canadian woman named Jolene Van Alstine made headlines because of Canada's socialized single-payer healthcare system.

Jolene can't access a healthcare specialist to get the lifesaving surgery that she needs. Jolene has a rare disease, and she needs surgery. Yet there is not a surgeon available in her province to perform that surgery. You would think she would look elsewhere in Canada to get the surgery, but she can't do that. Jolene must get permission from a local specialist first due to government rules running the socialized healthcare system in Canada.

Yet getting an appointment with a specialist isn't possible because no one is accepting new patients. Now she is considering "medical assistance in dying" because Canada's healthcare system doesn't have a surgeon or a specialist that she needs to get that life-saving care.

American conservative radio commentator Glenn Beck has offered to cover the patient's travel expenses to America if an American surgeon is able to perform the surgery. I sure hope

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



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VENEZUELA

someone will step up to help Jolene in this way.

So Canada does, however, have an alternative healthcare system. It is called the United States of America, if the patient can afford to come here and pay for the services. I have highlighted before how Canadians' cancer patients are coming to America for treatment. Socialized medicine leads to longer wait times and scarce resources. Let this be another reminder of socialized medicine's failures.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, 2025 was a historically busy year here in the U.S. Senate: the longest session period in more than 15 years; the greatest number of votes in half a century; many, many, many hours in session, substantially exceeding the average of the past 78 years.

What do we have to show for all of that? More than 400 Presidential nominees confirmed, far exceeding the totals of the first year of President Trump's first term and of President Biden's; repeal of a number of burdensome Biden rules and regulations, including multiple rules that would have driven up prices for American families and businesses; legislation to combat the fentanyl epidemic; to keep criminal illegal immigrants off our streets; to create the first U.S. Federal framework for stablecoins and ensure U.S. leadership in financial innovation; and first and foremost, of course, we passed the Working Families Tax Cut and the rest of our landmark legislation.

January 1 was this past Thursday. If Democrats had their way, Americans would have been facing a big tax hike at the start of this year. Instead, thanks to the Working Families Tax Cut, Americans will continue to pay the lower tax rates Republicans passed in 2017. And that is not all.

In addition to making permanent the tax relief we passed in 2017, Republicans have added a number of new tax relief measures to ensure that Americans can keep more of their hard-earned money. We further increased the standard deduction. We further increased the child tax credit and indexed it to inflation so that its value will never go down. We added a new bonus deduction for seniors, no tax on tips and overtime, and the list goes on.

Thanks to our legislation, Americans will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money permanently, and that is not all our legislation did. Our once-in-a-generation legislation also invested in our national security, in a more secure border, and safer streets.

We repealed Democrats' natural gas tax and took steps to unleash Amer-

ican energy production to ensure Americans have a stable and affordable energy supply and more.

Our goal for 2025 was more money in Americans' pockets, new opportunities, and safer streets. We are accomplishing that with the Working Families Tax Cuts and the rest of our landmark legislation, and we will continue to expand on that work in 2026.

There are a number of bills that I would like the Senate to take up, including ROAD to Housing—legislation that addresses housing affordability and availability—and market structure legislation that builds on the success of the GENIUS Act and provides long-overdue clarity on digital asset regulation.

Our first item of business, though, is appropriations. We still have work to do to get as many full-year appropriations bills as possible across the finish line for fiscal year 2026. I made it very clear when I became majority leader that I wanted to get the Senate back to regular-order appropriations, and we made a strong start last year, passing three appropriations bills with robust bipartisan margins before the August work period—the first time that we have passed an appropriations bill that early since 2018.

Unfortunately, Democrats then chose to shut down the government, which seriously delayed our appropriations work. But we got right back to it after Democrats finally agreed to reopen the government, and we were able to get those three appropriations bills signed into law by the President this fall.

Now we have another bipartisan, bicameral package of three bills that was released today and is ready to move through the House and the Senate. That will be the priority as soon as this package comes over from the House, and Senators can expect continued work on appropriations for the remainder of January.

We have a January 30 deadline to fund the government, and nobody should want a repeat of the recent Democrat shutdown at the end of this month. So let's get the rest of this year's appropriations bills done so we can turn our attention to our other responsibilities and to getting the next fiscal year's appropriations bills done in a timely fashion.

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. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, early Saturday morning, as we all know, U.S. forces apprehended Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife. Both of them are now in U.S. custody.

First, I will say this: Maduro is a tyrant. Nobody mourns what has happened to him. Under his watch, the people of Venezuela have suffered immensely. But now the crucial question is, What comes next for Venezuela and, more importantly, for the United States?

Nobody really seems to know. The administration's story keeps changing by the hour. Even after Secretary Rubio spent all day Sunday trying to clean up Trump's mess, the President went right back to repeat that the United States will now apparently run Venezuela for a while.

On and on and on. No plan. No clarity. Only chaos.

Ironically and dangerously, the chaos Donald Trump has engendered in Venezuela leads him on, in his mind, to think he should try the same thing in Colombia, in Iran, and even in Greenland.

But the danger in Venezuela is only beginning. Donald Trump has opened a Pandora's box, and things can get out of hand very quickly. And if Donald Trump tries to do to Colombia and Greenland what he did to Venezuela, the disasters and consequences could compound exponentially, as bad as Venezuela alone is going to be. Whenever our country has gotten involved in this kind of regime change and nation building, American families pay the price in blood and in treasure. That is what happened in Iraq, for instance.

The American people did not sign up for this kind of military adventurism when they voted for Donald Trump. They wanted a President focused on America first, focused on lowering the cost of living, lowering healthcare costs, lowering grocery prices. Just like Donald Trump broke his promise to release the Epstein files, he is now breaking his promise to end American involvement in the endless wars.

I warn my Republican colleagues: The backlash from the MAGA base on the war in Venezuela will be swift, fierce, and thunderous, just like it was with the Epstein files. And if the Republicans go along with Donald Trump on Venezuela, Americans will pay the price in blood and in treasure, while Republicans could very well pay the price politically.

In the meantime, the next step for Congress is clear: We must stop Trump's folly by invoking the War Powers Act. Later this week, I will join Senator Kaine, Senator Schiff, and Senator Paul in forcing a vote on our War Powers Resolution, a bipartisan measure that will affirm Congress's authority on matters of war and peace when it comes to Venezuela. If there was ever a time for Republicans to step up to the plate and stand up not just for the authority of Congress but for