

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the American people deserve a government that is fully funded.

Last week, the minority leader claimed on this floor that he wants to fund the government and avoid a shutdown. It is time for him to prove it. His record shows just the opposite.

The appropriations bills have historically passed with bipartisan votes. Yet when Senator SCHUMER was majority leader during the Biden years, he blocked every single appropriations bill from coming to this floor. Eleven bipartisan appropriations bills that passed out of the committees died in that wastebasket there under the desk of Senator SCHUMER. When Democrats were in the majority, they literally shut down the entire appropriations process.

After the Democrats lost the elections in 2024, they revolted, and they shut down the government twice. The two Schumer shutdowns broke records. First, in October 2025, Democrats shut down the entire Federal Government. It lasted 43 days—the longest shutdown in the history of our Nation.

During the shutdown, Senator SCHUMER infamously said:

Every day gets better for us.

Every day didn't get better for the American people all across the country. Federal workers missed paychecks, and there was a huge shutdown of TSA. People missed flights. There were long lines waiting to get to the airports and to get to the flights. Screening lines lasted hours and hours.

Then, in February of this year, Democrats did it again. They shut down the Department of Homeland Security, and that shutdown lasted 75 days.

The shutdown of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol lasted even longer. Democrats voted to defund Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and they voted to defund our Border Patrol. They want wide-open borders.

Democrats vote to protect illegal immigrant criminals but don't seem to care about protecting law-abiding American citizens. Democrats have proven their own willingness to disrupt travel, to delay paychecks, and to endanger our national security, and they will do it when they think it is to their political advantage, not to the advantage of the people of our country.

Senator SCHUMER may have said on the floor that he wants to avoid a shutdown, but his actions signal that Democrats are getting ready to do it again.

Just last month, Senator SCHUMER said shutdowns are, in his words, "strategic decisions"—"strategic decisions." Democrats have already shut

down the government twice. A third shutdown would be just as painful for the American people and maybe worse. Democrat shutdowns make life less affordable, and they make our communities less safe. The American people deserve better.

Senator SUSAN COLLINS, who is the chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, is working very hard to fix what Senator SCHUMER has broken. She is working to put bipartisan bills on this floor and is working to keep the government open. This is how the appropriations process was designed to work.

House Republicans are soon going to vote on a bill that funds the government until after the elections in November.

Here in the Senate, Senator COLLINS continues to lead with integrity and with intelligence and by working in bipartisanship. She has a long and respected record of working on both sides of the aisle. She has presented good-faith offers to Democrats. Democrats continue to reject them. They demand more spending on things like these fraud-ridden programs that we have read about. They are threatening to stonewall every single appropriations bill again this year.

Democrats are trying to avoid a shutdown—so they say. But they are not trying to avoid a shutdown; they are preparing for another one.

Here is what another Democrat shutdown would mean to the American people: A Democrat shutdown means longer lines at the airport. A Democrat shutdown means our troops miss paychecks. A Democrat shutdown means TSA agents miss paychecks. A Democrat shutdown undermines national security. A Democrat shutdown hurts our veterans, and it hurts our seniors.

Senator SCHUMER says he wants to avoid one. Well, time is going to tell.

Republicans are focused on funding the government in a serious, timely, and bipartisan way. That is what we are intending to do. We will see if the Democrats are willing to meet us along the way.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF KARA MARIE WESTERCAMP

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, those seeking to recoup losses from President Trump's disastrous tariff policies will appear before what is called the Court of International Trade.

As is the case with many of President Trump's judicial nominees in his second term, his choice to fill a vacancy on this Court Kara Westercamp was tapped because of her obvious loyalty

to the President who nominated her instead of her loyalty to the law.

Her offensive, inflammatory, juvenile social media posts demonstrate she lacks the independence and the maturity and the temperament to be a judge.

Ms. Westercamp tried to delete her old tweets so we wouldn't see them on the committee. She failed. Our staff was able to recover them.

In these tweets, Ms. Westercamp spread conspiracy theories about the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol and attacked Republicans and Democrats alike for being insufficiently loyal to President Trump.

She elevated claims that the January 6 attack was "orchestrated by Members of the Senate, and members of the [Capitol] police."

Let me repeat that. In her tweets, she claimed that the January 6 attack on the Capitol, which we all saw the news of, was "orchestrated by Members of the Senate, and members of the [Capitol] police."

So much for the judgment of this would-be judge.

I was in this Chamber during the counting of electoral votes for the 2020 election. Vice President Pence was sitting where the Presiding Officer sits today.

Members of Congress watched as Secret Service evacuated the Vice President. Within minutes, we were told to leave as well because a violent mob of armed insurrectionists intended to prevent the certification of the 2020 Presidential election results, which Donald Trump had lost by 7 million popular votes.

But Ms. Westercamp dismissed this event entirely. She retweeted a post that read—and I quote:

We're all supposed to be sending thoughts and prayers to traumatized Members of Congress whose workday was interrupted for a couple of hours.

Mr. President, did you see the video? Did you see the mob? Did you see the damage they did to this U.S. Capitol Building?

Yes, we left for our lives. The Vice President was spirited out of here by the Secret Service to protect his life.

Ms. Westercamp has also repeatedly attacked Senator MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky for supposedly "betraying President Trump." She even called Senator MCCONNELL "a modern-day Benedict Arnold," and she repeatedly called him "Cocaine Mitch"—an inflammatory nickname used by MAGA critics of Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican Senator and former leader from Kentucky.

I am not going to be able to repeat some of the things that she wrote in her tweets. They are just too much. But of the late Senator Lindsey Graham, she wrote:

True to NO ONE but [his] own self-preservation.

She crudely called him a name that I can't repeat in the RECORD for not toeing the MAGA line. There is much,

much more that she had to say about Senator Graham.

Ms. Westercamp accused Senator COLLINS of Maine of prioritizing her “own personal political power” over loyalty to President Trump and called for her removal, as well as the removal of Senators MURKOWSKI and CASSIDY following their vote on the second impeachment effort against the President.

Ms. Westercamp even posted a sexually explicit image and joke about former House Speaker NANCY PELOSI—a post that Ms. Westercamp herself later described as “not safe for work.”

Notably, it appears some of her inflammatory, overtly political posts were made while Ms. Westercamp was on duty, actually, as an attorney at the Department of Justice; she was tweeting away. That would violate Federal law.

Last week, Leader THUNE filed closure so that we could move more quickly to Ms. Westercamp’s nomination. After you have heard about her background, what do you think as a Senator?

Despite her disrespectful and inflammatory comments, she is a priority for the other side. It is a disgrace that Senate Republicans are moving forward on this nomination while Senator MCCONNELL is still in the hospital and so soon after Senator Graham’s passing.

Judges are chosen for judgment, for character, for maturity, for competence, for independence, and most especially, for their temperament. Ms. Westercamp does not meet that standard. I urge my colleagues to oppose her nomination.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Mr. President, on a separate topic, last week the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing that I will never forget. On the second day of Todd Blanche’s nomination hearing to be Attorney General of the United States, the committee convened an outside panel of witnesses to discuss his fitness to serve in that office.

I invited one of the witnesses. Her name was Dani Bensky, a young woman who is a dance teacher and a mother. She was a victim of Jeffrey Epstein. She was sexually abused by him when she was 17 years old.

A group of about a dozen Epstein survivors and their loved ones sat behind Dani when she testified. They were urging that the predators responsible for these horrific crimes be held accountable. Their stories are heart-breaking.

Instead of helping them, the Trump Justice Department has retraumatized these survivors with its careless and cavalier attitude. When this administration finally released information pertaining to Epstein’s trafficking ring after missing the Epstein Files Transparency Act deadline, many of the survivors’ personal identifying information became publicly available.

These survivors already suffering unspeakable abuse were forced to relive

their trauma as one of the most painful moments of their lives became public for anyone, including their friends, family, and coworkers to see.

There was a time when the Department of Justice turned 1,000 attorneys loose on the Epstein files to find any references to the President. They were so careful, they went through it page by page for millions of pages.

And yet, when it came time to finally release the files, they were so slipshod and haphazard that they released the identities, the addresses, the telephone numbers, and even photographs of the Epstein victims.

The victims of Epstein’s abuse attended both days of the hearing to demand accountability from the man who oversaw that botched release of files that put private information online—Todd Blanche.

They wanted the opportunity to speak with him to tell him their stories and to push him to hold the predators responsible for their abuse accountable.

When I asked Mr. Blanche on Wednesday if he would meet with these brave individuals, he responded with babble about lawyers and regulations. He wouldn’t just say: I will meet with the victims.

It was fortunate that he did do the right thing. It took the threat of one Republican Senator who said he would not support Blanche’s nomination for Attorney General unless he met with the survivors. Then, reluctantly, he did.

You would think Mr. Blanche would go out of his way to meet with them to apologize for the harm he caused victims, for the information that they disclosed, and to present them with a plan for changes going forward to protect victims while pursuing perpetrators.

Instead, he arrived at the meeting ready to deny any blame for himself, with little or no concern for the survivors according to their reports. Those in the room described him as dismissive. They said that speaking with Mr. Blanche was like “beating your head against the wall.”

The impression that the victims had upon leaving the meeting was that Mr. Blanche was only there to check the box for his promotion; nothing was going to change.

Is this the man we want to confirm to be head of the premium law enforcement Agency in America? With Mr. Blanche, it is clear that justice is secondary to loyalty to the President.

Under Blanche, hundreds of FBI personnel were directed to troll through those Epstein files to find any mention of the President but could not exercise the same level of care to ensure victims’ information remain protected.

When pressed in an interview why more Epstein accomplices had not been charged, Blanche insisted “it isn’t a crime to party with Mr. Epstein.”

Survivors deserve more than that type of flip comment. They deserve a DOJ committed to ensuring that it will

never happen again. They deserve an Attorney General who treats them with respect and compassion.

Mr. Blanche’s behavior surrounding the Epstein investigation is just one of the many reasons he should not lead the Department of Justice. I urge my colleagues to oppose his nomination.

I yield the floor.

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

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

STOP INSIDER TRADING ACT

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, people generally in this country—and Nebraskans in particular—expect when they send their elected officials to Washington, DC, that they are going to serve the communities. Sadly, that belief that we are coming here is undermined by some of our policies that we have.

For example, 80 percent of Americans believe that Congress does not do a good job of keeping the inside information that we have separate from our finances. Consequently, the approval rating of Congress is about 17 percent.

And it is not just the polling that shows that we have got a problem; so does history. We can look on social media and see that regularly, publishing the trades of Members of this body is something people try to profit off of.

In fact, the former Speaker’s trades were published quite regularly. And as crazy as it sounds, that became a legitimate investment strategy because it was making people money.

We also had a former member of the Senate Intelligence Committee who sold about \$1.5 million in stock in 2020 that occurred right before the market tanked because of the COVID pandemic.

Even the appearance of impropriety undermines the credibility of the House and the Senate, that it gives the—even if we give the perception that we are using inside information to benefit financially, it undermines the public’s trust in our democracy and may depress people from wanting to vote, keep them home, and it certainly undermines the faith they have in our institutions.

I have a solution. My Stop Insider Trading Act. My Stop Insider Trading Act would go beyond our current disclosure laws. What it would say is that if you become elected to the Congress—either the House or the Senate—that you would not be allowed to buy any more stocks.

Now, if you owned it already, you would be allowed to keep those. But if you wanted to sell those, you would have to give 7 to 14 days’ notice so that the public would be able to see what you intended to do and be able to take