

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 436, S. 4784.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 436, S. 4784, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2027 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE RESOLUTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 6, S. Res. 817.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the executive resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

An executive resolution (S. Res. 817) authorizing the en bloc consideration in Executive Session of certain nominations on the Executive Calendar.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative 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 Executive Calendar No. 6, S. Res. 817, an executive resolution authorizing the en bloc consideration in Executive Session of certain nominations on the Executive Calendar.

John Thune, John Barrasso, Alan Armstrong, David McCormick, Kevin Cramer, John R. Curtis, Tim Sheehy, James E. Risch, John Boozman, Pete Ricketts, Chuck Grassley, Cynthia M. Lummis, James Lankford, Jim Banks, Bernie Moreno, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Scott of South Carolina.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

NOMINATION OF WALTER CLAYTON

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this afternoon, we are going to move on the nomination of Jay Clayton to be Director of National Intelligence.

Amid a heightened threat environment, having a proven leader in this role is especially important, and Jay Clayton fits this mold.

During the first Trump administration, Jay Clayton served as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission for almost 4 years, and under his leadership, the SEC went after financial crimes and fraud and aimed to protect Main Street investors.

He also worked with the intelligence community on national security issues that intersected with our financial system. That included efforts to address Chinese influence and exploitation of our markets.

And, of course, he worked to maintain economic stability after the onset of the pandemic, as well.

So, Mr. President, with that record, it is no wonder that President Trump wanted Jay Clayton to serve in his second administration, this time as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, an important law enforcement post.

And for the past year and a half in that role, Mr. Clayton has been busy. He has supervised the prosecution of terrorists and the drafting of the indictment against Nicolas Maduro on drug trafficking and terrorism charges. Now President Trump has nominated him for a Cabinet post to lead our Nation's intelligence community.

Jay Clayton's record inspires confidence in the type of DNI he will be, and Democrats have previously recognized his abilities. He has earned bipartisan support in the past. The Democrat vice chair of the Intelligence Committee even said after Mr. Clayton was nominated for this position "I have known and respected Jay Clayton for many years and believe he is a capable public servant"—that, again, from the Democrat vice chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

So one might think that we would be seeing some bipartisanship from Democrats on this nominee, but Democrats are playing the same partisan games with this qualified nominee as they have with so many of President Trump's picks. And it is a funny thing because Democrats have made no secret of their disdain for the current Acting Director of National Intelligence. In fact, Democrats were so worked up over the President's temporary choice for this position that they allowed our Nation's most important counterterrorism tool to go dark for the first time ever. That is right.

Now Democrats have the opportunity to replace that acting official, but they are in no apparent rush to confirm a permanent Director of National Intelligence. They have opposed his nomination in committee. They have delayed things here on the floor, and I don't expect we will see a lot of Democrat sup-

port for him in the final rollcall. It doesn't matter how qualified the nominee or even that Democrats supposedly want to see the current Acting Director replaced. For our colleagues across the aisle, everything—everything—takes a back seat to the political games.

Well, I have run out of words. It is shameful.

We are going to move forward with the Clayton nomination this week. We will have a permanent Director of National Intelligence in place shortly, and I hope this will encourage my colleagues to stop blocking the reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

POLITICAL PRISONERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, you often wonder if the speeches you give on the floor of the Senate are heard by anyone. Most of us have spent some time working with staff to prepare remarks to state a position or to make a plea, and you wonder if anyone is listening. Well, every once in a while, something happens which renews your faith that perhaps there are people listening who can make a difference.

Late last week, I had an amazing visit in my office upstairs, here in the Capitol, from China—Pastor Ezra Jin Mingri. He had been jailed for 266 days in a Chinese prison. His crime? He had been operating a church, a Christian church. At least eight of his congregants remain in prison. Pastor Jin's daughter Grace and his 7-week-old grandson—also named Ezra—joined our meeting upstairs as well. Grace worked tirelessly to draw attention to her father's case, and it was a joy to see them reunited. In our meeting, Pastor Jin told me that his prison conditions were very stark. While in jail, in China, he was cut off from communications with his family. His lawyers were harassed and threatened as well.

President Trump raised the case with Chinese President Xi, and here in the Senate, Senator CRUZ and I, on a bipartisan basis, passed a resolution calling for his release and the release of several other political prisoners in China.

I welcome the Chinese Government's release of Pastor Jin, and I call on them to release the remaining eight members of his church as well as the following who are mentioned in my Senate resolution: Dr. Gulshan Abbas, Jimmy Lai, Gao Quanfu, and his wife Pang Yu, and Epkar Asat. All of these people are noted on this poster that I presented on the floor several weeks ago. Here is Pastor Jin with a smile on his face—the same thing in my office

upstairs with his beautiful daughter and grandson.

I wish the Chinese Government would release the remaining individuals here whom I have spotlighted in this presentation: Dr. Abbas, Jimmy Lai, Gao Quanfu and Pang Yu, and Epkar Asat. This would be a welcomed move before President Xi's visit in September as there is simply no reason to fear these people who have done nothing but otherwise exercise the peaceful freedom of religion and expression.

APPROPRIATIONS

Now, Mr. President, on a separate topic, last week the Senate Appropriations Committee held a hearing on President Trump's supplemental request to pay for the war in Iran.

At the hearing, I asked Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to give us the latest accounting of the financial cost of this war. The Secretary estimated that it had cost \$37.5 billion. I might remind those who are following this statement that we are in the fifth month of the first year of this war in Iran. The cost so far, at least, is \$37.5 billion. I don't know how the Secretary arrived at that figure, especially considering the fact that it does not include the cost of repairing heavily damaged United States bases in the Middle East which have been attacked by Iran—all of this to say nothing of the cost to our servicemembers who shoulder the burden of lengthy deployment and, most importantly, to say nothing of the cost of the 18 brave—brave—Americans who have been tragically killed in Iran. We owe them and their families a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid.

So now the White House is coming to Congress with an \$88 billion—that is right—\$88 billion request for more money for the war in Iran and a few other items. To those of you watching at home who don't follow the ins and outs of Congress, this is a funding request outside the normal annual government funding process. This is usually reserved for serious emergencies and unexpected costs. This is despite the fact that the administration already has more than \$75 million in unspent money for the Pentagon—\$75 million unspent—and they are coming and asking us for another \$88 billion. They are leaving a lot of change on the dresser.

Moreover, if funding is needed for the war in Iran, the administration, at a minimum, owes Congress and the American people a plan to end this self-inflicted mess. Make no mistake, Iran is a troubling actor that has, for decades, threatened American and allied interests. It terribly represses its own people and has not given up on its pursuit of a nuclear weapon, but President Trump's war with Iran has not resolved either of these issues. All it has done is to have drawn us into a messy foreign entanglement with no clear endgame, and now a growing number of American troops have been killed and wounded. Allies in the region are facing repeated missile attacks, and the

global economy has been held hostage by Iran's totally predictable stranglehold of the Strait of Hormuz.

So, before this Congress provides billions of dollars more, there are some questions that need to be answered.

I might add, I want to return—we have lost 18 brave servicemen. They can, obviously, never be replaced, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their service to our Nation, but the administration is virtually silent with the number of troops—our troops—who have been wounded in this war with Iran—some of them seriously wounded. The numbers are over 400—400 casualties—along with the 18 who have given their lives.

This is a costly venture of a war that the President initiated without going to the American people or to Congress, as required by the Constitution, or to our allies or to the public at large.

The President did this on his own, believing it would be quick and over. We are learning again what we have learned so many times in the recent past: It is far easier to start a war than it is to end one, and we are seeing that to this day.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, on another unrelated topic—well, it is related, but it is different. The war in Ukraine has turned a good corner for us, with the real possibility for the first time in over 4 years that Russia will be finally forced to negotiate.

I was at the NATO summit in Ankara, Türkiye, earlier this month with several colleagues, including Senators SHAHEEN and COONS, the late Lindsey Graham, and Senator ROUNDS, and the message was clear: Momentum is with Ukraine, and this is the time for American and European support to step up.

But amid this shift, Ukraine desperately needs more air defenses to protect civilians from brutal Russian attacks. Unfortunately, too many of these air defenses have been needed in the gulf for President Trump's other war in Iran, and Ukraine still has not received \$400 million we appropriated in last year's appropriations bill, signed into law by the President. They are still waiting on it for air defense.

I asked Secretary Hegseth why the Pentagon is taking so long to send this critical aid to Ukraine. He didn't have a good answer.

President Trump needs to send the \$400 million in funds immediately. They are desperately needed in Ukraine to stop the Russian advances. Doing so will help bring President Putin to the negotiating table.

Secretary Hegseth also needs to move the \$200 million we appropriated and the President signed into law for the Baltic Security Initiative to help frontline NATO allies prepare for Russian intimidation and retaliation.

My last point is this: It is overdue for this Chamber to act on Russia and Ukraine and the legislation which Lindsey Graham was passionate about. The last time I met with him—just 3, 4

days before he passed away—he brought this issue up, this idea of sanctions against Russia. I think it is a valuable investment of our time, and I am happy to cosponsor this measure.

Senator Graham understood the timeliness of this legislation to help force Russians to negotiate. He worked hard to find agreement on this bill—months and months of work with Senator BLUMENTHAL and others, Senator SHAHEEN included.

I know the majority leader cares about helping Ukraine, so I am glad the bill is set to move this week. I look forward to its passage. It is truly a tribute to the kind of work which Lindsey Graham made his career in the U.S. Senate and makes a difference in the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The Senator from North Carolina.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BUDD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Clayton nomination.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, Trump going to Michigan today to tout his economic record is like an arsonist returning to the scene of the crime and asking for a pat on the back. Trump has said over and over again that "affordability" is a made-up word. He has said Americans' skyrocketing costs are nothing but a hoax.

Hey, Donald, ask any Michigander whether they think the higher costs that are crushing them are a hoax.

Michiganders and Americans know that rising costs are all too real, and they know who is to blame—Donald Trump and the GOP. Over and over again, they have done things that have made it more expensive to live in Michigan.

If Trump wants to tout his economic record in Michigan, so be it. Trump can brag about how Michiganders are forking over \$4.23 for a gallon of gas on a car economy because of his failed war with Iran. Trump can take credit for the massive tariff tax he is forcing Michiganders to pay because of the whopping 50 percent tariff he just slapped on Canada—the State's northern neighbor. The Michigan and Canadian economies are intertwined. How stupid to impose a tariff when the two economies depend on each other. Or maybe Trump wants to boast to Michigan's factory workers about the 75,000 American manufacturing jobs he has lost in his second term.

Everywhere you look, the Michigan economy is in shambles because of Donald Trump and his actions.

So that is your record, Donald. Go ahead and own it.

Trump thinks he is in for a warm reception in Michigan; he is in for a reckoning.

CORRUPTION

Madam President, on corruption, the only people who think America is getting more affordable are Donald Trump and his cronies as they cash in on unprecedented corruption. We see a new con come out of the Trump administration almost every day, but the scheme is always the same: Americans pay; Trump profits.

Last week, I announced Senate Democrats' new effort to stop Trump from turning his Presidency into his personal ATM. We released a report detailing how the Trump family has defrauded the American people to the tune of more than \$4 billion in the past 18 months. We also saw Republicans vote against my legislation to prevent Trump from wasting further taxpayer dollars on upgrades for his \$400 million luxury jet.

Our work to expose and stop Trump's grift continues this week. In the coming days, I plan to announce new legislation to clean up the swamp Trump promised to drain a decade ago. We are unmasking the people who are swindling the American people, holding their feet to the fire, and advancing reforms to stop further corruption in the future.

The Presidency isn't a product to sell, a commodity to trade, or a grift to run—no matter how hard Donald Trump tries. Every American who has been forced to pay more this last year and a half is paying for Trump's profit margin. We are done picking up his tab.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Madam President, on the SAVE Act, it is a new week in Washington, but one thing remains the same: The SAVE Act is dead on arrival in the Senate. Trump keeps tiring himself out running the same play. Trump knows he can't defend Republicans' abysmal record—his abysmal record—so he whines to the GOP to pass the SAVE Act to disenfranchise voters who want to hold him accountable in November. Give it up, Donald. The SAVE Act ain't going to happen.

The courts have rejected the SAVE Act. Congress rejected the SAVE Act. Even members of Trump's own party have rejected the SAVE Act.

Republican problems aren't going to go away until Trump realizes how futile this brazen effort to rig our elections really is. Instead, Trump has said publicly that "Republicans have to pass SAVE . . . otherwise we are going to have a shutdown in November." That is Trump. He keeps threatening a shutdown.

Are Republicans listening? Your President is threatening to shut down the government. It is not Democrats doing that.

Donald, I keep trying to remind you, the last time you bragged about shutting down the government—back when NANCY PELOSI was in charge then—

didn't go so well for you, did it? And it definitely won't now.

Republicans either need to drop this frivolous and vicious effort to pass the SAVE Act or watch Democrats stop it dead in its tracks.

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. CASSIDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant 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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 833, Walter Clayton, of New York, to be Director of National Intelligence.

John Thune, Tom Cotton, Jon Husted, Alan Armstrong, Jim Banks, Bernie Moreno, Chuck Grassley, John Barrasso, Marsha Blackburn, Joni Ernst, John R. Curtis, Roger F. Wicker, Pete Ricketts, Katie Boyd Britt, Bill Hagerty, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Mike Crapo.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 nomination of Walter Clayton, of New York, to be Director of National Intelligence, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 210 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Armstrong	Capito	Cruz
Banks	Cassidy	Curtis
Barrasso	Collins	Daines
Blackburn	Cornyn	Ernst
Boozman	Cotton	Fischer
Britt	Cramer	Graham
Budd	Crapo	Grassley

Hagerty	Lummis	Schmitt
Hawley	Marshall	Scott (FL)
Hoeven	McCormick	Scott (SC)
Husted	Moody	Sheehy
Hyde-Smith	Moran	Sullivan
Johnson	Moreno	Thune
Justice	Murkowski	Tillis
Kennedy	Paul	Tuberville
Lankford	Risch	Wicker
Lee	Rounds	Young

NAYS—43

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Kaine	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kim	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	King	Shaheen
Booker	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Cantwell	Lujan	Smith
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gallego	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	
Heinrich	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—6

Gillibrand	McConnell	Ricketts
Kelly	Peters	Welch

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 43. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Walter Clayton, of New York, to be Director of National Intelligence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mr. HUSTED. Mr. President, I rise today in support of H.R. 7008, a bill that contains two commonsense reforms. These are pretty easy—banning members of Congress from purchasing stocks while in office and requiring a photo ID to vote. People have said that they want us to do this. I have heard it for years around here. It hasn't happened. Now it is time to happen. Tonight, we have an opportunity to do it.

Both policies are overwhelmingly supported by Americans. If you want to listen to the American people, do these two things. Mr. President, 86 percent of Americans support banning Members of Congress from purchasing stocks while in office, and 83 percent of Americans support showing a photo ID to vote.

It has been 7 days since I last stood in this Chamber to speak about photo ID, and I am back to do it again because it is an important policy. I want to reiterate a point: Photo ID doesn't just protect the integrity of our elections; it makes our elections work better.

If election integrity isn't reason enough to support photo ID, consider what it would mean to election administration. We have seen this in States like California, where it took them over a week to count votes in recent