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Senate

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.

Almighty God, Father of mercy, light, and justice, we acknowledge that we are in Your hands. Lord, we ask for Your mercy upon this legislative body; let Your Holy Spirit guide them with wisdom, discernment, and courage.

Prosper the work You have called them to do that their decisions may serve the welfare of all people. Strengthen them in times of difficulty, and keep them faithful in their responsibilities, inspiring them to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

May all that is done in this Chamber reflect Your wisdom, honor, and love. We pray in your righteous 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.

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 Senator from Iowa.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am here to show my support for the Prevent Government Shutdowns Act.

Before I do that, I want to express my support for the proposed continuing resolution and thank Senator COLLINS for her leadership to make sure government doesn't shut down if that continuing resolution gets to the President.

Now, I do prefer passing 12 appropriations bills. And while I do that, I can say at the same time, it is my opportunity to tell my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to work with us and get the job done to avoid a government shutdown.

Funding the Federal Government is a core responsibility of Congress. The fiscal year begins October 1 each year. If appropriations bills are not signed into law by September 30, lawmakers and the President must agree on the temporary spending resolution that is known as a continuing resolution. That resolution keeps the government open for business. If that fails, the unfunded parts of government shut down.

Now, with increasing frequency, the minority party has used the threat or reality of a government shutdown to try and advance partisan political priorities. Over the past 10 years, we have seen five government shutdowns. Three of them—one a full shutdown, and two partial shutdowns—have occurred in just the past 9 months. Unfortunately, it looks like we could be headed for a fourth before the end of the year.

History has repeatedly shown that shutting down the government is not only bad policy; it is bad politics. It has also shown not to be a great bargaining tool. By a bargaining tool, I mean there is some group of Senators or sometimes an individual Senator will say: We are going to shut the government down until I get some policy, that that individual wants or that group of people want. And you know what? Eventually, government opens

up and the bargaining tool instrument has not served the purpose of the Members that shut down the government.

It is a simple fact it costs taxpayers money to shut down the government and even more to reopen it. And in a time of fiscal crisis like we have now, you shouldn't be wasting that kind of money. A government shutdown reduces essential services to the American people, erodes the trust of the American people in their government, and limits the ability of Congress to conduct oversight over Federal Government operations. I believe Congress needs to stop governing from crisis to crisis, respect the appropriations process, and fulfill its constitutional responsibilities to fund the government.

For that reason—and the reason I am here today is to talk about the Prevent Government Shutdowns Act. That act is introduced by Senator LANKFORD and Senator HASSAN. This bill would make government shutdowns a thing of the past by providing an automatic continuing resolution should Congress fail to complete its job of passing appropriations bills on time. Moreover, it would implement rules designed to enforce the commonsense principle that if Congress doesn't do its job, Congress doesn't go home. Congress needs to work through regular order to fund the government Agencies to avoid our "Groundhog Day" approach to spending each year. Americans deserve better. They should not be asked to pay a price for congressional dysfunction.

It is past time that we put an end to the recurring political sideshow of government shutdowns, so that is why I say: Let's enact the Prevent Government Shutdowns Act by Senator LANKFORD and Senator HASSAN.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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



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S4401

Mr. THUNE. 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I am pleased to say that the text of the continuing resolution has been released. It is a strong, bipartisan piece of legislation, and I hope it will receive overwhelming support from both parties in the Senate.

I am deeply grateful to Appropriations Chair COLLINS for her work to produce this legislation, in consultation with Members of both parties, and I also want to thank Senator MURRAY, vice chair of the Appropriations Committee, for her efforts to get this done.

I look forward to passing this bill in the next few days.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this week, we will move our fifth block of civilian nominees, which includes 74 well-qualified individuals. By the end of the week, we will have cleared 95 percent of the civilian nominees who are eligible for floor consideration—95 percent.

At this same point in President Trump's first term, there were 155 unconfirmed nominees on the calendar. This year, that number is on track to be about 10. It is the best confirmation track record in a quarter century.

As I said, we will have confirmed 95 percent of the civilian nominees available for confirmation, meaning that we are doing better at this point than we were during President Obama's first term, President Trump's first term, or President Biden's.

It didn't always look like we would be able to achieve this. From the very beginning of his second term, Democrats met President Trump's nominees with a historic level of obstruction. And when I say historic, I do mean historic.

Up until extremely recently, President Trump was the only President on record—the only President on record—not to have had any civilian nominees approved by unanimous consent or voice vote. That used to be the standard way of approving these nominations.

During President George H. W. Bush's 4 years in office and President Clinton's first 4 years, both Presidents had 98 percent of their civilian nominees—98 percent—confirmed through unanimous consent or voice vote. President George W. Bush and President Obama both had 90 percent.

And then we get to President Trump's first administration. Democrats introduced an unprecedented new level of partisanship into the historically bipartisan confirmation process, forcing time-consuming votes on civilian nominees who would once have gone by unanimous consent or by voice vote.

But despite this—despite this new level of partisanship—both President Trump in his first term and President Biden had more than half of their nominees confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote.

And then we get to President Trump's current administration. As I said, until recently, he had not had one single nominee confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote—zero. So the fact that we are standing here today with a civilian nominations calendar about to be essentially cleared is pretty impressive.

But we have been on a mission to ensure that the President has his nominees in place so that he can do the job the American people elected him to do. That included taking action to restore the Senate tradition of en bloc confirmation of largely noncontroversial nominees. And, most of all, it included putting in the work—lots of work in committees, lots of work on the floor, and lots of votes—lots and lots of votes.

That has paid off. We have confirmed 52 article III judges, 91 percent of the U.S. attorneys that have made it out of committee this Congress, 23 Cabinet members, and the list goes on.

And we are going to continue to ensure that nominees are confirmed in a timely fashion and that the President is able to have his team in place.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 910.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Erica Schwartz, of Florida, to be Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant executive 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. 910, Erica Schwartz, of Florida, to be Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Jim Banks, Bill Cassidy, John Barrasso, John Boozman, Cynthia M. Lummis, Jon Husted, John Hoeven, John Cornyn, Joni Ernst, Bill Hagerty, Kevin Cramer, Chuck Grassley, Ted Budd.

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 the en bloc nominations listed in S. Res. 817.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 817, the nominations listed therein are pending en bloc.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant executive 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 and the provisions of S. Res. 817 (119th Cong.), do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Executive Calendar Nos.: 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 739, 740, 746, 747, 748, 749, 757, 759, 761, 762, 764, 766, 781, 782, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 826, 832, 834, 835, 836, 837, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 899, 900, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909 en bloc.

John Thune, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Tim Sheehy, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, John Boozman, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Pete Ricketts, Tommy Tuberville, Alan Armstrong, Joni Ernst, Eric Schmitt, Bernie Moreno, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Rounds, John R. Curtis.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.