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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 6, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Senate

TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2026

The Senate met at 10:01 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ALAN ARMSTRONG, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma.

PRAYER

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

O Lord, in whose hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all humanity, we come before You in humility, and trust that all wisdom, justice, and mercy are Yours alone. Apart from You, we can do nothing.

Lord, we pray for our Senators and all entrusted with governance. Manifest Your presence among them. Order their steps in Your truth, and lead them in righteousness, courage, and unity. Give them discerning hearts to choose what is right over what is merely expedient and the grace to pursue justice with humility, wisdom, and integrity.

We pray in Your precious 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 bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, August 4, 2026.

To the Senate:

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

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ARMSTRONG 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

AGOA EXTENSION ACT—Motion to Proceed—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 6500, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 320, H.R. 6500, a bill to extend duty-free treatment provided with respect to imports from certain countries in Africa under the African Growth and Opportunity Act, to extend customs user fees, and for other purposes.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 5221

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5221) to prohibit the purchase, sale, or exchange of nonpublic information, and for other purposes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

AGOA EXTENSION ACT—Motion to Proceed

WORKING FAMILIES TAX CUTS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, a week or 2 ago, I came down to the floor and talked about growing up in a small town in South Dakota. As I said in those remarks, I carry those South Dakotans with me in a special way in my work here in Washington.

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



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When I consider bills or look at regulations, I think about what kind of impact they will have on those Americans, on hard-working people without a lot of extra money in the budget, on people living paycheck to paycheck or, as was the case with some of the farmers I grew up with, harvest to harvest. I think about how to ensure that government isn't standing in their way or taking up all the extra money in their budget.

And it was hard-working Americans like the South Dakotans I grew up with who were at the top of my mind when Republicans drafted our landmark tax relief legislation back in 2017. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act cut tax rates across the board, doubled the child tax credit, and nearly doubled the standard deduction. It put more money in hard-working Americans' pockets, money that they were able to use for their particular needs—from childcare to home repairs, to medical bills, to a family vacation.

And those same hard-working Americans were our focus last year when we passed the Working Families Tax Cuts.

Our first aim with the Working Families Tax Cuts was making the 2017 tax relief permanent, and that is exactly what we did. We made the lower tax rates permanent. We made the increased child tax credit permanent. And we made the increased standard deduction permanent.

But that was just the beginning. We weren't content with a permanent extension of the 2017 tax relief. We wanted to do more for working families, and so that is what we did.

As I said, our 2017 tax relief bill doubled the child tax credit. Well, the Working Families Tax Cuts not only made that permanent; it increased the child tax credit even further and then indexed it to inflation so its value will never go down.

I said the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act nearly doubled the standard deduction. Well, the Working Families Tax Cuts boosted the standard deduction even further.

And we didn't stop there. We instituted two big new tax relief measures: no tax on tips, no tax on overtime. That meant major new tax relief for a whole host of working Americans—waiters, delivery people, bartenders, Uber and Lyft drivers, nurses, factory workers, paramedics, police officers, and many others.

And that still isn't all. We instituted a new \$6,000 bonus deduction for seniors, and we created new tax-advantaged investment accounts to help parents save for their children's future, starting with an initial \$1,000 investment from the Federal Government for babies born between 2025 and 2028.

And that is far from the only thing we did to help the next generation get a headstart on their American dream. The Working Families Tax Cuts also made some significant improvements to the traditional 529 education savings plan, allowing those savings to be used

for a greater variety of education-related expenses, like tutoring or home school materials and vocational and continuing education.

On the higher education side, we implemented accountability and reforms and put downward pressure on the cost of college degrees. We also made permanent a policy I authored that allows employers to pay off a portion of their employees' student loans, without the employee having to pay taxes on the repayment amount.

And on top of all that, we created the Workforce Pell Program, which will provide financial assistance to Americans in shorter term skills and career training programs, whether they are just starting out or looking to switch careers or develop new skills in their current field.

This tax season, more than 35 million seniors claimed the new bonus deduction for older Americans. More than 29 million American workers were able to deduct overtime pay from their taxes, resulting in substantial tax savings. And more than 7.5 million workers deducted their tips on their taxes, ensuring they were able to keep more of their hard-earned money.

And that is not to even mention the countless hard-working Americans who were able to take advantage of the increased standard deduction and the enhanced child tax credit.

Tax refunds were up this season, and it is no surprise. It is the Working Families Tax Cuts at work.

I may live in Sioux Falls now, which is one of South Dakota's bigger cities, but I spent a lot of time in smalltown South Dakota. And whenever I am there, I am proud to be able to share the details of the Working Families Tax Cuts and report that Republicans are delivering for working families.

And we are going to continue to build on the Working Families Tax Cuts to expand opportunity and make life more affordable for hard-working Americans.

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 bill 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.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Senate Republicans seem to think Todd Blanche became a different person somewhere between the confirmation hearing and today's vote. It is obvious he didn't. Blanche remains Trump's personal lawyer—same client, same corrupt record, same playbook. He is the same guy. Nothing has changed. Thanks to Blanche, Trump and his family still have a permission slip from the IRS to take in tens of millions of

dollars through tax fraud—tens of millions of dollars—and they exempt him from tax fraud even though he has had so many brushes with the law before.

How can we appoint this man to such an important position when he is the one who facilitated the President avoiding any tax liability, which an overwhelming number of Americans despise? It is crazy. It is amazing how our Republican friends just tie themselves in pretzel knots to allow Trump to do illicit things, to allow the country's morals to go down the drain when it comes to finance ethics.

Blanche still hasn't put up any meaningful guardrails to Trump's \$2 billion MAGA slush fund. We all know what that was—one of the grossest things any President has ever done. He sues the government as a private citizen and then asks the government for \$10 billion and then shakes hands with the government that he gets \$2 billion to do whatever he wants. It makes you nauseous, what he is doing to the morals of this country.

Let's not forget that Blanche still hasn't released 3 million pages of the Epstein files.

Make no mistake, if you had to line up every American, lawyer or not, who should be Attorney General, he would be at the back of the line because he is so unethical. Ethics matter in this job more than just about any other.

So make no mistake, Blanche still has no business becoming Attorney General. Todd Blanche hasn't changed, and neither should the votes of anyone who plans to oppose his nomination.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on the CR, from the start, Senate Democrats said we wanted to keep the government open and keep politics out of the appropriations process. This CR gives us the time we need to continue hashing out a budget that helps make life more affordable for the American people while crushing the chaos and the corruption of the Trump administration.

Senate Democrats will always be willing to work across the aisle and negotiate in good faith to deliver results for working Americans.

Thanks to Senator MURRAY's efforts, we have staved off Trump's efforts to withhold Federal grants from vital projects. Trump wanted to pick grants in the States and politicians he liked and eliminate them from others. Nothing could be more against the Constitution, more against the government, more against fairness, more against bipartisanship than that. He wanted to do all that. People were amazed.

Oh, I like this project in a red State. Go for it.

I don't like the very same project paid by the same money in a blue State. Cut it out.

No rationale, no reason other than political malignance.

People were really revolted by what he was trying to do. Taxpayers fund these grants. Taxpayers deserve to see that the money is invested in their

communities, not withheld by Trump because of partisan retribution.

Senate Democrats have stood up for working Americans at every step, and we are going to continue to fight for the American people in the weeks and months ahead.

HEAD START

Mr. President, now on Head Start, Donald Trump believes the Federal Government exists to serve him and no one else. Even though he acts like a toddler three-quarters of the time, he is not eligible for Head Start, so if the program doesn't benefit him, what does he care?

Trump will soon announce plans to gut Head Start without any thought of how it will hurt hundreds of thousands of children. After trying and failing to defund it altogether, Trump is putting the program to the torch by rolling back Federal standards that ensure Head Start will be high quality. That means no math or literacy requirements, no health or safety screenings, no guarantee that children can access medical and dental services. Trump's changes will hurt America's most vulnerable children and leave their families in the lurch.

Donald Trump, the parents of some of these kids are working two or three jobs, knocking themselves out almost 24/7 just to help their kids by making ends meet. Does Trump really think these families can afford to spend more on finding care for their kids?

The gutting of Head Start is the Trump administration's disastrous approach to governing laid bare. Better outcomes for Trump, worse outcomes for our kids—that is Trump's America. Donald Trump uses his office to help himself and his billionaire friends get ahead while holding back our children, while holding back our working families.

Every single Senator who cares about Head Start needs to stand up to this effort that undercuts our children, particularly the most vulnerable. Early education works. It gives kids a head-start. It makes America more prosperous as a whole. Trump doesn't give a damn.

REFLECTING POOL

Mr. President, Trump's Reflecting Pool saga continues to show how his corruption comes back to bite him.

Last Friday, Jeanine Pirro, the FOX News host turned U.S. attorney—he loves these television hosts to have places in his administration whether they are qualified or not. Look at the Defense Department. Well, this host is U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, and she admitted in court that Trump's own grifting caused the Reflecting Pool renovation to fail.

How dare she. How dare she speak the truth against Donald Trump when one of the requirements of being chosen by Trump for any important office is that you just go along with him.

I will tell you this: If we had serious people leading the DOJ and serving as U.S. attorney, we never would have had

these nonsense legal cases in the first place.

You know Trump is living in an alternate reality when not even Pirro, an ardent Trump loyalist, will defend his lies.

What did Trump expect? Shoddy work is inevitable when you award a multimillion-dollar, no-bid contract to your personal pool guy at the taxpayers' expense.

Trump's Reflecting Pool debacle is so unbelievably stupid, it would be funny—except we American taxpayers are paying for it. Some nearly faced jail time for it. Trump is so delusional, he would rather prosecute innocent Americans than own up to his own failure.

Is it any wonder that 80 percent of Americans think Trump doesn't have the right priorities? Trump keeps spending his time and American tax dollars on these vanity projects.

Donald, Americans want you to lower their costs, end your war, stop your corruption. The Reflecting Pool can wait.

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 legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the American people deserve a government that is open and is functioning. The American people know that government shutdowns cause significant pain to them personally and harm to our Nation.

We have had two painful shutdowns in the last year, and the Democrats—and the Democratic leader just left the floor—have caused both of them. Democrats have proven that they are willing to make life harder for Americans, and they do it every time they shut down the government. They think it helps them politically.

Actually, that is what Senator SCHUMER had said in the past—because in October of 2025, SCHUMER and the Senate Democrats chose to shut down the entire government, shut it down for 43 days. That is a record—a record—in the history of our Nation. And Senator SCHUMER actually said at the time—he said:

Every day gets better for us.

I am not sure who the “us” was. It is not the American people, not the people who were suffering in the long lines at the airport, and with TSA and the flights that were canceled and people that weren't getting paid. Every day got worse for the American people. It might have been better for Senator SCHUMER but not for people at home in my State and in the Presiding Officer's.

It seemed to the Democrats that the American families were just collateral damage as they tried to make a political message. Servicemembers weren't able to pay their mortgages, as they had to wait for their paychecks to come in. Flights canceled, airport screening lines stretched—I remember the video. They stretched for hours. Park rangers, TSA agents all missed paychecks. Democrats said it got better for them every day. Government employees living paycheck-to-paycheck had to struggle to make ends meet, to pay the bills. We saw people lining up at food banks. The American people responded and offered help to their neighbors. The Democrats said it got better for them every day. People on food assistance lost that assistance.

And less than 4 months later, the Democrats did it again. That time, they blocked funding for the Department of Homeland Security. That shutdown lasted 75 days for the Department of Homeland Security.

Democrats voted to defund America's law enforcement Agencies. That seems to be their mantra: defund the police; get rid of ICE, get rid of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; open the borders; let anybody in. That is who that party is now, and we are seeing it even today in the Michigan primary, where they have radical, extreme, dangerous, scary people running and who may win primaries and have been winning primaries in the Democrat Party across the country. These are people that put the safety and security of the American people at risk. They do it because they think it may give them a political advantage. It doesn't help the American people.

Recall that during the last shutdown, the shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security, we in this country faced terrorist threats. In Texas, there was a man wearing clothing that said “Property of Allah.” He was arrested. He shot into a crowded restaurant, just shot into the restaurant. People were killed. “Property of Allah.” Apparently, that is OK in some people's minds. Most Americans don't think so.

In Michigan, a man whose family member was tied to Hezbollah rammed a truck full of explosives into a synagogue. Over 100 children and their teachers were inside. This is the threat we face.

By shutting down the Department of Homeland Security, Democrats put the safety of illegal immigrants—and specifically illegal immigrant criminals—above the safety and security of American citizens. That is whom the Democrats choose to prioritize, and we are seeing the Democrats do that in campaign ads and in campaign speeches all across the country as the most radical of the radicals seem to be winning Democrat primaries this year.

So the question is, Are Democrats going to choose to shut down the government a third time?

We were able to get on the bill yesterday. The onus is on them. The Republicans are ready to move forward.

We have an appropriations process. That is the way that government funding is supposed to work. Right now, the Democrats are stonewalling every single Appropriations Committee right here in the U.S. Senate, and it is shameful.

Senator SUSAN COLLINS, our colleague and friend from Maine, is the chair of the Appropriations Committee. She has a history of working with bipartisanship, and integrity is so much a part of her leadership style. Democrats have rejected every good-faith measure that she has put forward in terms of the Appropriations Committee.

Recall that when the Democrats were in charge of Congress and Joe Biden was in the White House, Senator SCHUMER blocked 11 of the 12 appropriations bills from even coming to the floor, even coming here for debate. He didn't want any of them—none.

Republicans are committed to repairing the damage that has been done to the process by the Democrats.

Senator COLLINS has carefully crafted a reasonable continuing resolution. That is what we voted to get on last night. It keeps the government open. So that was just the first step. Now we have to move forward. We will see what the Democrats say today.

Here is the choice facing every Senate Democrat this week: Vote to keep the government open or force the Nation into another painful shutdown. We are going to find out.

People have already lived through these two painful Democrat shutdowns over the last year. People don't want a third. They have suffered enough. Senator SCHUMER this morning said he wants to avoid a shutdown. Time for them to prove it.

The question is, Do Democrats in this body have the courage to stand up to the extremists who have taken over their party? We are going to find out.

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 legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Mr. SHEEHY assumed the Chair.)

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

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

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with Senator DURBIN for up to 30 minutes.

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

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I just told my colleague from Illinois: It has been a ride. We have been trying to set up a process, a process whereby Congress would consider a solution—not prescribe a solution, consider a solution—for Social Security, a process that would have Members of the House

and Members of the Senate come together fully open for input from stakeholders, from citizens, to have something to present among all the proposals that are out there—two proposals, three proposals—and whatever we put up would not be the final solution necessarily. It could be replaced by any other Member of the Senate with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

And people won't even set up a process. We are not talking about a solution. We are talking about a process that would come to a solution maybe that still has to get 60 votes in the U.S. Senate.

Folks say: We need more time. DICK DURBIN just chuckled. He goes: They have had 44 years. They have had 44 years. How much more time do they need?

I have got a couple cartoons just to make the case. I think that if we don't set up this process, Congress will be kicking granny off the cliff. That was made famous long ago. There it is. She earned it; she deserves it; she counts on it; and Congress will not set up a process by which to address the issue. Mr. President, 75 million retirees, widows, widowers, others rely on Social. In 6 years, the program, the trust fund—the trust fund goes insolvent. And when that happens, according to the actuaries, there will be either an almost 29 percent benefit reduction or a 40 percent increase in payroll taxes on working Americans.

If that trust fund goes insolvent and that benefit is cut 28.5 percent, as the actuaries say it will, the rate of poverty among Americans over age 65 will increase by 50 percent—by 50 percent.

So here is another cartoon. Congress made a promise, and some people want to ignore it. She paid in; she earned it; she relies on it. But if you ask: Should we do something about Social? Apparently, for some people, the time to do something on Social is never.

Don't disturb Congress. They don't want to take a tough vote—even if that vote only sets up a process—it doesn't even propose a solution—a process whereby Congress is required to fix the issue.

By the way, Social has always been important. It is even more important now that Americans are living longer. And every year we delay fixing Social, the amount of cuts required to balance it increase or the amount of taxes required to fix it increases or the amount of money we have to borrow to fix it increases. There is no good thing about waiting except it allows Congress to dodge its responsibility.

I want to compliment my colleague from Illinois. He came up to me and he goes: BILL, I am leaving the Senate. We need to make a run at fixing Social.

I am leaving the Senate. We need to make a run. By the way, we have a solution, but we are not saying it has to be our solution. All we are trying to do is set up a process by which solutions can be considered. And running out the

clock, it may be politically convenient, but it is the wrong thing to do.

Congress' obligation to the American people, to the people that rely upon Social Security, is to act, and it is to act now.

I have another cartoon here just to make the point. It is not just older people affected; it is younger people. Sorry, young folks. You are getting left behind because some say it is not our problem. The Social Security system is going insolvent, and these folks can pay into it. They will never receive a benefit.

These young pages here, they don't recognize it yet, but they are contributing every month on the wages they are getting to a system that will not be there for them unless we do something now.

So before I defer to my colleague, I will just say once more: All we are doing is setting up a process to propose solutions that may or may not pass, that any Senator can bring their own bill and have it as an amendment in the nature of a substitute. It is up to Congress, though, to find a solution.

Now, history will decide whether Congress took up the responsibility of addressing the issue or whether because it was politically advantageous, politically expedient to kick the can down the road once more, even though the road is about to end in a dead end, or, in the case of one of our cartoons, a cliff.

Here. We built a bridge and decided not to finish it. Here. The folks that need to get across the bridge of Social Security will get to it someday. We have got to get to it now. That is the point.

Let's set up a process to be considered. We are talking about the PROMISE Act, which is a DICK DURBIN—lead author—BILL CASSIDY bill. And there may be another way, but let's set up the process. With that, I defer to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. What a treat it is to be on the floor of the Senate with a colleague from the Republican side of the aisle working together—together—to try to solve the problem. It doesn't happen much around here. You see these empty desks? They are empty almost all the days, week in, week out, month in, month out.

We do important things like nominations. There is nothing that is trivial about that. But we don't tackle the issues that really affect people at home with their families.

Here is one: Social Security. Mr. President, 75 million Americans rely on it. Half of them, it is their only source of income, so a Social Security check means a lot.

So the experts on Social Security tell Dr. CASSIDY and myself that just in a few years—6 years—Social Security will be unable to make full promised payments. It will be cut by 22 percent in terms of benefits.

Let's take an example. The average Social Security check now is around \$2,400 a month. If you reduce that by 22 percent, it means that people receiving Social Security will receive about \$450 to \$500 less a month.

If this is your only source of income, imagine for a moment that \$2,400—just lopped off \$400, \$500 from your monthly payment. How does it affect you? Paying your rent; paying your mortgage; paying your utility bills; paying what it might take at the grocery store to get by. It is going to be a real hardship.

As Senator CASSIDY said, for the senior citizens of America, it means that those under the poverty level will increase by 50 percent. We can't let that happen. We have to do something about it.

And the bill that I have introduced with Senator CASSIDY basically doesn't pick a solution—although we can come up with a couple. It doesn't pick a solution. It just says: Don't waste any time. Start talking about it; start debating it; let the American people engage in this conversation with you; and vote on some alternatives.

Now "vote" is a word that used to be part of being a Senator. Not so much anymore. Except when it comes to nominations, there aren't a lot of votes on substantive issues around this Chamber.

I know a little bit about this. I have given more than half of my life to Congress: 14 years in the House, 30 years in the Senate. I know what you are saying; It sounds like a career politician. Well, maybe I am—and proud of it and particularly proud of serving in this Chamber.

I have seen some glorious things happen in this Chamber on a bipartisan basis, but it takes a couple Senators, maybe more, to stand up and say: We have got to do something that is risky and controversial but important.

This is not the first time I have faced Social Security. When I was a Member of the House elected in 1982, came to serve in 1983, I was told that in a matter of months Social Security would run out of money.

Imagine that. You are a brandnew Member of Congress scared to death you won't be reelected, and they tell you, you have got to make a big change in the biggest social program in America. It scares you to death. But you know what? We did it.

Our goal was simple: 50 years of solvency in Social Security. Can we change Social Security and guarantee 50 years of solvency? We made a lot of changes. And you know what we got for it: 2032—1983 to 2032, we kept our word—50 years.

It is not too much to ask this Congress to fix Social Security and keep it solvent for 50 years. We can do it. And the longer we wait to do it, the more difficult it becomes.

I look back on voting for that, and I thought it was the end of my political career, which was only a few months old, but it turned out no Member of

Congress—Democrat or Republican—in 1983 and 1984 lost an election because they voted for Social Security changes.

The American people expect us to make the best choices we can, and they accepted what we did. We bought 50 years of solvency—that is an amazing thing when you consider how important this program is.

And so what Senator CASSIDY and I have suggested is a process which basically says we won't go by the old Senate rules.

I might add—I was going to show it, but I think it violates the Senate rules. The Senate is a Chamber of tradition. Down here, a few of you can see it, is a brass spittoon—a brass spittoon. It has been held onto as part of the tradition of the Senate.

Well, we have traditions in the rules that make things almost impossible to pass except after a long period of time. Weeks go by sometimes; days certainly go by, trying to get from a measure on the floor to an actual vote. The Senate rules are not kindly. They are tough.

So the bill that I introduced basically cuts through some of this redtape and delay and says we will move after several weeks to consider alternatives to Social Security. The bottom line is: It isn't enough to get a majority in the Senate under the current rules, and it isn't changed at all under our proposal. We still need 60 votes to ultimately pass any change to Social Security. Well, Democrats don't have 60 votes; Republicans don't have 60 votes; but together, we think we can reach that goal.

Now, I have been a little disappointed, but not surprised, that some of my colleagues that I have talked to about this said they thought it was a good idea, but on reflection they have decided it is too risky, that we are moving things too fast.

The Senate has never been accused successfully of moving too fast on almost anything. We take our time. That is why we are here. The Senate is different than the House, and I served in both and respect both.

So to my colleagues who oppose this approach and say we need more time to do it, I want to back up Senator CASSIDY. It costs money over time. It costs benefits over time. The solution becomes more expensive over time.

The longer you wait, the more expensive it becomes to save Social Security. And we absolutely, positively have to save it. Too many people are counting on it.

I bet you the folks who gathered here today have many relatives of their own who count on Social Security—either because they are disabled or elderly. I understand that in my own family. I think everybody does.

So it is a great day in the Senate when a Democrat and a Republican stand on the floor and don't criticize one another but actually talk about working together. It has been a real pleasure for me, I would say to Senator CASSIDY, to be part of the CASSIDY-DURBIN team.

We are both ending our Senate careers on January 3 of next year. We hoped that this would be one of the things we could achieve before we left. I am still not giving up completely. Miracles do occur. But I had to step up and make a proposal with Senator CASSIDY to get my colleagues into conversation.

The conversation about Social Security has increased dramatically since we started this effort, and I think it should. The sooner, the better. The more expensive it becomes the longer we wait.

I yield back to Senator CASSIDY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, Senator DURBIN is referring to what's called the PROMISE Act. Again, it is a bill which sets up a process to come to a solution. It doesn't dictate what the solution is.

We have colleagues who are objecting to coming up with a process, and so it is important for our country that Congress tackle this issue. And when I say "our country," I mean the people who live here. And the people who live here, whether they are older or whether they are younger, they are relying upon Congress to step up to its responsibility.

Thank you, Senator DURBIN. We will continue to push on this. It is important for our Congress, important for our country, important for our people.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

AGOA EXTENSION ACT—Motion to Proceed—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

RECOGNIZING THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY WRESTLING TEAM

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. President, Pennsylvania is wrestling country. The sport fits the character of our Commonwealth. From smalltown school gymnasiums to the biggest stage in college athletics, generations of Pennsylvanians have learned on the mat that nothing is given and everything is earned.

Our proud tradition is embodied by a team that has once again set the standard for intercollegiate wrestling and is here with us in the Gallery today. So I rise to honor the 2026 NCAA national championship Penn State Nittany Lions and submit a resolution congratulating them on their fifth consecutive national championship and their 13th title in the last 15 NCAA championships. This recognizes the