

## 119TH CONGRESS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, it is hard to believe that we are in the last few months of the 119th Congress. Two years ago at this time, Democrats were still in charge, and the country was dealing with the two defining legacies of the Biden administration: a historic inflation crisis and a historic immigration crisis.

And I don't use the word "historic" lightly, but those two crises were truly historic. Democrats presided over the worst inflation crisis in 40 years, with inflation reaching 7, 8, and 9 percent. And they presided over 4 straight years—4 straight years—of record-breaking—recordbreaking—illegal immigration. Republicans' priority when we came into office was dealing with the effects of these crises, and that started with preventing a massive tax hike on hard-working Americans.

As everyone knows, during the first Trump administration, Republicans passed a historic reform of our Tax Code. We cut tax rates across the board, doubled the child tax credit, and nearly doubled the standard deduction. But that tax relief was scheduled to expire at the end of 2025.

The standard deduction, which is claimed by 90 percent of Americans on their taxes, would have shrunk, increasing the amount of Americans' income the government could tax. Tax rates would have increased. The child tax credit would have been reduced by 50 percent.

For a typical family in my State, that would have meant sending an additional \$2,500 a year to Washington. Well, Republicans were not going to let that happen.

And so in 2025, we passed the Working Families Tax Cut—sometimes known as the One Big Beautiful Bill—to prevent this massive tax hike on hard-working Americans.

We made the increased standard deduction permanent; we made the lower tax rates permanent; and we made the increased child tax credit permanent. In other words, more money in American families' pockets permanently.

But we didn't stop there. We were well aware that Americans had had a very rough time financially under the Biden administration and so we took action to put additional money in hard-working Americans' pockets.

In 2017, we had doubled the child tax credit. In 2025, we not only made that increase permanent, we boosted the child tax credit even further and indexed it to inflation so its value will never go down.

We also implemented no tax on tips and no tax on overtime, substantially lowering the tax bills of millions of hard-working Americans, from Uber and Lyft drivers to hairdressers, to police officers. And we added a new bonus deduction for seniors, making retirement more affordable for millions of older Americans.

And our efforts to help Americans keep more of their hard-earned money

didn't stop with the Working Families Tax Cuts. We have also spent this Congress cutting burdensome regulations that have driven up prices for hard-working Americans, from the California electric vehicle mandate, which would have forced Americans into costly electric cars, to regulations that would have driven up the cost of appliances.

We passed landmark housing legislation in June to help keep hard-working Americans from being priced out of the housing market, and we took action to drive down costs at the pharmacy counter as well.

We passed a law to ensure that patients get the savings from any discounts or rebates from their purchases at the pharmacy counter in their healthcare plans. We removed incentives for pharmacy benefit managers to promote higher priced medications at the expense of seniors. And we improved access to more affordable generic drugs.

As I said, in addition to reducing taxes and working to lower costs, Republicans were also committed to dealing with the Biden border crisis.

President Trump took action immediately to get the situation at our southern border under control, and the reduction in illegal immigration has been staggering.

During the last full year of the Biden border crisis, which was fiscal year 2024, there were well over 2 million illegal immigrant encounters at our southern border.

Well, we are almost done with fiscal year 2026, and do you want to know how many encounters there have been at the southern border? Fewer than 120,000. We are looking at somewhere on the order of a 90-percent decrease.

And do you want to know how many of those illegal immigrants have been released into the United States? Zero. That is right, not a single illegal immigrant has been released into the United States during the entire 2026 fiscal year. Now, that has been the case for 15 straight months, in fact, under President Trump.

And I don't need to tell anyone what a massive turnaround that is from the Biden administration, which presided over the release of millions of illegal immigrants into our country's interior.

The dangers of the unchecked illegal immigration that we saw under the Biden administration are manifold. And to help prevent anything like that from happening again, the Working Families Tax Cut included substantial resources to help guarantee the security of our Nation's border from additional Border Patrol agents to security technology. We also boosted funding for our national defense and for law enforcement.

Safer communities and a safer country, that has been and will continue to be a Republican priority.

Our work isn't done, but I am proud of what we have been able to do this Congress to put more money in Ameri-

cans' pockets and to help make our country more secure. And hard-working Americans will continue to be at the top of Republicans' agenda.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Madam 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. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 830.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Kasdin Miller Mitchell, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Texas.

## CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam 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 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. 830, Kasdin Miller Mitchell, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Texas.

John Thune, Tim Sheehy, John Barrasso, Pete Ricketts, Thom Tillis, Rick Scott of Florida, John Cornyn, Steve Daines, Bernie Moreno, John R. Curtis, Chuck Grassley, Jim Banks, Mike Crapo, James Lankford, Kevin Cramer, Mike Rounds, Ted Budd.

Mr. THUNE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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 Democratic leader is recognized.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on artificial intelligence, the warning signs about AI's rapid pace have never been clearer. But what is President Trump's response to the recent calls

for the government to regulate AI—even from industry leaders? Trump says:

The only control or “guardrails” that AI needs is a STRONG AND SMART (High IQ!) PRESIDENT.

Well, even if we had a high IQ President right now—and we surely don’t—it wouldn’t be enough. Congress cannot afford to turn a blind eye to AI.

Today, I am calling for an all-Senators classified briefing with top administration officials to address the dangers of unchecked AI development and hold the administration accountable for its lack of action to protect the American people.

I have long argued that we need to ensure that the United States remain the global leader in innovation and security.

We all know the transformational innovation that can come from AI for advances in medicine, science, education, research, and so much more. But I have also always said that if our economy and our society is to reap the potential benefits of AI, we need sustainable innovation as well. That means putting guardrails in to mitigate the risks of this technology and earn the public’s trust, which is critical to American leadership.

In the last few months, the importance of these strong guardrails has become more apparent. Just this week-end, leading voices from the AI industry came together to sound the alarm and embrace a slower development of AI to avoid damaging outcomes.

This comes after weeks of revelations of AI going rogue and working together to hack websites, without human control, and of real concerns of the potential catastrophic risks of unchecked AI.

The American people want to see action. Industry leaders want to see action. Many of us on both sides of the aisle want to see action. That is why the Trump administration needs to address three key points in our classified briefing.

First, we need a full accounting of the administration’s new framework for testing powerful frontier AI models, something that has been withheld from the public for weeks. We need to know exactly how this framework is identifying and countering potentially catastrophic risks before these AI models are released.

Second, we need to hear how the administration plans to defend our country against increasingly AI-enabled cyber attacks on critical infrastructure. How are we going to protect our power grid, our hospitals, our water treatment systems, schools, telecommunications, banking, and election systems from this new threat? They don’t have the sophistication of much larger institutions. They are susceptible to attack. Americans need to know how we are going to protect these systems.

Finally, the administration needs to explain what it is doing to block China

from accessing America’s advanced AI chips, semiconductor manufacturing equipment, and other cutting-edge tech that the Chinese Communist Party is using to accelerate their own AI development.

For years, I have stressed the importance of protecting this technology from being co-opted by the Chinese, and now there is growing bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress to do so.

We need immediate action, and the President should take it. The administration cannot, in one breath, say we need unrestrained AI development to win the race with China while giving away our AI crown jewels to the Chinese.

I believe preserving America’s AI advantage over China and ensuring responsible AI development go hand in hand. We can—we must—do both.

Unless all the facts come out and come out soon, it will greatly hamper our ability to get anything done. That is why this classified briefing is of the utmost importance. I urge the administration to provide a classified briefing on AI to the entire Senate immediately.

Regardless, Senate Democrats will take further action on AI in the coming days and weeks. The U.S. Government cannot sit this one out.

## ELECTIONS

Madam President, on the DHS whistleblower, the news of which has just been made public, today, Americans get another whiff of Trump’s scheme to rig the election. Today, Senator PADILLA and I are revealing a bombshell whistleblower complaint about the Department of Homeland Security’s effort to interfere in the upcoming election on Trump’s behalf.

The DHS whistleblower warns that the Department is pulling hundreds—hundreds—of Federal agents from national security roles and sending them on a wild-goose chase. The goal: to try and prove Trump’s sad, tired, and long-debunked election conspiracy theories. Apparently, agents are being commanded to violate State laws and lie to access private voter information and create law enforcement records as part of DHS’s “unlawful voter initiative.” The whistleblower reports that innocent American citizens have been caught up in this effort to prove Trump’s baseless voter fraud claims.

Do you hear that, America? Trump’s DHS, his Department of Homeland Security, is forcing its officials to carry out an illegal scheme, break State laws, lie about their identities, and treat U.S. citizens as collateral damage, all to advance Trump’s scheme to rig the election. It is pathetic. It is horrible. That is how desperate Trump is to escape the wrath of the electorate.

Donald, end this illegal initiative now, and stop meddling in our elections.

## VOTE-BY-MAIL

Madam President, on mail-in voting, Donald Trump’s assault on free and fair elections is relentless, but so is our effort to stop him. Last night, in a lawsuit I brought with other Democrats, a second Federal judge blocked Trump’s attack on mail-in voting. When even a conservative, Trump-appointed judge rejects this brazen scheme to disenfranchise millions of voters, you know just how absurd it would be for the Supreme Court to allow it to continue.

Trump doesn’t get to rewrite the rules of our elections to tip the scales in his favor just because he is terrified of the voters. He knows the doom he will face in the upcoming elections.

We have blocked Trump’s illegal efforts to interfere with mail-in voting for now, but the Supreme Court ought to bury it once and for all. Trump can keep trying to float these desperate attempts to disrupt our elections in the eleventh hour all he wants. We are going to swat them down every time. And if a rightwing, Trump-appointed judge stops Trump from this awful scheme, how can the Supreme Court overrule her and go along?

## AFFORDABILITY

Madam President, on affordability, prices are up everywhere Americans look. Donald Trump keeps trying to point fingers as if Americans can’t see the truth right in front of them: He is the one driving up their costs.

Does Trump think anyone will believe his lie that somehow Ukraine is responsible for diesel prices just hitting a record high? Give me a break. Everyone knows it is Trump and his disastrous war with Iran that are driving up prices at the pump. Trump himself has said it. Trump just called his war with Iran and its massive cost to the American people “small potatoes.” He said that gas prices will plummet as soon as his war ends.

Well, we are waiting, Mr. President. If gas prices will plunge when the war ends, end it. Americans are sick of shelling out \$4.31 for a gallon of gasoline and watching inflation spike just so you can send troops into harm’s way.

No scapegoat could ever make Americans forget just how much of a disaster Trump has been for the economy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

## WHISTLEBLOWER DISCLOSURE

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, as our colleagues know, I serve as ranking member of the Rules Committee, which oversees Federal elections. I also serve on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration. And