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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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 and everlasting God, You are the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Shine Your light upon this Chamber and illuminate the hearts and minds of those who serve here.

Lord, grant our Senators wisdom to discern what is right, courage to do what is just, and humility to recognize the limits of their own understanding. As they deliberate and search for common ground, guide their feet into the way of peace; teach them to listen with patience, to speak with grace, and to disagree with civility and respect.

We pray in Your compassionate 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. ARMSTRONG). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### PROTECT COLLEGE SPORTS ACT OF 2026—Motion to Proceed—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed under S. 4668, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 449, S. 4668, a bill to protect the name, image, and likeness rights of, and provide protections for, student athletes and to promote fair competition among intercollegiate athletics, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

IOWA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, during our August break from Washington, DC, and the work of the U.S. Senate, I did my Iowa work as a Senator, completing my annual 99 county meetings for the 46th year in a row.

I started this tradition in 1981, when I was first elected to the Senate. I wanted Iowans to be assured that I would care about listening to them in every corner of our State and not just during election years.

Now, you might ask me: Why would you be in every county every year?

Well, during my campaign in 1980, I overheard people in a restaurant say something like this—this may not be the exact words: But it must be an election year because politicians are around.

I thought to myself: That is not right. People should think of their role in government and expect politicians to be seen in times other than just an election year.

So I hope my 99 county meetings show that I took that admonition seriously. The voters send Senators to serve them for 6-year terms, and you better show up regularly throughout your State, not just during election

season. So that is what is behind my starting the annual 99 county tour in 1981.

My county meetings inform my work for Iowans. Dialogue between those of us elected and our constituents, to me, is the essence of representative government. If you are going to represent your constituents faithfully and responsibly, you have got to know what is on their minds.

This year, I heard gratitude from families and businesses about tax certainty that they received through the Working Families Tax Cut Act that we passed in 2025. I heard from law enforcement and factory workers about how the no-tax-on-overtime provision means more take-home pay in their pockets.

When I was at a Village Inn, waiters told me that they appreciated not having their tip income taxed.

I heard from hospitals about how the Rural Health Transformation Fund is helping healthcare professionals fight cancer in their community.

And farmers kept up their conversation with me about the need for E15 year-round, a fix to Proposition 12, increased agricultural exports, and to bolster and increase the number of cattle in the United States because the farmers know, as is a fact, that we are at a 75-year low of the number of cattle in the United States.

So I look forward to more Q&A's yet, this year, in the coming weeks.

One listening session in a county is not the end of my work for the people of Iowa. There is always more work to do. And it is time for us here in Washington, DC, to roll up our sleeves and deliver for the American people.

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

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



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S4743

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

PROTECT COLLEGE SPORTS ACT OF 2026

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it is no coincidence that the largest stadium in the United States is a college football stadium. College athletics has a unique place in America. It is deeply rooted in our communities and families.

For student-athletes, their sport is an important part of their education. What they learn from their coaches, teammates, and on the playing field, they carry with them throughout their lives. And there is nothing like the opportunity to compete in front of your friends, classmates, parents, and professors.

We could say the same thing about fans in the stands. There is nothing quite like a college sporting event. There is something very unifying about it.

Game day brings together people from every walk of life. Fans who attended that university—and often many who didn't attend, but nevertheless are a part of that school's community—all of them united by their love for the school.

Anyone who knows me knows I am a sports fan. I spend a lot of time at games when I am back home in South Dakota. And whether I am in a high school gym on a Friday night, at a tailgate on a Saturday morning, at the DakotaDome or the PREMIER Center—in a conversation with sports fans, the current state of college athletics is bound to come up. Anyone who follows college sports knows that the last few years have been complex and, at times, chaotic.

Higher numbers of student-athletes are entering the transfer portal, and rosters are being overhauled each season.

Eligibility rules have been stretched—most notably, with former professional players being recruited back to a college campus.

And amid the arms race in revenue-generating sports and among larger institutions, smaller schools and nonrevenue sports are increasingly anxious about the future. Smaller institutions risk losing standout players to schools with bigger budgets.

And last year it was reported that 41 Olympic sports programs were cut across NCAA Division I athletics programs, affecting over a thousand student-athletes.

This status quo cannot continue, and to restore stability to the college sports ecosystem, we need national standards, not a patchwork of State laws.

Thanks to the leadership of Chairman CRUZ and Ranking Member CANTWELL and a number of our colleagues on the Commerce Committee, we have a bill to do that. And yesterday we moved forward to begin debate on that bill: the Protect College Sports Act, which preserves the opportunities that

have been available to student-athletes for generations and ensures those opportunities can coexist with the new opportunities available to the current generation of college athletes.

The Protect College Sports Act addresses some of the largest issues in college athletics today, and in doing so, it restores stability to the college sports ecosystem.

And that starts with uniform eligibility rules: One transfer without loss of eligibility; a maximum 5 years of playing time starting at college enrollment or on the athlete's 19th birthday; and no professional athletes.

This bill also bans coaches from switching schools midseason, ensuring that athletes have the same coach at the end of the season as they did at the start.

And it brings transparency to athletic compensation, protects student-athletes from bad actors, and safeguards opportunities for women's and Olympic sports.

This bill has been a work in progress for a number of years, and I am grateful for all the hard work that went into getting it right.

I have sat down with college athletes in my State to get their perspective. I have talked to coaches and athletic directors, and I know I am not the only Senator to have done so. Getting this type of input is the only way that you get a bill like this—a bill that has broad bipartisan support, that has support from more than 30 college athletic conferences, hundreds of universities in all 50 States and in Washington, DC, and from hundreds of thousands of student-athletes, which is the most important support of all.

I mentioned that I am a sports fan. I am also part of a sports family. My dad was a Big Ten basketball player in the early 1940s. He got the chance to play point guard for the University of Minnesota where he was the team MVP. He was high point man at a game in Madison Square Garden—quite a journey for a smalltown kid from South Dakota.

My daughter ran cross country and track at Belmont University and was inducted into that school's hall of fame.

The question before us is whether the same opportunities that were available for my dad and for my daughter will be available for the next generation of student-athletes. We have a responsibility to them to protect college sports so they can focus on their sport, their education, and their future.

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. SCHUMER. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

TARIFFS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first on tariffs, the American people are getting absolutely slammed by Trump's tariff tax. So, later today, I will ask consent to vote on my End Trump's Tariff Tax Act to stop the President from bleeding Americans dry with skyrocketing costs.

My legislation would roll back Trump's latest salvo with tariff taxes—including the severe ones he just put on Canada—and refund the Americans who have been ripped off.

Trump's tariffs are hitting all Americans hard. We are losing manufacturing jobs. Our farmers are getting hammered, but no one is bearing the brunt more than our northern border States.

How could Trump possibly think that launching a nonsensical trade war with Canada, whose economy is so intertwined with so many of our northern States, would go well? Well, it sure isn't going well. Trump's tariffs have cost States like Michigan, Maine, New York the equivalent of thousands of dollars per family.

Groceries, gas, essential goods, you name it, Americans are paying more for every one of those things because of Donald Trump.

Senate Republicans, I say to my colleagues once again: Are you willing to go along with Trump on these ridiculous tariffs?

The bill will likely be the only chance—this bill will likely be the only chance Republicans have to put their foot down and stop Trump from jacking up costs on the American people before the upcoming election.

If Republicans don't help us lower Americans' costs today, they will pay a dire political cost in November.

IRAN

Mr. President, now speaking of costs, the cost of the Iran war. The American people are still paying the price for Trump's incompetence 7 months into a disastrous war with Iran that he said would only take days.

Take a look at the headline: "Independent Budget Office Estimates Iran War Has Cost \$38 Billion" and "Americans Have Spent \$100 Billion More on Fuel During the Iran War," from the Times and the Wall Street Journal.

Let's be clear, \$38 billion is the floor, not the ceiling. The costs of this war are far greater. The CBO's \$38 billion estimate only measures through August 1 and doesn't include any of the costs involved with repairing the vast damage Iran has inflicted on our bases in the region.

The sticker price on Trump's disaster on Iran doesn't even include how much the war has sent Americans' costs skyrocketing. So that is what the other headline says: "Americans Have Spent \$100 Billion More on Fuel During the Iran War."

The cost of diesel just hit a record high. The price of regular gas is up nearly 50 percent since the war began. Some American stores have started to

ration motor oil. That is how desperate the situation has become. And when the price of gas goes up, so does the price of everything else.

Donald, you can try helping Putin and blaming the Ukrainians for high gas prices all you want, but no one is buying your BS; just look at the polling.

Let's not forget the human cost of this war as well. Eighteen U.S. troops killed, hundreds more wounded, thousands of Americans kept in the line of fire for months on end without any respite, and Trump has the gall to sweep casualties under the rug and then turn around and call this war "small potatoes" with a straight face.

This is so disgraceful. I can't believe how low this man is, and I can't believe that still so many Americans support him for President.

What is the worst part of the war of all? There is no end in sight. Even now, the war is widening when it should be winding down. Because Trump didn't listen to his top advisers and didn't secure the Strait of Hormuz at the beginning, the Iranians have the upper hand.

So given all of this, are Senate Republicans going to keep backing Trump and his blunder in Iran?

On multiple occasions, Democrats have led this Congress to pass War Powers Resolutions to end the hostilities in Iran and will soon force another vote on a War Powers Resolution to stop the fighting and get our troops out of harm's way. And we will continue to force those votes so long as this war continues.

I know our Republican colleagues don't like it to have to vote again and again and again to embrace and ratify Trump's war in Iran, but you are going to have to keep doing it until you join us in forcing Trump to end this awful war.

If Trump continues his current course in Iran, I can promise you this as well: The costs will just keep piling up.

#### FEDERAL RESERVE

Mr. President, finally on the Federal Reserve, today, the Fed will decide whether to raise interest rates because of the Trump slump. The chaos of Trump's disastrous war and costly economic policies are drowning Americans in inflation. Trump has sown chaos in our economy, scared off potential investors, rattled our markets, and made it harder for American businesses and the like to succeed.

Ever since taking office, Trump has taken aim at the Fed and other institutions designed to keep our economy stable and growing. That has only added to the economic chaos plaguing our country.

But what does Trump care? Trump doesn't care that Americans have to pay more; he only cares about raking in as much money as he can off the Presidency before Americans send him and his Republican Party packing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

#### ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to say that the cornerstone of a safe, secure, and prosperous nation for us—the cornerstone of that is energy; that it is affordable, available, and reliable. And you and I have worked together on the importance of permitting to make sure we can do more; that we make it available for the American people.

And you know as well as I do that the American people and this entire Nation is blessed with incredible resources. Now, under President Trump, as opposed to a previous administration, we are finally using them. They need to be used. They can't be stranded in the ground. We need to use our resources.

In 2 short years, what we have seen is we have gone from an energy reduction—which is what the Biden administration and Democrats—to energy production. So many of these burdensome regulations are now gone to the way of bigger paychecks.

That is what America is all about; using our resources providing for the future. This week, the Trump administration continued taking the handcuffs off of American energy production. President Trump ended Joe Biden's so-called Clean Power Plan 2.0. That is now gone.

It was a punishing regulation, and it penalized clean, affordable, available, and reliable coal. They did this, the Biden administration, in an attempt to eliminate the use of coal in our Nation. It was a vicious attack on affordable energy, and it was really a vicious attack on the hard-working Americans who work to produce the energy that the American people need.

People of Wyoming certainly didn't want what the previous administration was trying to do, and the people of America didn't either. Fortunately, President Trump and Republicans are reversing—turning back—all of this assault on American energy that we lived through the last previous 4 years. We are unlocking American energy, as we need to do, and we are fighting for America's energy workers.

Wyoming energy workers are powering our Nation, and we are doing it with clean, affordable, available coal. We are an energy powerhouse in America. We are America's energy breadbasket. We have it all, and we are the Saudi Arabia of coal.

As Trump ends the war on American energy, Republicans in Congress are going to continue to fight to lower costs for the American people. Affordability is key on the people's minds. I am sure it is in your home State of Oklahoma; it certainly is in my home State of Wyoming.

Last year, Republicans in Congress used the Congressional Review Act many times to overturn California's ban on a number of things, and one specifically was gas-powered vehicles.

California still relies on permission slips from the Obama era to try to force what they are trying to do. So

Democrats want to use them to set new rules to force-feed electric vehicles all across the country.

So what we have here in the Senate is we have Senator RICKETTS and Senator HUSTED having resolutions to repeal these California nationwide mandates for electric vehicles that the Democrats have been trying to pedal since the Obama years. I mean, that goes back a long time that they have been on this fantasy trip.

Passing them prevents California Democrats from dictating what cars and trucks Americans can buy and drive. Passing it protects Americans' pocketbooks from Democrats' radical demands. Passing it puts American families back in the driver's seat. That is who should be in the driver's seat—the families, the families making decisions.

When it comes to electric vehicles, the American people have been voting with their wallets. They know what they want. They know what they don't want. They know what works for them and what doesn't work for them and their families.

We have seen the sale of electric vehicles down 20 percent in the last year. Now, that was when Republicans repealed the \$7,500 Biden-era EV handout.

The Biden administration was trying to pay people to choose the vehicles that people didn't want. They didn't want to buy them. They didn't want them. They don't want to use them. They are not reliable for them. They certainly don't work in Wyoming, don't work in broad areas of Oklahoma.

Listen, 1 in 10 Americans want an EV. Seven in ten—certainly my State—want an SUV. That is the difference. It is time for Washington, DC, to listen to the American people.

That brings me to the issue that is so critical to both you and me, Mr. President. That is permitting reform.

Now, whether you are filling up your gas tank, heating your home, all Americans want the same thing; they want energy that is available, affordable, and reliable. America is going to need more of it, a lot more over the next years. Even though we have more efficient vehicles, more efficient utilities and appliances, we still need much more energy to power our Nation. Our energy grid is under growing strain.

Energy demand is going up. Whenever America needs a new powerplant, a new pipeline, a new transmission line, or any kind of critical energy project, building it is a lot harder than it should be. Why? Because our hands have been tied by Federal regulators, by people saying: No, you can't do this. You can't do that. You can't do this. You need a permission slip to do just about anything.

Major projects take years just to get the permission slip. Surviving the bureaucrats is more than half the battle. And it is not just bureaucrats; it is trial lawyers, it is environmental activists. They use the courts to tie up necessary projects for years and years

and years, purity tests that are preventing us from doing what we need to do as a nation.

A nation that can't build quickly, can't lower costs, can't provide what families need. It can't provide what the American people need. We have the resources here. We have the workers. We have the technology. We have the know-how.

What we lack is a permitting system that allows us to use them effectively. That is why Congress needs to pass meaningful permitting reform and do it this year. I believe we can get there. We can't afford to wait.

Congress has been waiting too long. Republicans and Democrats in this very Chamber are determined to fix our broken permitting process. Senate Leader THUNE is committed to bring bipartisan permitting reform to the floor as soon as it is ready, and people are working to do that. I applaud this effort.

Now, I have worked on permitting reform for years. America needs more energy. We need the energy. We have it here. We need to be able to build. Congress needs to build on our past efforts. We need to find common ground, and this is the issue of not just affordability; it is an issue of energy national security, and it is an issue of American competitiveness.

Permitting reform is just common sense, and the time is now. Our Nation is ready to build, and Washington, DC, needs to get out of 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. DAINES. 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.

The distinguished senior Senator from Montana.

#### ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES BILLS

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I come to the floor today with my distinguished colleague Senator CORTEZ MASTO to request that two important bills pass the Senate today and head to the President's desk. H.R. 3657, the Hydropower Licensing Transparency Act, whose companion bill is led by Senator CORTEZ MASTO and myself, passed the House Energy and Commerce Committee on a unanimous 47-to-0 vote. It then passed the House floor by voice vote and cleared the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee by voice vote.

The bill will bring transparency to FERC's hydropower licensing process, which will lead to quicker approvals and, ultimately, more development of hydro assets.

We now have the opportunity to continue the bipartisan support of this bill and to pass it by unanimous consent.

H.R. 7250, the Fort Peck Water System Reauthorization Act, is led by

Congressman DOWNING and myself and similarly passed the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee by voice vote. It then also passed both the House by voice vote and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee by voice vote.

This bill is critical for northeastern Montana and gives communities the needed time to complete the Fort Peck Dry Prairie Rural Water System, which has been worked on for many years and is very close to completion. After years of hard work, the good news is this project is 95 percent complete. This bill allows the water system to finish construction and bring clean drinking water to about 30,000 Montanans.

And before I ask for unanimous consent, I would like to turn to Senator CORTEZ MASTO and give her a chance to speak on her bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking my colleague Senator DAINES for bringing these bills forward today.

In the West, reliable water and energy costs, they are not partisan issues. We all need to come together to find solutions. As costs continue to rise, we have to adopt an all-of-the-above approach to energy production. That includes expanding America's hydropower capabilities.

Hydropower is cheap, it is clean, and it is reliable. American hydropower already produces enough electricity to power up to 24 million homes. It employs over 66,000 people nationwide. Nevada's own Hoover Dam provides electricity for more than a million people throughout the Southwest.

Unfortunately, hydropower projects are currently struggling under a burdensome relicensing process. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC, regulates over 1,600 hydropower projects at over 2,500 dams. These facilities are required to relicense every 30 to 50 years.

Because of some bureaucratic delays and redtape, the hydropower licensing process takes an average of 7 to 10 years. And if that is not bad enough, those delays are expected to double in the next decade.

That is just unacceptable. It is time to hold FERC accountable and to provide transparency for the hydropower industry.

That is where our Hydropower Licensing Transparency Act comes in. I am so proud to have Senator DAINES colead this with me. This bipartisan legislation would require FERC to report annually to Congress on the status of the licensing process for each hydropower dam with a pending application. Shining a light on a system full of unnecessary delays will streamline the process, promote efficiency, and ensure accountability.

And it is time we actually do this. There is a bipartisan fix for it. So let's get it done. It is common sense that

will make a meaningful difference in Americans' lives.

I thank my colleague for joining me on these two bills and bringing them forward.

Mr. DAINES. Senator CORTEZ MASTO, thank you. We both know and understand how, in the West, we wish we could get more rain. It is a pretty dry part of the country, and, boy, we need to continue to make sure our hydropower assets are developed and used in a commonsense way. This brings reliable, affordable, renewable energy.

Thank you for your help on this, Senator. Much appreciated.

#### REAUTHORIZING THE FORT PECK RESERVATION RURAL WATER SYSTEM ACT OF 2000

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, so notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 7250 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7250) to reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DAINES. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. DAINES. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate on the bill, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 7250) was passed.

Mr. DAINES. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The Senator from Nevada.

#### HYDROPOWER LICENSING TRANSPARENCY ACT

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3657 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3657) to amend the Federal Power Act to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to annually submit to Congress a report on the status of ongoing hydropower relicensing applications.