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## Senate

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of John DeLeeuw, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2026.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### ESTONIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, a few days ago, I stood here and congratulated Lithuania on its Independence Day. Well, there is another Baltic State that had Independence Day yesterday, the country of Estonia. Just as we celebrate Independence Day on the anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, yesterday marked the anniversary of Estonia's Declaration of Independence in 1918.

The United States established diplomatic relations with Estonia 4 years later in 1922, and that recognition and relationship with Estonia has continued uninterrupted until today. That is right. We even had accredited Estonian diplomats working in the United States throughout the 50 years that Estonia was illegally occupied by the Soviet Union and Moscow considered Estonia as a legitimate part of the Soviet Union.

So we never gave up on Estonia's freedom. That is something that we Americans can be proud of: standing by our friends.

Today, Estonia is very free, very prosperous, and very pro-American.

#### UKRAINE

Mr. President, yesterday was also a more somber anniversary. Four years ago, Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russian forces

reached the outskirts of the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv in an attempt to overthrow the democratic-elected government of Ukraine.

As we know, that failed. That failed due to the courage and determination of the Ukrainian people who were able immediately to push back Russian forces out of at least half the territory that they initially took.

Russian troops have failed to make any major breakthrough, taking tiny amounts of territory at the cost of tens of thousands of Russian lives. Those losses would be unsustainable for any country that values the lives of its people or that must answer to its citizens for its actions in democratic countries.

What was supposed to be only a 3-day military operation has been 4 years of all-out warfare. Ukrainians are going without power or without heat in sub-zero temperatures because Russia has targeted civilian powerplants. Churches in Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine have been closed, and Christians have been persecuted if they do not accept the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church and its KGB leader of that church who answers only to Putin.

But just like the brave Estonians, for now 100 years-plus under the Soviet occupation, Ukrainians will never concede their sovereignty, and they will never give up on their countrymen who are currently suffering under brutal Russian occupation.

Just like we did for Estonia, we ought to not give up on Ukrainian freedom and independence, and the United States should do everything it can to make sure that the Ukrainian people are helped to preserve their country and preserve their freedom. Nothing could be more American.

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.

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.

Eternal God, as we reflect on the state of our national union, may we also remember the importance of our union with You. Lord, You desire for us to be in alignment with Your will, to strive for oneness with each other, and to make our world a place where Your grace, mercy, and goodness can prevail.

Today, give our lawmakers a union with You that will transform their lives, to become mirrors of Your divine attributes. Provide them with the divine traits of humility, patience, and perseverance as You fill them with a peace that the world cannot give or take away.

We pray in Your marvelous 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. MORENO). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

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



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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.

REMEMBERING EDEN HOLGUIN

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to mention Special Agent Eden Holguin, a member of the Capitol Police's Dignitary Protection Division, who passed away last week following a brief illness.

It is men and women like Special Agent Holguin who allow us to complete our work here each day in safety. I am profoundly grateful for his service and for that of our other Capitol Police officers.

My prayers today are with Special Agent Holguin's loved ones and his family.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. President, it was a pleasure to hear from President Trump last night on some of the achievements of his first year in office and his continued plans to make life better for hard-working Americans.

It is something to remember the situation the President was facing 13 months ago, when he took office. America and Americans had been through a lot under President Biden—a historic inflation crisis and the worst border crisis on record. On top of that, hard-working Americans were facing the prospect of a \$2.6 trillion tax hike in 2026.

President Trump and Republicans took office last January determined to turn the page on these crises. We knew things weren't going to get fixed overnight, but we also knew we could do a lot to make life better for hard-working Americans.

We got right to work. A prime order for business was stopping that \$2.6 trillion tax hike on hard-working Americans, something we achieved with our signature 2025 legislation, the working families tax cuts.

But we weren't going to stop there. We were determined to put more money in American families' pockets. That is exactly what we did.

In addition to preventing a \$2.6 trillion tax hike and making permanent the tax relief Republicans passed in 2017, the working families tax cuts implemented a slew of additional tax relief. We increased the child tax credit by hundreds of dollars and linked it to inflation so its value will never go down. We boosted the standard deduction, which is claimed by 90 percent of taxpayers in this country. We instituted a new \$6,000 bonus deduction for lower and middle-income seniors. We implemented no tax on tips and overtime, allowing hard-working Americans, from nurses to ride-share drivers, to keep more of their own money—and more. Americans are already seeing this relief in the form of bigger tax refunds.

But the working families tax cuts didn't end with tax relief. We repealed the Democrats' natural gas tax and took steps to unleash American energy production to ensure that Americans have a stable, plentiful, and affordable supply of energy. We took measures to modernize the farm safety net, something very important to the financial well-being of farmers in my State of South Dakota and around the country.

And, of course, the working families tax cuts also addressed border security and national defense. Thanks to President Trump's work to stem the national security crisis at our southern border, encounters at our southern border are currently a tiny fraction of what they were under President Biden. Unlike under President Biden, individuals apprehended attempting to cross our southern border are not being released into the interior of the country.

The working families tax cuts bill helps ensure that we have the resources to maintain this kind of secure border for the long term.

The working families tax cuts may have been a signature legislation last year, but it is far from the only thing we have been doing to help make life more affordable for hard-working Americans. The President and Congress have taken action to repeal a number of burdensome rules and regulations—regulations that would have driven up energy and appliance prices in this country.

In this year's healthcare appropriations bill, we prioritized measures to make prescriptions less expensive at the pharmacy. We are looking to soon take up major housing legislation to make homeownership more affordable and accessible for everyday Americans.

My Democrat colleagues may talk a good game about helping hard-working Americans, but Republicans are actually putting them to work. We are putting more money in Americans' pockets and working hard to make life affordable for American families. As President Trump made clear last night, we are just getting started.

Before I close, the President awarded medals to several military members last night, including the Medal of Honor to South Dakota native Royce Williams. Then-Lieutenant Williams heroically took on multiple Soviet MiGs during action off the Korean Peninsula in 1952, hitting not one but several of the aircraft before piloting his own heavily damaged plane back to an American aircraft carrier.

I know from personal experience—my dad—that South Dakota has produced some incredible naval aviators, and we are incredibly proud of our South Dakota heroes, including Mr. Williams. And, Mr. President, we are grateful for their service.

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. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night was not America's State of the Union. It was Donald Trump's state of delusion. For 2 long hours the President stood in the House Chamber congratulating himself, inflating his own ego, but offering no solutions to our country's many problems.

He is in a bubble. He doesn't even have a clue about what the average American family is going through. Donald Trump patted himself on the back so many times I thought he would fall down. While Donald Trump kept claiming that "America is back" and that we are winning so much we don't know what to do about it, that is only half true. We are not winning so much, but he sure has no idea what to do about the problems in America, and he admitted it right there himself.

People back home were asking something different than what the speech addressed. They are asking: What about my electricity bill? How am I going to pay for my groceries? How am I going to afford a doctor? Donald Trump ignored all these things during his speech last night. Frankly, I have never heard a State of the Union speech—and I have heard quite a few—where the President's rhetoric and the country's reality were so far apart. Instead, Donald Trump spent most of his speech focused on the accomplishments, not of his administration, but on the accomplishments of other Americans whose accomplishments he has nothing to do with.

We are all proud of the men and women hockey teams that just won gold in the Olympics. We are all proud of and grateful for our veterans. They deserve honor. But Donald Trump didn't have anything to do with these accomplishments. He had so little to say about what he accomplished that he had to just go on and on about accomplishments of others, and folks back home want to hear about what the President is doing to help with their problems. They don't want to hear a fantasy that everything is going great.

But it got worse. Trump didn't simply ignore the affordability crisis. He mocked it yet again. The average American sitting at their table trying to figure out how they are going to pay that damn bill was furious that he said it doesn't matter. It is truly stunning to watch a billionaire like Donald Trump make fun of people's financial struggles during a State of the Union speech. The guy doesn't have a clue. He is in a bubble so thick, he can't hear what people are going through.

And of course, he lied about the economy. This man is an inveterate liar.