

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 10 a.m.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is the end of February, but it sure feels like the beginning because it feels like Groundhog Day. We are in yet another partial government shutdown. We are in it right now.

What is interesting is we just had our last vote of the week, and this is still not resolved, and Members are all heading back home as if everything is normal, but it is not. Next week, we will have people who work for the Department of Homeland Security not get a paycheck because it is not funded because this body has not resolved this.

Now, I understand my Democratic colleagues want to defund ICE. I get that. I hear from them over and over again: Let's defund ICE. And their way of defunding ICE is to be able to cut off funding to this particular part of our Federal budget.

But I think some of my colleagues have lost track of what this means to be able to cut off DHS funding. It is not just cutting off ICE. In fact, ICE is a very small portion of the Department of Homeland Security. There are about 250,000 total employees across all entities in the Department of Homeland Security. ICE has 21,000 of that 250,000-plus. It is a very small group. But they are determined they are going to defund ICE.

What they are actually defunding is not just ICE. They have also defunded U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. They have defunded the U.S. Coast Guard. They have defunded Customs and Border Protection—those are all the folks that actually handle customs duties and produce coming across our border. They defunded the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Agency. They defunded FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They defunded the Federal law enforcement training centers. They have defunded U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement—that is ICE, what they were targeting. They have also defunded the Secret Service. TSA—those folks that a lot of Members are going to go check in with to get on a flight right now—they are not getting a paycheck next

week, although they are still working this week. They defunded the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office.

Listen, this is a big deal. We just had a shutdown of 43 days—the longest in American history. Those TSA agents lost two paychecks during that time period. There are a lot of Americans who can't miss one and make it; they missed two.

The TSA agent I walked past a couple of weeks ago caught me as I came through and said: I feel like my paycheck is bipolar—I never know whether it is going to be there or not.

All I could say to them was: I am so sorry. We are trying to get this open.

But my Democratic colleagues are so mad at ICE and so determined that they don't want enforcement across the country that TSA agents in my State are not getting a paycheck.

What in the world do the TSA agents in my State have to do with the rage against ICE? What in the world do the Coast Guard folks have to do with the rage against ICE? What in the world do the FEMA folks that are handling emergencies, in preparation for spring storms, and dealing with wildfires across the country—what do they have to do with their rage against ICE?

If we want to have an argument about ICE, let's have it, but why are we cutting off the paychecks of folks that work for FEMA because somebody is mad at ICE? That makes no sense to me, and it certainly doesn't make sense to those folks at the airport in my State who work every single day, who show up way earlier than most Americans actually wake up and get up. They are already at their spot early that morning taking care of passengers and making sure everybody is safe. They have nothing to do with ICE—except now they are not getting a paycheck because somebody is mad.

We should be able to resolve our differences in this body and not have other people not get a paycheck because of that. I have worked literally for years across the aisle and in conversation in this body to be able to come up with a very simple, straightforward bill that says: When we get to a moment that we haven't resolved everything in funding, when we get to that moment, instead of having the government shut down, everyone would still be paid. We would go to what is called a continuing resolution automatically. Everyone would still get paid. The status quo would continue except one thing: We would not leave. We would be here, the House and the Senate, 7 days a week. We would have to be in session and keep working until we solve the problem.

Put the pressure on us. Rather than cutting off the paycheck of somebody who has no ability to be able to make the decision to solve this, why don't you put the pressure on us, where it should be, to be able to stay here until it is resolved?

Now, I want to see my family like everybody else does. There are folks that

have all kinds of issues that are happening this weekend. Some are going on codels. Some are heading overseas. Some are going home. Some have elections coming up. There are lots of things that are happening this weekend, and I totally understand everyone wanting to be able to get to those spots, but we have unfinished business. We should be here until it is done, and we should hold harmless the folks in Oklahoma airports who are just getting up every day and going to work to protect our country and protect travelers. We have to figure this out.

So we have two issues. One is, let's solve the immediate one right now. Let's actually get the government back open, and let's actually get people paid.

My Democratic colleagues have demanded that we have body-worn cameras on ICE agents. We as Republicans have said: We agree.

In fact, the bill that you are blocking literally has \$20 million and a requirement to have body-worn cameras for law enforcement in the bill that you are blocking. We agree. Body-worn cameras are helpful for law enforcement and for the public to tell the complete story of what actually happened.

My Democratic colleagues have demanded that we get deescalation training for Federal officers. We as Republicans have said: Yes, we agree with that as well.

In fact, the bill that you are blocking, that you refuse to even take up, actually includes money for deescalation training in it. And there is not some trick in it; it is the actual issue everyone seems to be addressing right now.

This is about the drama of the moment and trying to be able to prove that you oppose Trump. OK. We get it. You don't like President Trump. But what I don't get is, why are the folks that work for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, why are the folks that work at TSA, why are the Coast Guard members, why are the folks that handle weapons of mass destruction, why are the folks that handle cyber security for our Nation—why are we not paying them while we are having this political fight?

This may be good political drama, but for the quarter-million Federal employees that are getting up and going to work without a paycheck this week, it is not drama; it is a problem that we need to solve.

So let's finish up these negotiations, and let's actually pass a bill that long term says we will never have another one of these.

I long for the day when I sit with my grandchildren one day and they say "Tell me about the time that the government used to shut down when Congress had arguments," and I would say "Yes, there was a time that used to happen, but we fixed that, so that doesn't happen anymore."

Let's solve this. We are supposed to be the adults in the room to be able to

resolve our differences. Let's figure this out for the sake of all those folks that are working every day to protect our Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE MONTH

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, this year marks the 250th anniversary of America's founding, and this year should be a celebration of our Nation and all those who have made it what it is. The story of our Nation is a story of diversity, of people of different races, religions, and national origins coming together to build something bigger than any one of us.

That story should be told in its totality, but we have a regime that fears diversity and is trying to erase it from our history. From directing the National Park Service to remove aspects of American history from exhibits, such as slavery, to targeting immigrant communities across the country, to its all-out war on diversity and inclusion, Trump's regime is attempting to rewrite history and create a White America that never existed in the first place.

The Native peoples were here first. This country would not be what it is today without the social, economic, and cultural contributions and the many sacrifices of historically marginalized but important communities.

As we celebrate 250 years of America, it is critical that we tell their stories—stories that are central to the country and truly define our communities. One such story is the revitalization of Native languages, including the Hawaiian language.

Since 2023, February has been recognized by the State of Hawaii as Mahina Olelo Hawaii, or Hawaiian Language Month. Following the colonization of the Hawaiian Islands by English-speaking westerners, the Hawaiian language, also known as Olelo Hawaii, was nearly driven to extinction. After the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, a law was enacted effectively barring the teaching of Olelo Hawaii across the islands. As a result, the use of Olelo Hawaii sharply declined, and the language came close to extinction.

Thankfully, cultural practitioners, educators, and community members like Mary Kawena Pukui, author of the Hawaiian language dictionary, kept the language alive until interest in learning Hawaiian increased during the Hawaiian cultural renaissance in the 1970s.

In 1978, Olelo Hawaii was finally recognized as an official language of the

State of Hawaii—quite the contrast to President Trump's Executive order designating English as the language of our country.

Olelo Hawaii has been reintroduced to the public education system, and Hawaiian language immersion schools have been established throughout the State to continue to revitalize and protect this important aspect of Hawaiian culture.

The designation of February as Mahina Olelo Hawaii serves as a testament to the resilience of the Native Hawaiian community and the importance of Hawaiian history and culture.

Indigenous languages are an important part of our country's history and fabric. A curriculum similar to what is used in our Hawaiian immersion schools has also been used by other indigenous groups to foster and revive their languages. In 2016, for example, a group of Hawaii educators from our Aha Punana Leo immersion schools in Hawaii traveled to the Midwest and mentored a language institute of the Ojibwe Tribe. There, the group shared their methodology and curricula to support the institute's program and help preserve the Ojibwe language.

I am really proud that the resurgence of Native Hawaiian language is used as an example for other Native groups to learn how they can use similar programs to preserve their very special Native languages. Celebrating the survival and revitalization of these indigenous languages helps to preserve and strengthen the cultural diversity of our communities because, while much has changed since the founding of our Nation, the through line of America has always been our diversity.

So Trump and Republicans can continue to tell their cherry-picked version of American history, but they cannot erase the truth of our diversity.

As we celebrate our Nation's 250th anniversary, we reaffirm our commitment to upholding and fostering that diversity, to protecting the culture of communities that were here before us, and to ensuring the stories of our country and the Americans who make it so great are told in full.

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

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

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. BANKS. Mr. President, before we leave for the weekend, I wanted to take a moment and just come down to the floor and give the President a lot of credit for a great State of the Union speech on Tuesday night.

It was my eighth State of the Union speech. I spent 8 years in the House,

and this was now the second State of the Union speech I have heard as a U.S. Senator for Indiana.

It was truly the best State of the Union speech that I have ever heard. And it was especially special for me to have my younger brother—10 years younger than I—Bradley Banks, from Columbia City, up in the Gallery in the House to watch the State of the Union speech. He, too, loves President Trump and what he stands for, and to have him be my special guest was a special moment for me and for him to experience a great speech as well.

As President Trump said 2 nights ago, the state of the Union is strong, and that is thanks to President Trump and his great leadership. It has been incredible to see what a difference just 1 year makes and what a difference President Trump has made in this first year of his second term, especially after 4 disastrous years with President Joe Biden in the White House.

President Trump listed a number of reasons why the state of the Union is strong, but just to name a few of those reasons and give President Trump a lot of credit: Because of him, our border is completely secure. What a night-and-day difference that is from what it was just a little over a year ago when President Trump came back into office. Inflation is at its lowest level in more than 5 years, thanks to President Trump. Gas prices are down below \$2.30 in most States. Incomes are rising again. The stock market has set 53 all-time record highs since President Trump's election in 2024. Fentanyl moving into our country is down 56 percent. The murder rate has had its single largest decline in American history. And America is respected on the world stage, perhaps unlike ever before, because of President Trump's incredible leadership.

As President Trump said at the State of the Union, our country is winning again. I loved hearing that from him. It made me so proud to be a U.S. Senator serving with President Trump in the White House once again.

And while President Trump was celebrating our country, while he was saying that we have "achieved a transformation like no one has ever seen before and a turnaround for the ages," Republicans stood to applaud while Democrats sat in their seats. It was really shocking to see Democrats refusing to stand up and cheer for American greatness. It was shocking to me. I couldn't believe it.

While President Trump asked Congress to stand up and show support if they agreed that "the first duty of the American government is to protect American citizens—not illegal aliens," the Democrats sat in their seats. They refused to stand up and cheer and stand with President Trump with all of us on the Republican side and agree to that simple statement. None of them agreed—not a single one of them. Not a single Democrat in the House Chamber, House Members or Senators on the