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## Senate

(Legislative day of Wednesday, January 7, 2026)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of recess, 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 Father, You are the source and strength of our lives. Great is Your faithfulness. We thank You today for our lawmakers who embraced the calling to serve You by serving our Nation and world. Bless them with divine insights as they grapple with complexities that require difficult choices. May they make it their ultimate goal to serve You by striving to do what is best for the building of Your Kingdom in a chaotic world. Lord, guide us all, for we are pilgrims in this land. We are weak, but You are mighty. Guide us with Your powerful hands.

We pray in Your merciful 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.

### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Iowa.

### NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, tomorrow, January 9, is National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. For 365 days a year, but especially tomorrow, we offer our gratitude to our country's men and women. When you meet one of them, you should say: Thank you for your work. Thank you for keeping the peace.

With President Trump's support, law enforcement nationwide is making America safer. This year, violent crime is down 12 percent and murders across our major cities are down 20 percent. Record amounts of dangerous drugs like fentanyl, meth, cocaine, and heroin have been seized and, thankfully, are off our streets due to the hard work of law enforcement's very courageous work. I am proud to back the blue. I am also grateful for their work to maintain the peace.

As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee this year, I have continued my work to support law enforcement in Iowa but also nationwide. In that role, I worked with Senate Republicans and the White House as part of the Working Families Tax Cut law signed by the President on July 4, securing historic support for the Byrne JAG and COPS Programs for local police as well as efforts to combat drug trafficking.

Additionally, four bipartisan bills the Judiciary Committee passed during Police Week in May became law with the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act. These new laws will expand access to Federal support for law enforcement and their families and help State and local law enforcement combat online child exploitation.

The National Defense Authorization Act also expanded counterdrone authorities for State and local law en-

forcement agencies using language that was based on legislation that I worked on in a bipartisan way with the senior Senator from Michigan.

We should all look forward, but I want you to know that I look forward to working further with my colleagues this year to support police in a bipartisan way. We are very fortunate that this type of legislation is mostly bipartisan in the Congress.

To all those who have selflessly answered the call to keep our communities safe, I say thank you. May God bless you and may God protect you as you go about your work of protecting the American people.

I yield the floor.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

### APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, at the start of this week, I said that the Senate would be focusing on government funding this month. We have a January 30 deadline to get the job done and avoid another government shutdown. We have already passed one package of three appropriations bills that was signed into law in November. Now we need to finish our work.

Later today, the House is expected to consider another package of three bills: Commerce, Justice, and Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environmental appropriations.

These three bills were crafted with bipartisan input from both the House and the Senate. The Trump administration supports this package. I expect we will see robust bipartisan support for these bills in today's House vote.

This three-bill package advances some important priorities. It funds programs that support law enforcement,

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



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promotes public safety in communities across America, invests in critical infrastructure projects, and it supports efforts to unleash American energy to provide affordable energy supply to the American people.

There is one more thing about this package that is significant. It spends less money than a continuing resolution. That is right. This bill spends less taxpayer money than if we passed another CR or continuing resolution to fund these Agencies. That is not an accident. That is what we can accomplish when we make appropriations a priority, when we put in the work, make tough choices, and put it up for a vote.

Appropriations is one of our core responsibilities, but it hasn't always been treated like the priority that it is. In too many cases in the past, massive omnibus bills were being written behind closed doors. That is not how I want to do things. When I became majority leader, I made it clear that I wanted appropriations to get the attention that it deserves, and we made some solid progress on this front in this Congress. We considered appropriations bills through regular order and passed three Senate appropriations bills before the August work period, something that hadn't been done going back to 2018.

We should be considering bills through regular order, a process that allows all Senators an opportunity to make their voice and the voices of their constituents heard. It is not just a better process; it creates a better product too.

When we receive this next package from the House, there is no reason that we can't take it up and pass it quickly here in the Senate. As I said, this bill was written with input from both parties in both the House and the Senate. It has the backing of the Trump administration. It advances a number of important priorities, and it actually spends less than if we just expended Biden-era spending levels for these same Agencies.

Once we finish this package, we have more work to do. Appropriators are working to finish the remaining bills for fiscal year 2026. One of those is the Defense appropriations bill—which is an especially important priority—to ensure that our military has the funding and certainty it needs to maintain and modernize its capability, support Americans serving in uniform, and protect our national security.

We don't have time to waste. It will require cooperation to ensure we can keep making progress as the end of the month approaches. I want to be clear that January 30 means January 30. We can't afford another extension. As soon as we finish, work will begin on the next appropriations cycle, starting with the President's budget request for fiscal year 2027.

We have done a lot of good work on appropriations this past year. I want to thank our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, especially Chair COL-

LINS, for their hard work throughout the year. This work isn't easy, but it is important, and it is a responsibility we need to take seriously. I know they all do. Let's get fiscal year 2026 funding done and keep up the progress as we begin the process for fiscal year 2027.

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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

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

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

#### VENEZUELA

Mr. REED. Mr. President, for 4 months, my Democratic colleagues and I have come to the floor to warn against President Trump's military operations in South and Central America. We pointed out that his boat-strike campaign was strategically incoherent, legally questionable, and, ultimately, not about narco-trafficking at all. We have argued that the administration's shifting legal justifications, refusal to give Congress straight answers, and, in particular, the failure of the Department of Defense to provide information to Congress, which is required by law—all of these things—together with a massive military buildup, pointed toward something larger than narco-trafficking. Indeed, we warned that these actions were always directed at the government and economy of Venezuela.

That campaign has now culminated in a military raid on Caracas, the capture of Nicolas Maduro and his wife, and President Trump's extraordinary declaration that the United States will "run" Venezuela and seize control of its oil reserves.

Let me be very clear about something, at the outset: Nicolas Maduro is a brutal dictator who has destroyed Venezuela's economy, crushed democratic opposition, and fostered widespread corruption. He will not be missed. But this operation was not designed to restore peace in Venezuela or protect America from the ravages of drugs. Indeed, this operation is not about democracy. It is not about the suffering of the Venezuelan people. It is not even about narco-trafficking, despite the administration's killing more than 100 people in its strikes on alleged drug boats. In the President's own words, this campaign is simply about seizing Venezuela's oil and profiting from it.

The people of Venezuela have suffered extraordinary hardship under the Maduro regime. They have voted in multiple elections for new leadership and have been denied their choice through fraud and repression. After everything they have endured, the people of Venezuela deserve to choose what

happens next in their country. They do not deserve to have their future dictated by President Trump, Secretary Rubio, or anyone else in Washington.

Yet that is precisely what this administration plans to do. The plan presented by the White House is to simply force the remnants of the Maduro regime to grant the United States exclusive access to Venezuelan oil or face the consequences of a blockade. That is it. That is the plan.

Not in the plan: positive change for the people of Venezuela. There is no framework for elections or democratic transition, no serious assessment of the rival political factions inside Venezuela—factions that have been waiting for precisely this moment to seize power.

I have seen no contingency plan for what happens when China, Russia, Iran, or Cuba—nations with deep economic interests in Venezuela—decide to block or back proxy groups in a country we have just destabilized, nor have I heard any proposal for the next steps for countering narco-trafficking.

The administration's goals are aspirational at best, and aspirations are not enough when the stakes involve war and the future of millions of people.

One of the first lessons I learned as an Army officer is that hope is not a plan. Over my career, both in uniform and in the Congress, I have seen the United States hope that its military interventions abroad would succeed. I have seen regime changes, nation-building efforts, and elaborate reconstruction schemes launched with confident predictions of success, only to have them collapse when encountered with the reality on the ground.

And the reality is this: When we rely on the U.S. military as our primary tool of foreign engagement, we generally set ourselves up for failure. We have persistently misunderstood and misjudged the cultures, histories, and politics of the nations in which we have intervened because we assume military might is enough. We imagine outcomes that align with our military and economic objectives but are surprised when those outcomes fail. We consistently fail to plan for the "day after."

Unless the Trump administration gets serious, Venezuela will be no exception.

This isn't about our military capabilities. We have the most formidable fighting force the world has ever seen, and I am proud and, frankly, not surprised that all elements of our military worked together to successfully execute such a dangerous and difficult mission in Caracas. The skill, professionalism, and courage are beyond question of these men and women.

But military capability is not the same as strategic wisdom. The ability to achieve tactical objectives does not guarantee beneficial long-term outcomes, and executing a successful raid does not constitute a plan for governing a nation of 28 million people.