

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 27, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to consider a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 9 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 9 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 11:45 a.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SURFACE TRANSPORTATION,
FREIGHT, PIPELINES, AND SAFETY

The Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, Freight, Pipelines, and Safety of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for my intern Ellie White to have privileges of the floor.

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

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND
GIRLS IN SPORTS ACT OF 2025—
Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 2, S. 9.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 9) to provide that for purposes of determining compliance with title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in athletics, sex shall be recognized based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. 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 legislative 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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 2, S. 9, a bill to provide that for purposes of determining compliance with title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in athletics, sex shall be recognized based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth.

John Thune, Eric Schmitt, Marsha Blackburn, Joni Ernst, Ted Budd, Katie Britt, David McCormick, Bernie Moreno, Rick Scott of Florida, Tommy Tuberville, James Lankford, Markwayne Mullin, Jim Justice, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Cynthia M. Lummis, John Barrasso, Mike Rounds.

AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY
COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE
FOR THE PERIODS MARCH 1, 2025,
THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2025,
OCTOBER 1, 2025, THROUGH SEP-
TEMBER 30, 2026, AND OCTOBER 1,
2026, THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2027

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 16, S. Res. 94.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 94) authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, and October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 94) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in the RECORD of February 25, 2025, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RARE DISEASE DAY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 104, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 104) designating February 27, 2025, as "Rare Disease Day".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 104) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT—S.J. Res. 12

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that S. Res. 12 be indefinitely postponed.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY,
MARCH 3, 2025

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday, March 3; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 24, the McMahon nomination, under the previous order; finally, that following disposition of the McMahon nomination, the Senate proceed to legislative session and resume consideration of Calendar No. 2, S. 9; and that the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of my colleagues.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 12

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, let me just restate: I ask unanimous consent that S.J. Res. 12 be indefinitely postponed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Duly noted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF LINDA MCMAHON

Mr. REED. Mr. President, as we celebrate Public Schools Week, Senate Republicans are preparing to confirm Linda McMahon, another of President Trump's billionaire patrons, as Secretary of Education, and I oppose such nomination.

During her confirmation hearing, Mrs. McMahon demonstrated little knowledge of public education or the basic programs and functions of the Department of Education. Clearly, the choice of this nominee is not based on merit.

But that does not matter because Mrs. McMahon was selected to be a front, as the Agency she hopes to lead is being dismantled by Elon Musk and DOGE. Indeed, while Mrs. McMahon was at her confirmation hearing, claiming that she would work to improve the Department of Education, Elon Musk's DOGE minions were at work firing people, taking back grants, compromising sensitive data, and laying the groundwork to eliminate the entire Agency.

And on Valentine's Day, President Trump's Department of Education threatened to cut Federal funding from public schools, as well as colleges and universities, if they did not eliminate any program that the Trump administration deems as promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

During her confirmation hearing, Mrs. McMahon seemed unsure whether this edict meant that schools can't celebrate or teach classes on African-American history or host clubs like Special Olympics or Girls Who Code.

As a reminder, by law, the Secretary of Education may not interfere with the content that schools teach, nor the academic standards that they set. Mrs. McMahon doesn't seem to know that.

By the way, while Mr. Musk has been tearing the Department of Education apart from the inside, Republicans in Congress have passed punitive blueprints that will cut trillions from government services to the American people, including education, all to pay for tax cuts for the richest Americans and Big Business.

In the Senate, the Republicans are calling for an unspecified \$9 trillion in cuts. In the House, the Education and Workforce Committee must provide a minimum of \$330 billion in cuts from education and job training programs. It is no wonder that educators, students, and families from across the country feel under siege.

We know what this looks like because we see how teachers, students, and military families are reacting with dismay as our world-class Department of Defense schools are laboring under another Secretary intent on politicizing its Department and promoting an indoctrination agenda authorized by President Trump.

I would like to take a moment to first thank all educators, school staff, family volunteers, and all community members who tirelessly work to equip our students for the future. We owe you a debt of gratitude and so much more than that. We need to recommit to strengthening our public schools and to investing in them.

In the first part of the 20th century, it was the high school movement that broadly expanded educational attain-

ment, preparing young Americans for success in a changing world and evolving economy. This movement featured professional educators and engaged families and communities. It was about general knowledge and practical application.

This movement launched the United States as a world economic power. It was essential to our national defense, and it created the conditions for the success of the largest expansion of postsecondary education through the GI bill. The high school movement meant that soldiers returning from World War II already had high school diplomas and were ready for postsecondary education.

Head Start, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Higher Education Act are some of our Federal laws that work to ensure that opportunities to learn and advance are not limited by income, race, ethnicity, or disability.

The expansion of public education is a great American story. Yet, today, it sometimes seems to have been forgotten. Some argue that we do not need public schools, that we can offer vouchers or education savings accounts or homeschooling instead. Today, instead of freedom of inquiry and inclusion, we see policing of what schools can teach, what students can read, what they can discuss, and how they should think. This is a recipe for stifling creativity and the development of the skills needed for an ever-changing knowledge economy.

We politicize and neglect public schools at our peril. They educate nearly 50 million students—our future. It is time that we treat public education as the priority it must be if we want a brighter future for our children and our grandchildren and our country.

We should embark on a new public school movement—one that will strengthen and support the education profession, one that will ensure that all communities can provide modern, state-of-the-art facilities, one that will ensure that all students have the right to read—with evidence-based reading instruction, school libraries, books at home, diverse materials, and the freedom to choose what to read.

Today, we are failing our public schools because we are not investing in them. For example, the average age of our public school facilities is 49 years. The GAO found that over half of our school districts in our country needed to replace or update major systems in more than half of their buildings.

As a nation, we should commit to modernizing our school facilities. That is why I will be reintroducing the Rebuild America's Schools Act to invest \$130 billion in our school facilities in the communities with the greatest need.

We know there is a crisis in the education profession. Too many school districts struggle to hire and retain teach-

ers. Too often, a career in teaching means financial struggles and little support to meet student needs.

Additionally, we need a national focus on literacy. In 2024, the percentage of eighth graders reading below the basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress was the largest in the assessment's history, and the percentage of fourth graders who scored below the basic level was the largest in 20 years.

Adults are not doing any better. Recent results of the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies show that overall scores in literacy and numeracy have decreased for U.S. adults, with adults scoring at the lowest level of proficiency in literacy, increasing from 19 percent in 2017 to 28 percent in 2023.

This is a crisis. Eliminating the Department of Education does nothing to solve it. Instead of gutting educational funding and eliminating the Department of Education to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy, Congress should address the acute literacy crisis for both adults and children across the Nation.

We should be increasing funding for adult education—at least doubling it. We should increase resources for schools to provide evidence-based reading instruction by fully funding title I, increasing funding for the Comprehensive Literacy Development State Grant Program and for Innovative Approaches to Literacy grants.

We should double the Pell grant and restore its purchasing power so students do not have to rely mostly on loans to pay for college.

Sadly, none of this is on Mrs. McMahon's agenda.

I urge my colleagues to join me in ushering in a new public education movement—a movement to ensure that this generation, as well as future ones, has the foundation to achieve their full potential and build a prosperous future. This nominee is not the person to lead such an effort. All indications are that she will actively work against it. So I encourage my colleagues to vote no on her confirmation.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 348

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to seek unanimous consent for my STABLE Trade Policy Act with Senator KANE, an act that would prevent any President from imposing tariffs on a U.S. ally or a free-trade agreement partner without congressional consent.