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## House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, March 14, 2025, at 9 a.m.

## Senate

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2025

The Senate met at 11 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.

Spirit of the living God, fix our thoughts on You. Let not anything impure distract us from listening to You. Lord, focus the attention of our lawmakers on serving You, as they seek to become salt and light to our world. Give them the wisdom to discern the things You desire to teach them. May they strive to strengthen their friendships with each other, finding common ground.

Lord, inspire our lawmakers to become disciplined followers, always ready to obey Your commands. May their lives become open letters from You that people can read with joy.

Lord, guide, teach, and strengthen us all until we reflect Your image of purity, gentleness, honesty, humility, generosity, and love.

We pray in Your wonderful 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. SHEEHY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### FULL-YEAR CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2025—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 26, H.R. 1968.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 26, H.R. 1968, a bill making further continuing appropriations and other extensions for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, and for other purposes.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Stephen Miran, of New York, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 133RD TEST SQUADRON

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to pay tribute to a military unit that is being retired in Fort Dodge, IA.

On March 2, the colors were retired for the 133rd Test Squadron in Fort Dodge, IA. The 133rd has an extraordinary legacy. Since its inception in 1948, the 133rd has stood as a pillar of excellence, evolving from radar spotting to pioneering the use of advanced communication technologies.

From the Korean war to the Global War on Terror, the 133rd has answered our Nation's call with unwavering dedication. Its innovation has helped ensure our military remains at the forefront of defense capabilities.

To the men, women, and families of the 133rd, past and present, thank you for your service, sacrifice, and commitment to our State and Nation. Your impact is immeasurable, and your legacy will endure.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### HALT FENTANYL ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday, I came to the floor to discuss the terrible human cost of fentanyl: the lives lost, the families changed, the futures destroyed. In 2022, we lost 295 people a day to drug overdoses, the vast majority of them opioids and, specifically, fentanyl. Twenty-two teenagers died each week that same year from drug overdoses. That is like losing an entire high school classroom every week.

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



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The majority of drug overdoses in this country are from fentanyl, and a lot of illegal fentanyl comes across our southern border in the form of fentanyl analogs, which are versions of fentanyl created with slight chemical variations in an attempt to dodge law enforcement. So getting this crisis under control requires targeting that flow of drugs.

That starts, of course, with securing our southern border so the cartels can't hide behind a flood of illegal immigration and so that the Border Patrol is free to focus on cross-border crime.

In just a few short weeks, President Trump has made major progress on this front, dramatically slowing illegal crossings and taking significant steps to halt the flow of fentanyl across our borders.

Now it is Congress's turn. The bill before us today, the HALT Fentanyl Act, would permanently classify fentanyl analogs—the fentanyl that cartels are making—as schedule I substances. In other words, fentanyl analogs would be permanently listed as the deadliest type of drug, and that would ensure that law enforcement agencies have the greatest flexibility to combat the scourge of fentanyl and hold accountable those who trade in destroying lives.

During his first term, President Trump temporarily classified fentanyl analogs as schedule I substances. And because it is so important, Congress has extended that classification several times. Now, it is time to make it permanent.

I was very pleased that we had a robust bipartisan vote, last week, on moving to this bill, and I hope that same bipartisanship is reflected in the final vote. There could hardly be a more commonsense piece of legislation, and every Member of this body should be able to agree that fentanyl analogs, which have been responsible for so many overdose deaths, should be classified as schedule I drugs.

The fentanyl crisis affects every corner of society and every State in the Union, and my State of South Dakota is no exception. Last year, in Sioux Falls, police seized enough fentanyl to kill 2.5 million people—2.5 million—and that was in just one South Dakota city.

I am grateful to Senators CASSIDY, GRASSLEY, and HEINRICH for introducing this legislation and to other Senators, like Senator JOHNSON and Senator GRAHAM, whose work has drawn attention to the fentanyl crisis. I hope that, in the next few days, Senators of both parties will unite to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act and ensure that law enforcement has critical tools to combat this crisis, protect our citizens, and protect our children.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill 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 minority leader is recognized.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Donald Trump and Republicans have wanted to take away Americans' hard-earned entitlement benefits for a very long time.

This week, Elon Musk said the quiet part out loud, and every single American should be alarmed. He said:

Most of the Federal spending is entitlements. So that is the big one to eliminate.

Of course, he is referring to Social Security.

Elon Musk is saying it plainly: Republicans' big goal is to eliminate—his words—Social Security and Medicare benefits.

The American people deserve to know where Senators stand on protecting Social Security. The American people deserve to know that. Are Senate Republicans fine with the terrible things Elon Musk and DOGE are doing to Social Security? Do they agree with Mr. Musk that it is one giant scam? We have seen the Social Security offices slashed so that people get less services. Is that the first step to eliminate Social Security? It seems to be.

Donald Trump ridiculed Social Security by just lying about people who have been on the books 200 years and making people think they got benefits, which, of course, they didn't. It seems he is in on the plan. It is not just Musk; it is Trump, too.

Well, all of these are simple questions, and Americans deserve to know the truth. If Republicans truly support Social Security, they need to break their silence and condemn Musk's attacks. DOGE has already—already—taken over the Social Security Administration and accessed the private data and benefits of tens of millions of Americans. Why are they after that? Why are they after that data? My guess is so they can hurt the program, close the program, eliminate the program.

Republicans and Trump and DOGE are gutting the Agency. They are firing thousands of staff, leading to office closures, longer wait times, and deteriorating service. In my State, they have already announced a few offices being closed. I am sure that is true in every other State.

If Mr. Musk and DOGE are allowed to keep going, at the moment, seniors will have to wait longer for their benefits, but in the future, they may not get them. People with disabilities will wait longer times for their claims to be processed, but they may not get them. Americans will spend more time waiting to talk to someone on the phone to get help with their benefits. But it seems, where they are headed, there will be no one on the phone to talk to and no benefits to be received.

Social Security is one of the most popular programs. Why the heck would any President—any erstwhile Vice President—Musk—maybe he is President—why would any party want to eliminate Social Security? Why would they want to cut Social Security, one of the most popular Federal programs we have? I will tell you why. They are frenetic on tax breaks for the billionaires, and they are taking away things from Americans. This is not what the American people want. This is not efficiency.

For Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, to not understand how a senior citizen depends on the \$1,100 a month to buy food, to purchase vitally needed medicines—what arrogance. What arrogance to not even deign to understand it.

We will cut the government.

Social Security is not the government; it is people. It is the money they put in. It is the money they now get back. It helps them live a decent life.

If Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Republicans continue to go after benefits like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—I have no reason to think they won't—Democrats will fight it, but most importantly, the American people will not stand for it.

ECONOMY

Mr. President, now on the economy, Donald Trump's erratic decisions—yes; no; maybe; this country; that country—are creating havoc in the economy, and we are starting to see dark clouds hanging over our economy because of Donald Trump and his whole team's erratic performance when it comes to the economy.

Listen to this: For the first time, CNN's polling shows that a clear majority—56 percent of the people—disapprove of Donald Trump's handling of the economy. Some of his pundits say he won the election because of his performance on the economy. Well, if now 56 percent of people disapprove, he is not in very good electoral shape now or in the future.

This week, forecasters say that thanks to Donald Trump's chaos and tariffs, the odds of a dreaded recession have started to crawl up. One J.P. Morgan report puts it, alarmingly, at 40 percent—40 percent chance of recession already. Trump is in office 2, 3 months. There was no chance—little chance of a recession the day he took office, and now it is up to 40 percent according to J.P. Morgan.

Household debt is also growing. The average household credit card debt surpassed \$10,000 for the first time since 2009. People are starting to fall behind on their car payments at the highest rate in decades.

Donald Trump promised an economic boom during the campaign, but 2 months into his Presidency, Trump is already backtracking and telling Americans they should be OK with "pain" and "disturbance" with the economy.