

produce electricity that would drive data centers and artificial intelligence, and by increasing our exports of things like natural gas so our friends and allies don't have to depend on Russia to keep the lights on or to heat their homes, we can create both growth for our economy here at home and we can improve our natural security posturing, including shoring up our vulnerable supply chains. Rather than forcing Europe to rely on Russia for its energy sources, we can increase their reliance—and they are eager to have it—on American energy, particularly liquefied natural gas.

This would be a big win for America and a big win for my State as well and a big loss for the “axis of evil”—Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea that are working together to undermine the United States and the West.

We have a lot to do and very little time to do it. We have an opportunity to pass huge wins for President Trump and, more specifically, for the American people. And that comes first through the budget reconciliation process. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity, and it is not an opportunity we can afford to squander. We can't let this go to waste by not taking this occasion to finally address our skyrocketing debt. And the only way we can do that is not only be responsible in the way we handle things like discretionary spending but to dig deeper into the areas that the Federal Government spends like mandatory spending.

I know Medicare and Social Security are particularly fraught. And without bipartisan support, it is really hard to save Social Security and Medicare, particularly if the Democrats aren't going to be willing to help. But there is about \$700 billion a year that the Federal Government spends that has mandatory spending. That means it is on autopilot, and we never go back to revisit it to see if it is still a priority, which continues to grow at 5, 6, 7, 8 percent a year. And until and unless we deal with this mandatory spending, we are never going to deal with this mountain of debt now approaching \$36 trillion.

We have now finally gotten to the point where we are paying more money for interest on the national debt than we are on our own defense, which is 2.7 percent of our GDP. We finally kicked the can down the road to the point we have run out of road. That is true both in terms of our fiscal condition and in terms of our national security.

We can't let this opportunity go to waste. As I said, we need to take a hard look at both our mandatory discretionary spending, and we also need to take a look at how the Tax Code has been transformed into a welfare system. About \$200 billion a year go to pay for the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit.

Democrats have been successful in decoupling any sort of work requirement for able-bodied adults. That needs to be reinstated because when it comes

to assessing the people who deserve help and need our help, able-bodied individuals should not be able to ride the backs of the American taxpayers. They need to do like everybody else does who is able-bodied, and that is to be a producer, not somebody who lives off the beneficence of the American taxpayer.

We have a lot of work to do, but this is an incredible opportunity that I trust we will not squander. The time to address these problems is now. We put it off long enough. I know it is easy to say let's do the easy things now, and we will do the hard stuff later. But later never seems to come so we have to deal with these now.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in recess pursuant to the previous order.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:25 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH).

MORNING BUSINESS—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONSTITUTING THE MAJORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of S. Res. 16, 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. 16) to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Nineteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

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

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, for the purpose of S. Res. 16, the majority committee membership resolution, the blank spaces with respect to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Energy and Natural Resources; Small Business and Entrepreneurship; and Special Committee on Aging are there to preserve the ratios on those committees negotiated between the Democratic leader and myself. It is my intention to place Senator elect Jim Justice of West Virginia on those committees by subsequent resolution when he is sworn in on January 14, 2025.

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

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

The resolution (S. Res. 16) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

CONSTITUTING THE MINORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 17, 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. 17) to constitute the minority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Nineteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 17) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 9

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

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.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

MORNING BUSINESS

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO LORIE TUDOR

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize Lorie Tudor who is retiring from the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) after an accomplished career, including the last 4 years as its director.

Tudor started at ARDOT in 1981 as a clerk typist and served the agency for 14 years before departing to obtain an engineering degree. She then returned after graduating from the University of Memphis in 1997 to begin working as a civil engineer.

In March of 2020, she became ARDOT's first female director. Facing the COVID-19 pandemic and an emergency closing of the Hernando de Soto I-40 Mississippi River Bridge in 2021, as well as other major endeavors, her steady hand and trusted leadership made the transformation of our State's transportation network possible.

Tudor embodies the Arkansas spirit of service. Her commitment to the organization, its staff, and its role within communities across the Natural State has been essential.

During her 41-year tenure at ARDOT, she helped secure a stable and reliable funding stream; guided the completion of the Connecting Arkansas Program, which modernized our State's transportation systems; played an important role in several interstate designations; oversaw the final stages of construction of the Bella Vista Bypass; and ensured progress on key projects including I-30 and I-69, as well as the Thomas B. Schueck Highway.

She is a dedicated public servant who has spent her career striving to make Arkansas better. Tudor's expertise has been widely recognized, including her selection as president of the Southern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and appointment to the State Board for Licensure for Professional Engineers and Professional Surveyors in October 2020, on which she served as president in 2023.

Director Lorie Tudor has served ARDOT and our State with incredible devotion and skill. I am grateful for all she has contributed to improve our State's transportation infrastructure and appreciate our valuable partnership. I know her impact will continue to be felt for generations to come and wish her the best of luck in retirement.●

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 5. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

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.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-1. A communication from the Program Analyst, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Natural Grass Sod Promotion, Research, and Information Order; Referendum Procedures" (RIN0581-AE07) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 20, 2024; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2. A communication from the Secretary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Investment of Customer Funds by Futures Commission Merchants and Derivatives Clearing Organizations" (RIN3038-AF24) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 31, 2024; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3. A communication from the Secretary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulations to Address Margin Adequacy and to Account for the Treatment of Separate Accounts by Futures Commission Merchants" (RIN3038-AF21) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 31, 2024; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4. A communication from the General Counsel, Government Accountability Office, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Fiscal Year 2024 Antideficiency Act Reports Compilation"; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-5. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of five (5) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-6. A communication from the Sanctions Regulations Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Updating Authorizations for Payments for Legal Services" received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 20, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-7. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8. A communication from the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Federal Re-

serve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Annual Report to Congress on the Presidential \$1 Dollar Coin Program"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-9. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13219 with respect to the Western Balkans; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-10. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 14115 of February 1, 2024 with respect to the situation in the West Bank; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-11. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13466 with respect to North Korea; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-12. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2025-2027 Enterprise Housing Goals" (RIN2590-AB34) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-13. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Financial Stability Oversight Council 2024 annual report to Congress; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-14. A communication from the Senior Congressional Liaison, Legislative Affairs, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "CFPB College Banking and Credit Card Agreements, December 2024"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-15. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "EDGAR Filer Access and Account Management" (RIN3235-AM58) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-16. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Electronic Submission of Certain Materials Under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934; Amendments Regarding the Focus Report" (RIN3235-AL85) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-17. A communication from the Senior Congressional Liaison, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Overdraft Lending: Very Large Financial Institutions" (RIN3170-AA42) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 3, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-18. A communication from the President of the United States transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation as emergency requirements all funding (including the transfer and repurposing of funds) so designated by the Congress in the American Relief Act, 2025