

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed \$7,767,027, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed \$13,314,904, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed \$5,547,877, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for "Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations" of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions re-

lated to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have seven requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 11 a.m., to consider a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct an oversight hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following fellows in my office be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 1st session of the 119th Congress: Mary Fernandes, Sarah Goldman, Adam Hasz, and Alyssa Rudelis.

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

LOCAL ACCESS TO COURTS ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 32 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 32) to clarify where court may be held for certain district courts in Texas and California.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 32) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 32

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Local Access to Courts Act" or "LACA".

SEC. 2. ORGANIZATION OF TEXAS DISTRICT COURTS.

Section 124(b)(2) of title 28, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (3), by inserting "and College Station" before the period at the end.

SEC. 3. ORGANIZATION OF CALIFORNIA DISTRICT COURTS.

Section 84(d) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting "and El Centro" after "at San Diego".

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 13; 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 to resume Executive Calendar No. 17 under the previous order; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Thursday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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.

The Senator from Delaware.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. President, on the eve of the vote for the nominee for the Department of Health and Human Services, I stand before you acknowledging that I will vote no on the confirmation of Mr. Robert F. Kennedy.

I stand before you tonight after looking at his abilities, his background and qualifications, and his character. For me, I listened to my constituents and the calls that we have received into our office. And I have read articles. I have looked at petitions and lawsuits. I have listened to podcasts, and even watched a video that he produced.

There were inconsistencies in his positions, and so that is one reason that I could say no to this candidate.

Even as the former deputy secretary of health and social services from Delaware, I thought about the potential for another pandemic in our country and would he be ready for the job?

I thought about the fact that I come from a State that is also an agriculture State, and we are right now dealing with issues and concerns and fears about avian flu. Would he be ready for the job?

I have thought about senior citizens in my State who are on Medicare and children with special needs who may be on Medicaid, and the fact that in our hearing and also in my one-on-one conversation with him, he confused the two. Even within a week's time, he did not learn the differences between the two.

That was concerning enough, but tonight, in the time that I have, I want to also say I stand here as a grandmother, and I think about my granddaughter Lennox and her ability to, No. 1, be safe in school, because she is vaccinated, and she is with other children who are vaccinated and no longer have to worry about things like polio. I think about her ability to have reproductive freedom over her own life, when Mr. Kennedy has changed his positions so many times on where he stands on reproductive freedom and the right for her to choose what she wants for her life.

But I think one of the most troubling things that took place during our meeting was that he was not familiar with the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, EMTALA, while we literally have a crisis in maternal mortality. It is important to me that the person who holds this job understands those basic things—Medicare, Medicaid, EMTALA—and that we face a challenge for women's lives being saved.

I asked him specifically if he agreed about making sure that, if someone

was having complications during their pregnancy, that they should get the care that they need. This is both something that is being experienced across the country, but it is also personal for me.

A few years ago, after my son and daughter-in-law went through so much to get pregnant through IVF, on Christmas morning, I remember beginning to make the family dinner, and I got a call from my daughter-in-law saying: Mom, something is wrong. My water broke.

She was only about 5, 6 months pregnant—about 5 months pregnant. And she went to a hospital. And I got to that hospital, and because I knew, from my former jobs, of the statistics, particularly for Black women and maternal deaths—I saw her sitting in a wheelchair in the waiting room not being attended. The hospital ended up telling her she needed to go home and just basically wait it out.

For that whole month afterward, my son and my daughter-in-law stayed in my house. They slept in my bed. We supported each other.

But because of the miracle of IVF, they were able to conceive again, and 2 years ago this weekend, I became a grandmother of my granddaughter Lennox.

Tonight, I stand here on behalf of the children who want and need to be healthy. I stand here on behalf of the women across the country who need to know that there is a Cabinet Secretary who understands the need for emergency care, who understands the rights of women to make choices with their doctors and their families, and, if they have a pastor or a rabbi, with their rabbi and their pastor.

As someone who has focused much of my career on health and social services and dealing with health disparities, it is important that we do better as a country with our health status and that we are healthier.

But I go back to the beginning. Does the candidate have the qualifications, the background, the character, and the ability? For this candidate, unfortunately, the answer is no.

And tonight, I stand here for all of the children of our country, all of the families of our country, and I will be voting no on this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I am joining my Democratic colleagues on the Senate floor today because we have pledged to Americans that we will always stand up and fight for affordable, quality healthcare.

Right now, Donald Trump and his Republican allies in Congress are trying to dismantle healthcare access for Nevadans and Americans across the country. As we speak, Republicans are

working out a way to pass their budget through Congress and slash Medicaid to pay for tax cuts for Trump's ultrawealthy friends. Their budget for these billionaire tax cuts was just released this morning, and they want to give away trillions of dollars to the richest Americans and add about \$3 trillion to our national debt in exchange for nearly \$1 trillion in healthcare cuts for working families. You can bet Medicaid will be one of their biggest targets.

It is absolutely outrageous, and it is important that we shine a light for the American public so they know what is going on.

Right now, the Senate is considering the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to lead the Department of Health and Human Services—who has made it clear that he will be a rubberstamp for Donald Trump even if it hurts Nevadans.

This isn't fearmongering or speaking in hypotheticals. Donald Trump has been coming after critical healthcare since his first term in office. Every annual budget proposal Trump had in his first term, from 2017 through 2020, included huge cuts to Medicaid. And when Republicans in Congress tried to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, President Trump was on board with every plan they came up with that slashed Medicaid in the process.

I will tell you what: Democrats stood up to him every time.

But even after multiple failed attempts, it doesn't seem like President Trump has learned that Americans don't want him to roll back Medicaid.

His Project 2025 manifesto calls for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to impose lifetime caps on Medicaid. What does that mean? That means a person can only receive Medicaid benefits for a limited period of time no matter their income or their healthcare needs. That would leave about 92,800 Nevadans who are low-income and depend on Medicaid for healthcare at risk of losing their coverage.

We know RFK, Jr., will just let this happen if he becomes the Secretary of Health and Human Services. HHS oversees the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which means Mr. Kennedy would have control over what happens with these essential healthcare programs.

What is ironic is that Mr. Kennedy doesn't seem to even know the difference between Medicare and Medicaid. He confused the two multiple times during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Finance Committee.

Also during that hearing, he made it very clear to me and he made it very clear to the general public who was watching that he would refuse to even tell me he wouldn't be a rubberstamp for this administration, that he could have an independent thought and fight any harm that would occur to Nevadans or across this country; he would stand up with them. He made it very