

U.S. & WORLD

DHS funding negotiations turn to stalemate in Senate

BY ARIS FOLLEY, SAVANNAH BEHRMANN AND AIDAN QUIGLEY
CQ-Roll Call (TNS)



U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., is followed by reporters as he walks to the Senate Chambers in the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 27, 2026, in Washington, D.C. The Senate is discussing DHS funding as tensions remain high in Minneapolis after the shooting death of Alex Pretti by federal agents. (Anna MoneyMaker/Getty Images/TNS)

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans immediately rejected a new offer Wednesday from Democrats to reopen the Department of Homeland Security, in a troubling sign for negotiations as lawmakers scramble to reach a deal before a scheduled two-week recess begins Friday.

The stalemate is throwing the upcoming recess into question, with Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., repeatedly threatening to keep lawmakers in town until DHS is funded.

“I think it’s awfully hard not to have the government funded if we’re not here,” he said.

The Democratic offer retains their long-standing push for changes to immigration enforcement policy, including a requirement for agents to remove their masks and obtain judicial warrants to enter private properties, lawmakers said.

It also includes some changes that the White House “has already agreed to in principle, like officer identification, body-worn cameras, protecting sensitive locations from enforcement standards, and basic training standards,” a Democratic source familiar with the offer said.

Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer of New York said Wednesday that Democrats had felt that negotiations with Republicans had been progressing and the most GOP recent offer was a step backwards.

“We thought there had been some progress, but then Republicans sent us their offer yesterday and contained none of what had been talked about,” Schumer said. “None of the reforms we had been discussing.”

But Thune shot down the Democratic counteroffer shortly afterward, accusing Democrats of “asking for things that have already been turned down.”

“Warrants and masks have never been on the table, and they know that,” he said. “This is another example of the Democrats not being serious. I mean, they’re just spinning their wheels.”

TRY, TRY AGAIN

In another attempt to pressure

Democrats into action, Thune brought a House-passed Homeland Security appropriations bill back up for another procedural vote on Wednesday, with an amendment from Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins, R-Maine, stripping out \$5.45 billion that would fund the Immigration and Custom Enforcement agency’s Enforcement and Removal Operations division. It would also provide back pay for Homeland Security workers who missed pay during the partial shutdown.

But the motion to invoke cloture, limiting debate on proceeding to the bill, fell short for the sixth time. The vote was 54-46, falling six votes shy of the 60 needed.

Schumer said his party’s latest plan includes “the very same asks Democrats have been talking about now for months.”

“For Republicans to now act as though Democrats have changed our position, as though we’ve moved the goalposts, is poppycock and bad faith,” he said. “And for Republicans to send us a proposal that has no reforms is bad faith as well.”

Thune said Republicans’ offer includes immigration enforcement

changes previously included in the original DHS funding bill. But he has also argued that any further policy changes should go hand in hand with the ICE enforcement funding.

“They’ve been saying for months now, literally, that ICE is the issue when they wanted to make it clear that they wanted reforms,” Thune said earlier on Wednesday. “And so we offered reforms, and they continually walked away from the table on that.”

Democrats have additionally expressed concerns in wake of Republicans’ latest proposal about funding for a unit that investigates human trafficking and smuggling, known as Homeland Security Investigations, which they argue would also still amount to funding “immigration enforcement.”

The long day of partisan sniping ended with little sign of progress, though lawmakers insisted they were not giving up on reaching a deal.

“Looks like everybody’s gonna stare at each other for a little while,” Thune said as he left the Capitol. “Then we’ll see if we can get something started again.”

Trump team examines what oil as high as \$200 a barrel would mean

BY HADRIANA LOWENKRON, SALEHA MOHSIN AND ERIC MARTIN
Bloomberg News (TNS)



U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent looks on as U.S. President Donald Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office of the White House on April 9, 2025, in Washington, D.C. (Anna MoneyMaker/Getty Images/TNS)

‘worried’ about the short-term disruptions from Operation Epic Fury.”

Bessent, he said, has repeatedly “conveyed both his and the administration’s continued confidence in the long-term trajectory of the American economy and global energy markets.”

Oil prices have jumped since the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28, with West Texas Intermediate up about 30% at \$91 a barrel. Brent crude is up almost 40% over the same period, trading around \$102.

The White House said Wednesday that diplomatic efforts to end the war are still underway despite Iran’s public rejection of President Donald Trump’s push for talks and threatened further military action if no agreement is reached. On Monday, Trump set a five-day deadline for Iran to negotiate a deal to end the war.

The administration planned for the military campaign to last 4-6 weeks, the White House has said. Energy Secretary Chris Wright said on March 12 that a spike to \$200 a barrel is “unlikely.”

Crude at \$200 would be an enormous shock to the world economy. In inflation-adjusted terms, the price has hit that level only once in the last half-century — in 2008 just before the global financial crisis.

Even at lower levels, Bloomberg Economics forecasts that oil at \$170 per barrel for a few months would push inflation higher for the U.S. and Europe and cut economic growth.

Trump has said he’s not concerned about rising energy costs, even suggesting they’re beneficial to the U.S., and predicted that oil prices will drop sharply once the war ends.

But the near-shutdown of shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, which

normally carries as much as a fifth of global oil and gas exports, has already hit economies around the world.

European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde said last week that the hostilities have stoked inflationary risks. Peers in Frankfurt, London and Japan are priming for interest rate hikes as soon as next month.

In the U.S., the most visible impact has been a 30% increase in retail gasoline prices, wiping away that Trump had touted as a key economic achievement.

The outlook for U.S. monetary policy is also increasingly muddled as the Federal Reserve watches for the impact of higher oil prices on inflation. Last week, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said that it was too soon to gauge the effects of a surge in oil prices on the U.S. economy.

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CLASSIFICATION INDEX

Topic	Number
ANNOUNCEMENTS (100)	
Food Specials	101
Business Opportunities.....	102
Coming Attractions.....	103
Notices.....	104
Lost & Found	105
Lodge Notices	106
EMPLOYMENT (120)	
Help Wanted.....	121
Jobs Wanted.....	122
MERCHANDISE (130)	
Auctions.....	131
Rummage Sales.....	132
Farm Equip. & Supplies.....	133
Livestock & Equip.....	134
Pets & Supplies.....	135
Indoor Goods.....	136
Outdoor Goods.....	137
Merchandise for Rent.....	138
Free	139
Merchandise Wanted.....	140
SERVICE (150)	
Services.....	151
Auctioneers.....	152
VEHICLES, ACCESSORIES (160)	
Autos	161
Trucks	162
Motorcycles.....	163
Recreational Vehicles.....	164
Vehicle Accessories.....	165
Vehicles Wanted	166
PROPERTY (180)	
Real Estate for Sale	181
Property for Rent.....	182
Mobile Homes.....	183
Property Wanted.....	184
Auctions.....	185
PUBLIC NOTICES	200

104 Notices

AA MEETINGS; 213 W. Oak; Independence; Noon Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday; Wednesday at 7pm. Thursday at 7pm; Sunday at 6pm. Alanon meetings; Tuesday at 7p m TF

INVITATION TO bid- Motor Grader. Montgomery County will accept sealed bids for the purchase of one Motor Grader for the Road and Bridge Department in the Clerk’s office, PO Box 446, Independence Kansas, 67301, until 10:00 am on Tuesday, March 31, 2026. Bids will be opened at that time, and a recommendation will be made at the following Commission meeting. Any questions should be directed to Montgomery County Public Works, 620-330-1170. MAR27

INVITATION TO bid- Backhoe/Loader. Montgomery County will accept sealed bids for one 4x4 Backhoe/Loader for the Road and Bridge Department in the Clerk’s office, PO Box 446, Independence Kansas, 67301, until 10:15 am on Tuesday, March 31, 2026. Bids will be opened at that time, and a recommendation will be made at the following Commission meeting. Any questions should be directed to Montgomery County Public Works, 620-330-1170. MAR27

121 Help Wanted

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CLIMATE CONTROL storage, available, Witwer Storage, 1691 CR 4325, Coffeyville, 620-251-8542. TF

DEVORE STORAGE, secured perimeter, reasonable rates, easy access, 216 Cement, 620-331-8407, 620-926-0197, sizes available. TF

200 Public Notice

(First published in the Independence Daily Reporter March 27, 2026) NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE APPLICATION

The Montgomery County Rural Water District No. 9 intends to file an application for federal financial assistance with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service. The project includes improvements to the water distribution system. Any comments regarding this application should be submitted to the Montgomery County Rural Water District No. 9, PO Box 367, Fredonia, KS 66736. March 27, 2026

Helpful Tips

Keep seasonal allergies in check

There is much to look forward to when springs arrives. Daily hours of sunlight increase while temperatures continue to climb. Blooming flowers and leaves budding on trees also add some awe-inspiring color back into the landscape. Even though there’s much to enjoy about spring, one side effect of so much foliage in bloom is the return of seasonal spring allergies.

Many people find they cannot enjoy the sunshine and balmy temperatures of spring because of seasonal allergies. Hayfever, or allergic rhinitis, is a common spring allergy. The American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology indicates allergies are the sixth leading cause of chronic illness in the United States. More than 50 million Americans suffer from allergies each year. The Aerobiology Research Laboratories says allergens in the air across Canada have been rising in many cities over the last 15 years.

While there is no cure for seasonal allergies, there are steps individuals can take to live with them more comfortably.

- Stay indoors on dry, windy days. It’s better to go outside after it rains, which clears pollen from the air.
- The ACAAI urges individuals to modify indoor environments to keep allergens out. An HEPA filter in HVAC systems can better trap spores.
- Consider vacations near the ocean or other bodies of water, as pollen counts tend to be lower in these areas.
- Delegate lawn mowing and other tasks that involve stirring up allergens to someone else. If you must do gardening and landscaping, wear a face mask to filter out some allergens.
- Close windows or doors when pollen counts are especially high.
- Wash hair and clothes when coming indoors to rinse out allergens that would transfer to pillowcases or furniture.
- Speak to an allergist who can recommend medications or other treatments that can improve seasonal allergies. Corticosteroids reduce inflammation and antihistamines can help reduce sneezing or itchy eyes.

Seasonal allergies are a potential pitfall of the spring season. However, there are remedies that can help alleviate the suffering.

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