

HOW THE NEWSLETTIFICATION OF NEWS REIFIES TRUMP'S POWER RATHER THAN EXPOSING HIS LIES

Increasingly (possibly as an outgrowth of their willingness to serve as data mules for his Truth Social tweets), news outlets treat Donald Trump's mere act of saying something as news.

There's an interesting example in the NYT that shows how doing so wildly distorts the workings of what democracy America has left.

On the front page of the NYT digital page there's a package of stories about the reconciliation bill, which Trump wants to push through by July 4, in part, to keep Stephen Miller's dragnet running. The top "story" in that package bears the headline, "Trump rallies for signature policy bill as GOP rushes to save it; President Trump's domestic policy bill faced another hurdle after the Senate parliamentarian said several of its major provisions could not be included."

Trump Rallies for Signature Policy Bill as G.O.P. Rushes to Save It

President Trump's domestic policy bill faced another hurdle after the Senate parliamentarian said several of its major provisions could not be included.

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Senate Republicans Reprise Push to Pay for Tax Cuts by Slashing Food Stamps

3 MIN READ



Wesley Lapointe for The New York Times

Trump Administration Tells Congress to Kill 'Revenge Tax'

4 MIN READ


A Running List of Policies Rejected From the Republican Megabill

If you click on that story, it's not a dedicated news story. Instead, it's just the top newsletter page, with stubs for stories on the reconciliation bill, Iran strikes, and deportation. Nevertheless, that page itself also bears the headline, "Trump rallies for his

policy bill as GOP works to save it.”

Trump Rallies for His Policy Bill as G.O.P. Works to Save It

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Republicans have imposed a July 4 deadline to pass their domestic policy bill. Eric Lee for The New York Times

Where Things Stand:

- **Trump policy bill:** President Trump pushed for the passage of his signature domestic policy bill during a White House event, calling it “the ultimate codification of our agenda.” The legislation faces fresh hurdles after the Senate parliamentarian, the enforcer of the chamber’s rules, said several of its major provisions could not be included in their current form. Republicans are using a special process to shield the measure from a Democratic filibuster in hopes of passing it by July 4. [Read more >](#)
- **Iran strikes:** Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, offered the administration’s most detailed descriptions yet of the planning and execution of U.S. airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities. But they gave no new assessments of the state of Iran’s nuclear program, and neither repeated Mr. Trump’s assertion that the strikes had “obliterated” their targets. [Read more >](#)
- **Deportation fight:** The Trump administration indicated that it planned to once again deport Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia, who was brought back from a wrongful deportation to El

If you click though the reconciliation bill stub, it takes you to this story, in which the Parliamentarian, Elizabeth MacDonough – not Trump – is the primary actor.

Top Senate Official Rules Against Several Key Provisions in G.O.P. Policy Bill

The parliamentarian, who decides whether the bill complies with budget rules, threw out more proposals, leaving Republicans searching for ways to cover its cost.

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The Senate parliamentarian ruled on Thursday that several of the measures in the Republican domestic policy bill could not be included in the legislation in their current form. Eric Lee for The New York Times



By **Catie Edmondson and Margot Sanger-Katz**
Reporting from Washington

June 26, 2025

A top Senate official on Thursday rejected a slew of major provisions in Republicans' sweeping domestic policy bill, sending

It's not until the fifth paragraph of the story that we get the promised "news" about Trump rallying for the bill – and the only newsworthy part of that 73-word passage is that Trump either misstated or lied about what was in the bill.

President Trump worked to rally support for the legislation on Thursday at an event at the White House, praising the "hundreds of things here" to like about the bill.

"It's so good," he said, though one item he trumpeted, eliminating taxes on Social Security, was not actually in the bill.

When a reporter shouted out a question about whether Congress could pass the

bill by July 4, Mr. Trump replied: "We hope so."

You could make an entire news story about this: that Trump promised to eliminate taxes on Social Security, but it's not in the Big Ugly he's pushing through to codify the things that really matter to him. Instead, Trump will take food from children and medical care from working people so he can pay off the billionaires who got him reelected (something else that's not in the story). Trump made a promise, and rather than keeping it, he is falsely claiming he's keeping it.

NYT didn't do that (though it did publish a story about Republicans who rely on the benefits right wingers are trying to kill), but they did cast him as the lead character in the one event in town where he's a side player, what might be the only substantive legislation passed this year, if right wingers even *can* pass it, which is not yet clear (Jake Sherman says John Thune doesn't have the votes to pass it, yet).

Incidentally, the only mention of a Democrat in the story comes from Bobby Kogan, who provided a price tag for the things right wingers had stuffed into a bill that broke the rules for reconciliation.

If Republicans are forced to remove all the provisions Ms. MacDonough has ruled against, it would eliminate more than \$500 billion of the bill's intended spending cuts, according to a rough analysis by Bobby Kogan, a former Democratic Senate Budget Committee staff member and White House budget official who is now the senior director of federal budget policy at the left-leaning Center for American Progress.

What doesn't make any of these stories is that the Parliamentarian's serial rejection of one after another policy in the Big Ugly came as a

result of a lot of work from Democratic staffers who successfully argued that the provisions were extraneous to the bill (see the sections on the Byrd Rule in this post for an explanation of what that means).

Ron Wyden is one of the few people who made this point: he and his staff had to work to make this happen.



Senator Ron Wyden ✓
@wyden.senate.gov



Bluesky Elder

This is a wonky process but BIG news regarding the Republican budget bill: My staff successfully got multiple provisions removed from the bill. Two key wins: 1) Medicaid provider tax. Striking this means Republicans have to backtrack on hundreds of billions in Medicaid cuts.



Bobby Kogan @bbkogan.bsky.social · 20h

Bluesky Elder

Seventh set of Byrd droppings is out, and WOW!

We won on trans care in Medicaid, provider taxes, FMAP, immigrants in Medicaid, and other issues.

These victories are amazing for the people they help - and cost Rs more than \$250 billion of their savings by rough calculations, largely not curable.

UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE
ON THE
BUDGET

Byrd Rule Violations Continue to Mount on the Republicans' "One Big, Beautiful Bill" | U.S. Senate Committee On The Budget
The Official U.S. Senate Committee On The Budget

This is what Democrats in the Senate have been working on (even giving little-noticed press conferences) during a period when many wailed they were doing nothing: trying, at a minimum, to remove the gratuitously bad things right wingers are trying to jam through on this bill. Among the things Democrats did via Byrd Rule challenges are:

- Preserving CFPB and Public Company Oversight Board
- Kept some Food Stamp funding

and benefits

- Limited a rule trying to prevent states from regulating AI
- Eliminated an attack on the judiciary's ability to enforce contempt
- Prevented DOJ from punishing sanctuary cities
- Thwarted Mike Lee's bid to sell off public lands
- Combated several attacks on renewable energy and defeated an effort to exempt offshore oil drilling from the NEPA process
- Preserved civil service protections for Federal employees
- Defeated an effort to attack unions
- Killed a plan to get rid of USPS' electric vehicles
- Protected some ObamaCare provisions
- Exempted existing student loan borrowers from an effort to restrict access
- Defeated a bunch of attacks on Medicaid
- Protected Medicaid funding for gender-affirming care
- Eliminated vouchers for religious schools
- Killed a tax exemption written just for Hillsdale College

▪ Defeated an effort to decriminalize gun silencers

It's not yet clear what will happen with the Big Ugly. Some House members are calling on Thune to fire the Parliamentarian, or to ignore her. There is a workaround that would blow up the filibuster.

For now, at least, Thune keeps insisting he won't ignore MacDonough's rulings (though as Politico notes, that could change if Trump demands it).

At the very least, the success in getting things excluded under the Byrd Rule has made a shitty bill less shitty. It has also created a delay, and any delay creates the outside possibility that the press will start to cover this bill as it should be, an effort to steal from the poor to pay off Trump's debt to Elon Musk, and with the coverage spook enough Republicans to kill the bill in current form. As Cogan notes, these eliminated cuts also create a bigger financial hole in the bill, one of a few issues that risks killing it altogether.

Yes, the press is covering the drama created because Republicans may not have the votes. Yes, it's likely Republicans will cave, again, once Trump directly threatens them.

But until that happens, Trump is not the story here.

If you want to tell a story about Trump, make it about the lies he and other right wingers are telling to try to reverse the overwhelming opposition to this bill. Absent that, treat Article I as if they still exist.

Update: Both David Dayen and I were once too optimistic that the Big Ugly wouldn't get done in the House. But he lays out here, with Whitney Curry Wimbish, why these Byrd Rule rulings could doom the bill.

REPUBLICANS HAVE A BUNCH OF OPTIONS for dealing with this, but all of them have

either been ruled out, would make the bill seemingly unpassable, or would need more time than they want to take.

First, Republicans can “cure” the Byrd rule problems by coming up with other language and negotiating with the parliamentarian to insert them back into the bill. The Senate Banking Committee already did this with new language on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Previously the committee completely zeroed out funding for the CFPB by setting an existing “cap” on how much the Federal Reserve can transfer to the agency at 0 percent of total Fed funds. That was thrown out by the parliamentarian. Now, in the new text, the committee has changed that to 6.5 percent.

Senators are reportedly trying to go back with new provider tax language as well.

Republicans would also likely try to squeeze more blood from cuts that have already been allowed to stay, Sanders said. “The big thing hanging over them is specifically the instruction to cut Medicaid,” she said. “Exactly where this could come out of, I feel like they’d probably try to get deeper savings from existing Medicaid savings that are allowed to stay in, which might end up making them more harmful.”

The problem here is that all new text would have to go back to the parliamentarian for more haggling. The parliamentarian did approve a change that would add state cost-sharing (along a slower timeline) to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, but as a Hill source explained, the process for the full bill could take weeks, and with each passing day, the bill gets less popular. That is why the

White House wants the bill done by July 4. That would be next to impossible under a constant rewrite scenario.

[snip]

The Senate appears eager to just stick a bill in the House's lap and dare them to vote it down. But that assumes they can get a bill over to the House at all. The buildup of parliamentary rulings really does threaten the outcome.

One huge problem for Republicans is the debt limit, where something needs to be done to raise the nation's borrowing cap by as early as August. There is a \$5 trillion debt limit increase in the Senate version of the bill. If the impasse on the bill continues, Congress may have to split that out and pass a standalone version, which would almost certainly need Democratic support, where Democrats could dictate terms.

Under the timeline needed to pass the megabill by July 4, votes would need to begin today. There's almost no chance of that happening. A press officer for Thune did not respond to an email request for information to say whether the Senate is operating under a new timeline.

You don't want to say that a bill cutting taxes and spending simply cannot pass a Republican Congress. It doesn't make much sense to say that. But that threat has grown much more real by the day.