News
U.S. Capitol

Visitors to the U.S. Capitol rest in the shade on Capitol Hill in Washington June 25, 2025. (OSV News/Reuters/Nathan Howard)

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Senate Republicans on July 1 passed their version of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which would enact key provisions of President Donald Trump's legislative agenda on taxes and immigration, without any Democratic support and losing three members of their ranks.

The House must now approve the Senate's changes to the bill before it goes to the president's desk for his signature. Trump has sought to do so by Independence Day, July 4.

Catholic leaders have alternately praised and criticized various provisions in the legislation.

A June 26 letter to senators from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops praised the provision that would strip funds from Planned Parenthood — now limited to just one

year — while opposing others that they said would raise taxes "on the working poor while simultaneously giving large tax cuts to the wealthiest." The letter added, "Because of this, millions of poor families will not be able to afford life-saving healthcare and will struggle to buy food for their children. Some rural hospitals will likely close." The bishops called these provisions "unconscionable and unacceptable."

The same day, 20 U.S. Catholic bishops signed onto an interfaith effort urging the Senate to reject the bill, citing cuts to nutrition assistance and Medicaid, and its impact on immigrants among other concerns, calling it "draconian" and a "moral failure."

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The Senate worked through the previous weekend as Republican leadership sought to meet Trump's deadline and secure enough support from their members, while Democrats used a Senate procedure to require the bill to be read in its entirety out loud by the clerk in the chamber, a process that took nearly 16 hours.

Three Republican senators — Thom Tillis of North Carolina, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Susan Collins of Maine — broke with their party to reject the bill. That meant Vice President JD Vance had to break the tie, resulting in a 51-50 vote. Its passage came after Republicans secured the vote of Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, a late holdout.

Mercy Sr. Mary Haddad, president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association of the United States, said in a statement that the legislation was a moral failure, citing its cuts to safety-net programs like Medicaid and SNAP.

"As a nation, we have a moral responsibility to care for those in need — especially our children, the elderly, and people living in poverty," Haddad said. "It is shameful that Congress has once again prioritized the interests of the wealthy over the needs of millions of vulnerable Americans."

"Let's be clear: no amount of tinkering changes the underlying, fundamental flaws of H.R. 1 and its devastating impact," Haddad said. "This bill inflicts deep harm on essential community health and social safety-net programs, threatening the survival of rural hospitals and long-term care facilities. It places additional financial strain on already overburdened health care providers and state budgets. By protecting the

most vulnerable among us, we build a healthier, more just society for all. This bill does the opposite."

Vance, a Catholic, supported the bill on X prior to its passage.

"The thing that will bankrupt this country more than any other policy is flooding the country with illegal immigration and then giving those migrants generous benefits," Vance said. "The OBBB fixes this problem. And therefore it must pass,

"Everything else — the CBO score, the proper baseline, the minutiae of the Medicaid policy —is immaterial compared to the ICE money and immigration enforcement provisions," he said.

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Tillis, one of the Republicans who voted against proceeding to debate on the bill, said in comments on the Senate floor that he opposed the legislation because it "will betray the very promise" the president made when he pledged not to cut Medicaid benefits.

The bill "would result in tens of billions of dollars in lost funding for North Carolina, including our hospitals and rural communities," he said in a statement. "This will force the state to make painful decisions like eliminating Medicaid coverage for hundreds of thousands in the expansion population, and even reducing critical services for those in the traditional Medicaid population."

Trump suggested on social media that he would seek a primary challenge to Tillis over his vote, but Tillis announced his intention to retire from the upper chamber. He reportedly told Trump of his decision before the primary threat. The North Carolina Senate race next year will be a key battleground state as Republicans seek to maintain their majority.

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Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York, told reporters after the vote, "This vote will haunt our Republican colleagues for years to come."

Collins said in a July 1 statement shared on X that while she supports some provisions in the bill like "extending the tax relief for families and small businesses." But she said her vote against the bill "stems primarily from the harmful impact it will have on Medicaid, affecting low-income families and rural health care providers like our hospitals and nursing homes."

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated the day before the bill's Senate passage that the bill would increase the deficit by nearly $3.3 trillion from 2025 to 2034.