

TODAY'S TRENDS ON CAPITOL HILL

FEBRUARY 13, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

FEDERAL GOVERNANCE STRAINS UNDER IMMIGRATION STANDOFFS, IMPENDING SHUTDOWNS, AND GLOBAL SECURITY SHIFTS

FEBRUARY 13, 2026: A DAY OF HIGH-STAKES LEGISLATIVE IMPASSE, HISTORIC DEREGULATION, AND GEOPOLITICAL REALIGNMENT

SECTION 1: DHS FUNDING & IMPENDING SHUTDOWN

FAILED SENATE CR VOTE (52-47)  DHS PARTIAL SHUTDOWN IMMINENT (TSA, FEMA, COAST GUARD PAY LAPSSES)

DEMOCRATIC DEMANDS: "SYSTEMIC REFORM" OF ICE BAN ON MASKS & WARRANTLESS HOME ENTRIES SEN. SCHUMER/REP. JEFFRIES: "EVERY SINGLE CHANGE NEEDS TO BE IRONCLAD AND PART OF THE LAW"

REPUBLICAN STANCE: "OBSTRUCTION TO PUBLIC SAFETY" SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM: "PRIORITIZING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT CRIMINALS"

SHUTDOWN: UNPAID, UNPAID, UNPAID

SECTION 2: MINNESOTA IMMIGRATION SURGE & CONFLICT

FEDERAL ACTIONS: CZAR TOM HOMAN CLAIMS 4,000 ARRESTS & 3,364 CHILDREN LOCATED FEDERAL OFFICIALS ADMIT NOT SHARING EVIDENCE  OPERATION METRO SURGE WIND-DOWN STATE RESISTANCE: GOV. WALZ & AG ELLISON ASSERT SOVEREIGNTY AGAINST "UNCONSTITUTIONAL OCCUPATION". "PROTECTION CRISIS", \$203M ECONOMIC DAMAGE, DEATHS OF RENEE GOOD & ALEX PRETTI

FEDERALISM vs. FEDERAL SUPREMACY: JURISDICTIONAL CLASH

SECTION 3: HISTORIC DEREGULATION & ECONOMIC REALIGNMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL DEREGULATION: REPEAL OF EPA'S 2009 ENDANGERMENT FINDING. ENDS FEDERAL CLIMATE REGULATION OF VEHICLE EMISSIONS. PRESIDENT TRUMP/ADMIN. LEE ZELDIN: "HOLY GRAIL OF OVERREACH"

"TRUMP ACCOUNTS" & OWNERSHIP ECONOMY: \$1,000 SEED INVESTMENT FOR NEWBORNS (2025-2028) TREASURY SEC. BESSERT: "TRUMP CARD" AGAINST SOCIALISM, STAKE IN S&P 500

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC REALIGNMENT: TOWARD AN INSULAR, OWNERSHIP-FOCUSED MODEL

MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE & GLOBAL SHIFTS

NEW GEOPOLITICAL ERA: END OF POST-WWII RULES-BASED ORDER 

EUROPEAN LEADERS: CHANCELLOR MERZ & PRESIDENT MACRON: "BIG POWER POLITICS" REPLACING OLD ORDER UKRAINE'S PLEA: PRESIDENT ZELENSKY WARNS AGAINST CONCESSIONS, SEEKS "IRONCLAD SECURITY GUARANTEES" FROM U.S.

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC REALIGNMENT: TARIFFS AS FOREIGN POLICY TOOL (CANADA/FENTANYL EMERGENCY)

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS, THEMES, AND LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

TREND: COLLAPSE OF INSTITUTIONAL TRUST & "LAWFARE", WEAPONIZATION OF LEGAL SYSTEM, PARTISAN RANCOR AT OVERTSIGHT HEARINGS, FBI'S "ARCTIC FROST" INVESTIGATION OF SENATORS 

LEGISLATIVE DEADLOCK & OUTLOOK: DHS SHUTDOWN LIKELY PROTRACTED, JUDICIAL BACKLASH TO EPA ROLBACKS EXPECTED, ROTOR ACT MOMENTUM, BUT FCC OWNERSHIP CAP FIGHT 

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP: BILLS DISCUSSED - ROTOR ACT, SAVE AMERICA ACT (SAFE ACT), 'ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL', CHLOE COLE ACT, NONDISCLOSURE FAIRNESS ACT, ROAD TO HOUSING ACT 

REPORT SYNTHESIS: EXPLORING THE INTERCONNECTED CHALLENGES SHAPING U.S. DOMESTIC POLICY, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND FUTURE LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE IN EARLY 2026.

TODAYS TRENDS ON CAPITOL HILL

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DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 13, 2026, was defined by a high-stakes legislative impasse as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) moved toward a partial midnight shutdown following the Senate's failure to advance a funding extension. The central conflict pits Democratic demands for systemic reform of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—specifically regarding the use of masks, warrantless home entries, and racial profiling—against a Republican administration that views these demands as an obstruction to public safety and law enforcement. Amidst this tension, the administration announced the wind-down of the controversial "Operation Metro Surge" in Minnesota, even as state and federal officials traded accusations over the deaths of U.S. citizens Renee Good and Alex Pretti during enforcement actions. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

Beyond the funding crisis, the administration executed the largest deregulatory action in American history by repealing the EPA's 2009 Endangerment Finding, effectively ending fed-

eral climate regulation of greenhouse gases from vehicles. Concurrently, the Treasury Department officially launched "Trump Accounts," a program seeding newborn investment accounts with \$1,000, aimed at creating a "shareholder society." On the international stage, leaders at the Munich Security Conference, including German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron, declared the end of the post-WWII rules-based order, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pleaded for security guarantees from the U.S. to ensure a just end to the war with Russia. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

DHS Funding and Impending Partial Shutdown

The Senate failed to advance a two-week continuing resolution (CR) for DHS in a 52-47 vote, falling short of the 60 votes required. ([Source](#)) Democratic leadership, led by Senator Chuck Schumer and Representative Hakeem Jeffries, refused to support the status quo, citing "rogue" ICE behavior and demanding 10 specific reforms, including prohibitions on masks and mandatory judicial warrants for home entries. ([Source](#), [Source](#)) Republicans argued that Democrats were "prioritizing illegal immigrant criminals" over the safety of TSA, FEMA, and Coast Guard personnel who will face pay lapses. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Minnesota Immigration Conflict and Surge Drawdown

Border Czar Tom Homan announced the conclusion of the ICE surge in Minnesota, claiming 4,000 arrests and the location of 3,364 missing unaccompanied children. ([Source](#), [Source](#)) Governor Tim Walz expressed "cau-

tious optimism" but demanded accountability for the deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, citing a "protection crisis" that has cost Minneapolis over \$203 million in economic damage. ([Source](#), [Source](#)) Federal officials admitted in testimony that they have not shared crime scene evidence with local Minnesota investigators, fueling "cover-up" allegations. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Historic Environmental Deregulation

President Trump and EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin announced the repeal of the 2009 Endangerment Finding, which Zeldin termed the "holy grail of federal regulatory overreach." ([Source](#)) This move eliminates federal authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act, a shift projected to save consumers \$1.3 trillion but one that will trigger immediate, protracted litigation. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Munich Security Conference and the New Geopolitical Era

German Chancellor Merz and President Macron stated that the international rules-based order no longer exists, being replaced by "big power politics." ([Source](#), [Source](#)) President Zelenskyy argued that only the U.S. has the power to stop Putin but warned against forcing Ukraine into territorial concessions without ironclad security guarantees. ([Source](#)) Senator Lindsey Graham predicted regime collapse in Iran, Cuba, and Venezuela by the end of 2026 through sustained U.S. pressure. ([Source](#))

Trump Accounts and the Ownership Economy

The administration launched "Trump Accounts," a program seeding \$1,000 into in-

vestment accounts for children born between 2025 and 2028. ([Source](#), [Source](#)) Major corporations, including JPMorgan, IBM, and Intel, announced matching contribution programs. ([Source](#)) Treasury Secretary Bessent described the program as the "Trump card" against socialism, designed to ensure every American has a stake in the S&P 500. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Collapse of Institutional Trust and "Lawfare": A pervasive theme throughout the day's hearings and press events was the weaponization of the legal system. Attorney General Pam Bondi's testimony was a focal point of intense partisan rancor, with Democrats accusing her of covering up the "Epstein Files" to protect the President while Republicans celebrated her role in ending "lawfare" against conservative figures. ([Source](#), [Source](#)) The revelation that the FBI secretly obtained phone records of several Republican Senators (the "Arctic Frost" investigation) further emphasized a breakdown in the traditional separation of powers and a shift toward using law enforcement as a tool for political retribution. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Federalism vs. Federal Supremacy: The clash in Minnesota illustrates a deteriorating relationship between the federal government and "sanctuary" jurisdictions. While the administration claims it is fulfilling a mandate to enforce federal law, state leaders like Governor Walz and Attorney General Ellison are asserting state sovereignty to protect their residents from what they describe as "unconstitutional occupation." ([Source](#), [Source](#)) This sub-national resistance is expanding to include legal challenges against federal environmental

rollbacks and the withholding of federal grants. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Strategic Economic Realignment: The administration's simultaneous push for aggressive tARIFFS, the "Trump Accounts" program, and massive deregulation signals a shift toward a more insular, ownership-focused economic model. The use of tARIFFS as a primary tool for foreign policy (as seen in the Canada/Fentanyl emergency) and the attempt to bypass traditional social safety nets via private investment accounts for newborns represent a fundamental reimagining of the U.S. economic contract. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

Legislative Deadlock on DHS: Given Representative Jeffries' and Senator Schumer's insistence that "every single change needs to be ironclad and part of the law," a quick resolution to the DHS shutdown is unlikely. ([Source](#)) Expect a protracted funding lapse for non-ICE/CBP agencies (TSA, FEMA, Coast Guard) while both parties leverage the political optics of unpaid workers and "secret police" ahead of the 2026 midterms.

Judicial Backlash to EPA Rollbacks: The repeal of the Endangerment Finding will likely be tied up in the courts for years. If the Supreme Court upholds the move under the "Major Questions Doctrine" established in cases like *West Virginia v. EPA*, it will permanently cripple the executive branch's ability to address climate change without new, explicit authority from a gridlocked Congress. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Aviation and Media Policy Consolidation: The ROTOR Act appears to have enough momentum to reach the President's desk if the

House moves quickly, driven by the harrowing NTSB evidence from the DCA crash. ([Source](#)) Conversely, the push to lift FCC ownership caps (the 39% cap) faces a split within the industry and significant Democratic opposition, making it a likely target for a party-line fight or an administrative attempt to bypass Congress. ([Source](#))

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity was focused on aviation safety, election integrity, and the ongoing DHS funding battle. Key bills discussed involve significant shifts in federal authority and consumer protections.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

ROTOR Act: Mandates ADSB-In and ADSB-Out technology for aircraft in congested airspace to prevent midair collisions. Passed the Senate unanimously; currently awaiting House action. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

SAVE America Act (SAFE Act): Federal legislation requiring photo ID for federal elections, proof of citizenship for voter registration, and the removal of noncitizens from voter rolls. ([Source](#))

One Big Beautiful Bill (Working Families Tax Cut): The omnibus tax and spending bill passed in 2025 that included the authorization for Trump Accounts, Medicaid cuts, and historic DHS funding. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Chloe Cole Act: Proposed legislation to create a private right of action for individuals harmed by "gender-affirming care" as minors, including a lengthy statute of limitations. ([Source](#))

Nondisclosure Fairness Act: A bipartisan bill (Lee/Coons) to require meaningful judicial review and written findings for government-issued nondisclosure orders (NDOs). ([Source](#))

Road to Housing Act: A bipartisan proposal (Warren/Scott) aimed at increasing housing supply by easing NEPA/EPA regulations and creating an "Innovation Fund" for local infrastructure. ([Source](#))

Pilot and Aircraft Privacy Act: Proposed to prevent airports from using flight data to assess landing fees on aircraft operators. ([Source](#))

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

Attorney General Pam Bondi Oversight Hearing: A contentious four-hour session covering the Epstein files, J6 prosecutions, and the administration's "anti-fraud" and immigration priorities. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Minnesota Law Enforcement Hearing: Examined the breakdown of cooperation between ICE and local officials following the Minnesota surge and fatal shootings. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

NTSB Chair Testimony on Aviation Safety: Chair Jennifer Homendy presented horrifying flight simulations to push for the ROTOR Act. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Trump Accounts Launch Summit: A multi-panel event featuring the Treasury Secretary and business leaders to announce the start of newborn investment accounts. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

EPA Deregulation Announcement: President Trump and Lee Zeldin announced the termination of the 2009 Endangerment Finding. ([Source](#))

Munich Security Conference: High-level discussions on NATO, the war in Ukraine, and the future of the transatlantic alliance. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

House Appropriations DHS Subcommittee Hearing: Federal officials from TSA, FEMA, Coast Guard, and Secret Service detailed the operational impacts of a funding lapse. ([Source](#))

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Trends On Capitol Hill is a public interest experiment in applying deep trend analysis to the daily business of the United States Congress to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists, scholars and Congressional staff better understand the overarching legislative trends, themes and patterns of Congress.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's Congressional activity to tease out its overarching themes and trends into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original source material, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the legislative themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

This inaugural report is based on deep analysis of CSPAN, CSPAN2 and CSPAN3 coverage in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive. It is currently limited to the Congressional business covered on those three CSPAN channels and thus may not include all major Congressional business, may include activity from previous days that aired on a later date, and/or may include other major federal, state and local governmental busi-

ness. We will continue to refine this report to incorporate a growing array of Congressional information sources. This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.