

TODAYS TRENDS ON CAPITOL HILL

MARCH 11, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

GEOPOLITICAL BRINKMANSHIP & LEGISLATIVE GRIDLOCK: ANALYSIS OF THE IRAN CONFLICT, DHS FUNDING CRISIS, AND AI SOVEREIGNTY

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

OPERATION EPIC FURY (IRAN)

MILITARY DOMINANCE:
Iranian Navy Neutralized, 5,500+ Targets Struck, 90% Missile Degradation. Yet, Diplomatic Incoherence & Scrutiny over Minab School Bombing.

DOMESTIC AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

\$110/barrel
+\$17%

ECONOMIC FALLOUT:
Oil Prices Surge. CBO Warns of Trillions of Debt from Conflict & "Big Beautiful Bill".

LEGISLATIVE PARALYSIS & CONSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT

DHS SHUTDOWN: ACCOUNTABILITY STANDOFF

DAY 26

MASK POLICY **JUDICIAL WARRANTS**

REFORM DEMANDS

TSA, FEMA, Coast Guard Unfunded. Democrats Withhold Funds for ICE Reforms; Republicans Demand "Mass Deportation" Mandate.

SAVE AMERICA ACT: LEGISLATIVE HOSTAGE-TAKING

TRUMP ULTIMATUM

Includes Anti-Trans Provisions. Stalled in Senate due to Filibuster Realities.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT: BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP

SCOTUS LANDMARK RULING

Debate on "Subject to the Jurisdiction Thereof." Proponents: For Freed Slaves. Critics: Creates "Permanent Underclass".

AI SOVEREIGNTY & INFRASTRUCTURE: THE NEW "PHYSICAL BACKBONE"

BLACKROCK SUMMIT & TECH LEADERS

\$10 TRILLION INVESTMENT DEMAND

Power Availability is Principal Constraint. Meta Announces \$600B Compute Investment. Countering Chinese Dominance.

AI COMPUTE & POWER = 21ST CENTURY NATIONAL SECURITY.

FUTURE WORKFORCE & SECURITY

Shortage of Electricians/Welders for Data Centers. New Cyber Strategy: "Shaping Adversary Behavior" & Hardening Infrastructure.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & FUTURE OUTLOOK

SHORT TERM (1-4 WEEKS)

April 1st SCOTUS Arguments. Heightened Civil Unrest. Investigation into School Bombing Forces Shift.

MEDIUM TERM (1-6 MONTHS)

2026 Midterm Primaries (GOP Divide). Potential Executive Order Governance if Gridlock Persists.

LONG TERM (1-5 YEARS)

AI-Driven "Golden Age of Construction." Remade Middle East Alliances. Potential "Fortress Americas" Energy Bloc with Nuclear Focus.

DEEP DIVE TRENDS

WEAPONIZATION OF TRANSPARENCY:
"Lawfare" via Document Release

SHIFT TO "HEBRAIC CONSERVATISM":
Reframing Israel Alignment as Civilizational

COMPUTE AS NEW STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE:
Infrastructure is "Electrons-to-Intelligence"

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DHS FUNDING CRISIS, AND AI
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DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The eleventh day of Operation Epic Fury finds the United States and Israel in a state of dominant but unsettled military success against the Iranian regime, characterized by the systematic annihilation of the Iranian Navy and a 90% degradation of its ballistic missile capabilities. However, this foreign policy aggression has catalyzed a severe domestic "affordability crisis," as oil prices surge toward \$110 per barrel and gas prices jump 17% since the war's onset. The administration is currently attempting to manage the narrative of a "limited excursion" while simultaneously threatening "death, fire, and fury" if the Strait of Hormuz remains obstructed, even as the CBO projects that the recent "Big Beautiful Bill" and the ongoing conflict will add trillions to the national debt over the coming decade.

Legislatively, the Senate remains paralyzed by a 26-day shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Democrats are withholding funding until the administration

agrees to ten specific reforms for ICE and CBP—including body cameras, the removal of masks, and judicial warrants—while Republicans have dismissed these as "toxic empathy" that undermines the "Save America Act" mandate. This deadlock is compounded by a high-stakes constitutional debate over birthright citizenship as the Supreme Court nears a landmark ruling. Concurrently, elite power brokers and labor leaders at the BlackRock Infrastructure Summit are framing AI compute and power grid resilience as the defining national security challenge of the 21st century, demanding \$10 trillion in investment to counter Chinese technological dominance.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Operation Epic Fury: Military Dominance vs. Diplomatic Incoherence

- US Central Command reports that over [5,500 targets](#) inside Iran have been struck, effectively rendering the Iranian Navy combat ineffective.
- The administration faces intense scrutiny over the [bombing of a girls' elementary school](#) in Minab, with the UN Security Council hearing reports of 170 children killed; the White House maintains an ongoing investigation.
- The Iranian Supreme Leader has been replaced by his son, a [greater hardliner](#), raising concerns about a prolonged insurgency and the continued mining of the Strait of Hormuz.
- Intelligence suggests [Russia is providing intelligence](#) to Iran regarding US force locations, prompting calls for expanded sanctions.

DHS Shutdown: The Accountability Standoff

- The DHS enters its [26th day of a partial shutdown](#), leaving TSA, FEMA, and the Coast Guard without operational funding as the parties clash over ICE enforcement tactics.
- Democrats have proposed [carving out funding](#) for non-enforcement agencies, which Republicans blocked, insisting on full funding for the "mass deportation" mandate.
- The administration has nominated Senator Mark Wayne Mullin to lead DHS following the removal of Secretary Noem, though Democrats signal the [rot in the agency](#) is deeper than personnel changes.

Save America Act: Legislative Hostage-Taking

- President Trump has issued an ultimatum that he will [not sign any further legislation](#) until Congress passes the Save America Act, which mandates voter ID and proof of citizenship for registration.
- The Act has been expanded to include bans on men in women's sports and [transgender surgeries for children](#), further polarizing the 2026 midterm battlefield.
- Senate Majority Leader John Thune expressed skepticism about the [votes for a talking filibuster](#) to pass the measure, citing mathematical realities in the chamber.

AI and Infrastructure: The Physical Backbone of Sovereignty

- Meta and Google leaders joined BlackRock to argue that [power availability is the principal constraint](#) to AI superiority, with Meta announcing a \$600 billion compute investment.
- A new "Future Business Builders" initiative and a partnership between Open AI and [building trades unions](#) aim to close the massive shortage of electricians and welders needed for data center construction.
- The White House released a [new cybersecurity strategy](#) focused on "shaping adversary behavior" and hardening critical infrastructure through whole-of-government pilots.

Constitutional Conflict: The Fate of Birthright Citizenship

- A Senate Judiciary subcommittee debated the [original meaning](#) of "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" in the 14th Amendment, ahead of the *Trump v. Barbara* Supreme Court case.
- Proponents of the executive order argue that birthright citizenship was intended for freed slaves, not [temporary visitors or illegal aliens](#), while critics argue the change would create a "permanent underclass."

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

AI & Technology Policy

- Open AI CEO Sam Altman predicts that by late 2028, there will be [more cognitive capacity](#) inside data centers than outside them, necessitating a utility-like approach to intelligence.
- The industry is pushing for "Bring Your Own Power" (BYOP) models to prevent data centers from [driving up consumer electricity rates](#).

Economic Security & Fiscal Resilience

- CBO Director Swagel warned that the national debt will hit [124% of GDP](#) soon, with interest costs projected to reach \$2 trillion annually within a decade.
- The 2026 "Big Beautiful Bill" is now estimated to add [4.7 trillion to the deficit](#), while Social Security insolvency has been moved up to 2032.

Energy Security

- The administration is touting "Fortress Western Hemisphere" energy security, leveraging [Venezuelan heavy crude](#) flows to US refineries to offset Middle Eastern volatility.
- Energy Secretary Wright corrected a deleted post, stating the US Navy has [not yet begun escorting ships](#) through the Strait of Hormuz, though it remains an active option.

National Security & Rule of Law

- The Senate Budget Committee held a hearing on the [costs of sanctuary cities](#), with Republicans proposing federal liability for local officials who ignore ICE detainees.
- Senator Whitehouse noted that in his circuit, state officials can be [held civilly liable](#) for detaining individuals without a judicial warrant, highlighting a mounting legal conflict between state and federal law.

Strategic Alignment & Coalition Cohesion

- The National Review/RJC Symposium on Antisemitism revealed a sharp divide on the right, with Senators Cruz and Cotton [denouncing "influencers"](#) who blame Israel for US foreign entanglements.
- Israel's Minister of Economic Affairs reported that despite the war, the [Israeli stock market](#) has risen 35% in two months, with 2025 serving as a record year for US-Israel M&A.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity is currently dominated by the "Save America Act" ultimatum and the ongoing housing supply debate. While bipartisan success was seen in committee for housing and veteran care, floor movement is stalled by the DHS funding impasse and the administration's refusal to sign non-priority bills.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED

- **Save America Act:** Requires voter ID and proof of citizenship for federal elections; now includes [anti-transgender provisions](#). Passed the House; stalled in the Senate.

- **Housing for the 21st Century Act (Road to Housing Act):** Aimed at increasing supply and lowering first-time buyer age. Passed Senate committee 24-0 but faces criticism for [banning "build-to-rent"](#) models for single-family homes.
- **Rotor Act:** Mandates ADSB "In" and "Out" technology for all aircraft in congested airspace. Passed Senate unanimously; [pending in the House](#).
- **Streamline Act:** Proposed legislation to increase [CTR and SAR thresholds](#) to \$30,000 to reduce banking compliance burdens.
- **Railway Safety Act:** Reintroduced with IAFF support to study [toxic chemical exposure](#) for first responders.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS

- **Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution:** Testimony on birthright citizenship focusing on the [originalist interpretation](#) of the 14th Amendment.
- **Senate Budget Committee:** Hearing on "Sanctuary Cities," exploring the fiscal and [public safety impacts](#) of non-cooperation with ICE.
- **UN Security Council Briefing:** High-level session where Resolution 2817 passed (13-0-2), [condemning Iranian attacks](#) on Gulf states.
- **NTSB Investigation Hearing:** Chair Homandy testified on the 2025 DCA mid-air collision, blaming [complacent safety culture](#) and lack of ADSB requirements.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Weaponization of Transparency

A recurring theme is the strategic use of "transparency" as a political weapon. In the UK, the release of the "Mandelson Papers" is being used to [damage the Starmer government](#) over Epstein ties. In the US, the "Epstein Files" are a central point of contention between Congressman Massie and the President, with the White House and GOP leadership clashing over which documents should be public. This "lawfare" through document release has become a primary tool for settling intra-party scores.

The Shift to "Hebraic Conservatism"

There is a concerted effort among GOP elite thinkers to redefine the party's alignment with Israel not just as a strategic necessity, but as a [civilizational cornerstone](#). This "Hebraic Conservatism" narrative serves to isolate isolationist elements (Carlson/Owens) by framing them as anti-Western. The convergence of evangelical faith, Judeo-Christian values, and modern military tech-sharing is being presented as the only [viable "America First" pathway](#).

Compute as the New Strategic Petroleum Reserve

Infrastructure is no longer just roads and bridges; it is "electrons-to-intelligence." The recurring discussion at the BlackRock summit suggests that "energy dominance" is being recalculated to prioritize data center uptime. The administration's pivot to [Venezuelan resources](#) and the push for nuclear fusion/fusion indicate that the federal government is moving toward an "Energy Addition" policy where AI needs will dictate grid architecture for the next 50 years.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

- **Ground Invasion of Iran:** Despite the "short-term excursion" rhetoric, several Senators emerged from briefings ["fearful of boots on the ground"](#) to secure nuclear material. Expect a massive supplemental funding request (estimated at \$50B+) to trigger a new round of War Powers Act challenges.
- **Federal Commandering of Local Police:** If the DHS shutdown continues, Republicans may attempt to attach "anti-sanctuary" language to a must-pass CR, potentially [lifting state immunity](#) for officials who block federal warrants.
- **AI Regulatory Sandboxes:** Senator Rounds' proposed ["AI sandbox" legislation](#) for banks is likely to gain traction as a middle-ground between state-level regulation (California) and federal inaction.
- **Revisiting the 14th Amendment:** If SCOTUS rules in favor of Trump in *Trump v. Barbara*, it could trigger a [presumptive non-citizen status](#) for millions of infants, requiring a massive legislative effort to define "acceptable evidence" of ancestry.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): The focus will shift to the April 1st Supreme Court arguments on birthright citizenship. Expect heightened civil unrest or "No Kings" protests as the DHS shutdown affects spring break travel [TSA wait times](#). The investigation into the Iranian school bombing will either force a tactical shift or lead to a "Mission Accomplished" style declaration to pacify oil markets.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The 2026 midterm primaries (notably [Massie vs. Galarin](#)

in KY) will serve as a bellwether for the "America First" vs. "Traditionalist" GOP divide. If the "Save America Act" is not resolved, the administration may govern primarily through [executive orders](#), further straining the separation of powers.

Long Term (1-5 Years): The US will likely enter a "Golden Age of Construction" driven by the \$10 trillion AI infrastructure need. Alliances in the Middle East will be permanently altered by the [remaking of Iran](#), potentially leading to a "Fortress Americas" energy bloc that includes a rehabilitated Venezuela and a nuclear-dependent US economy.

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 business. 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 GDEL Project at <https://blog.gdelproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.