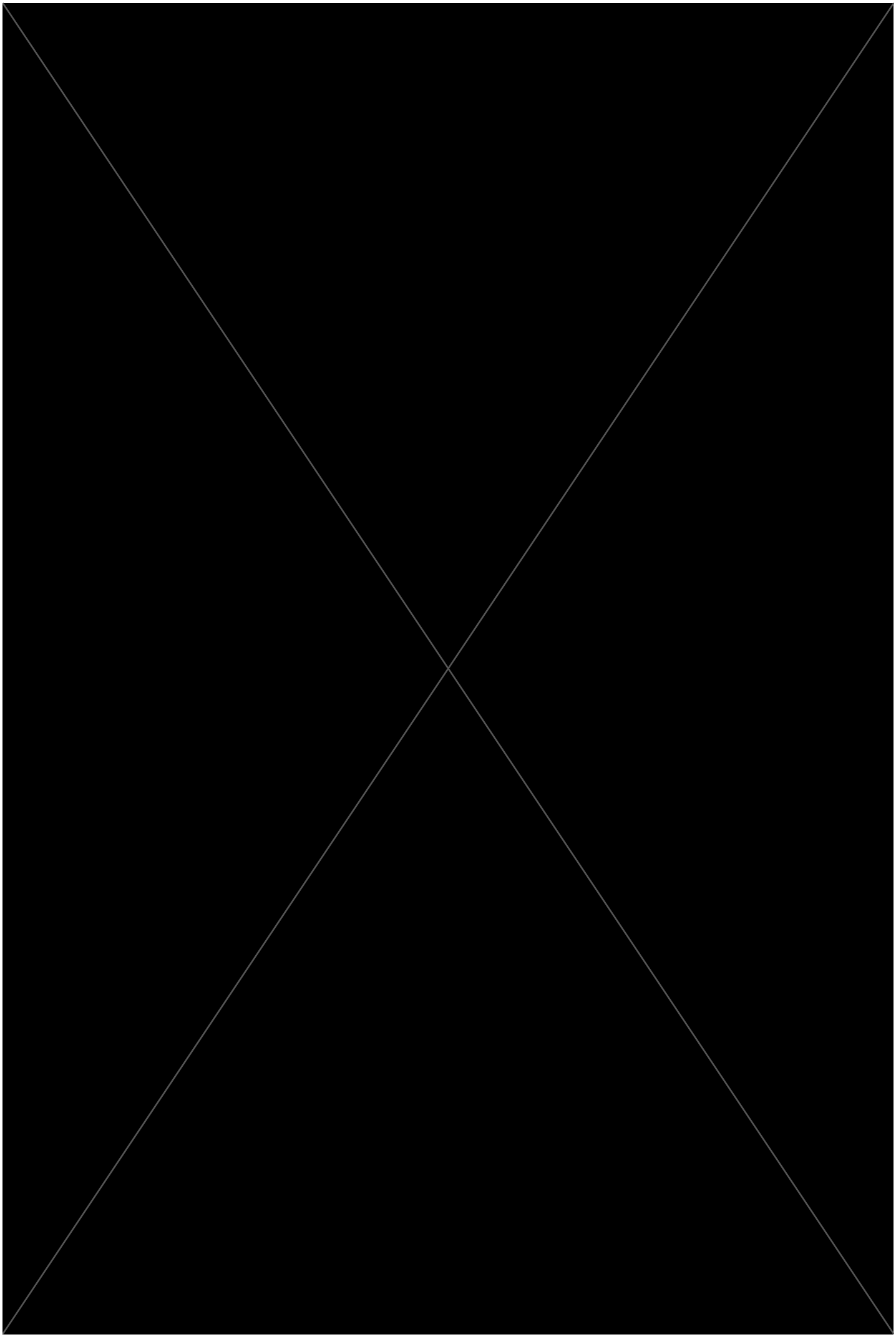
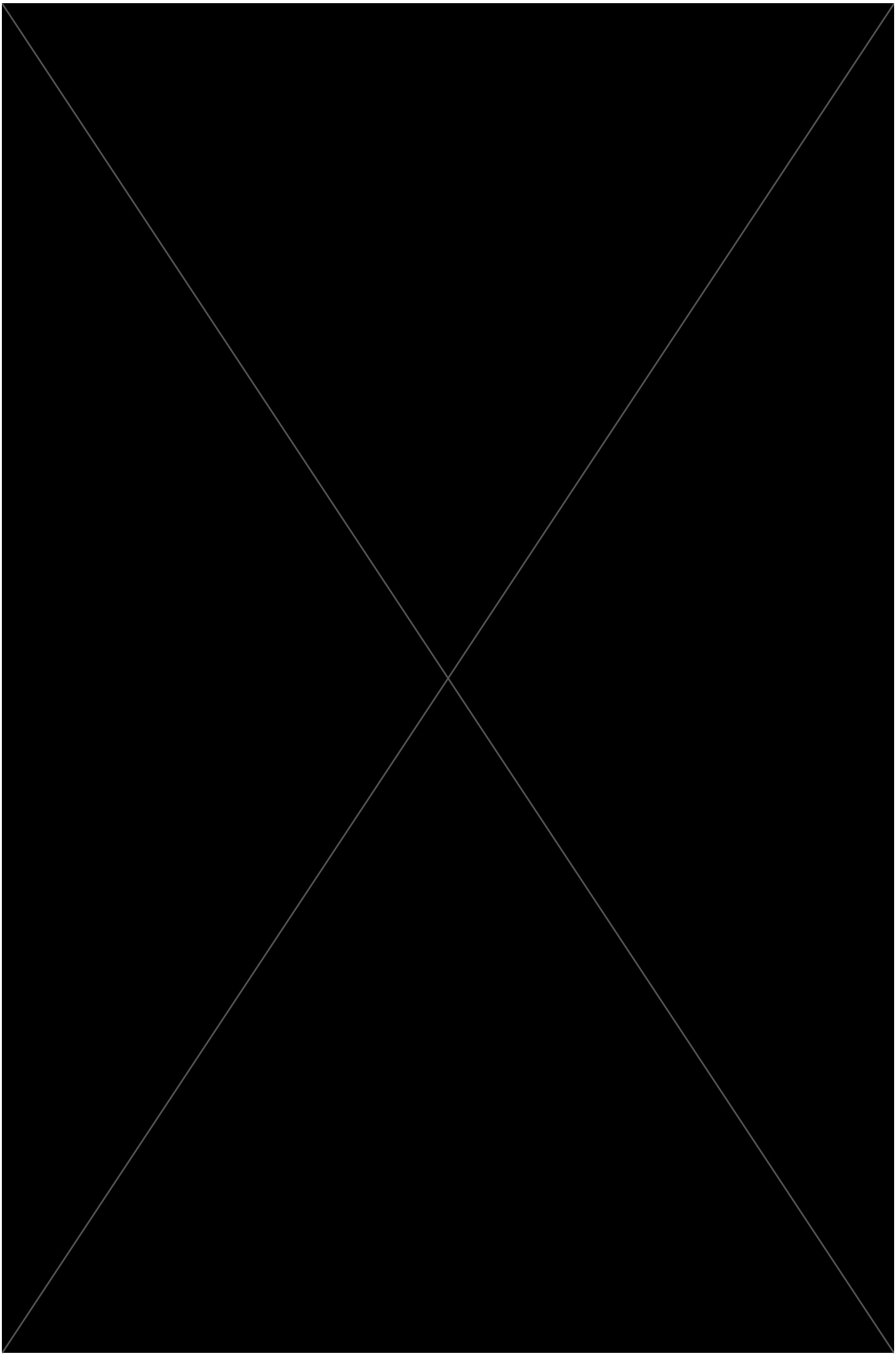
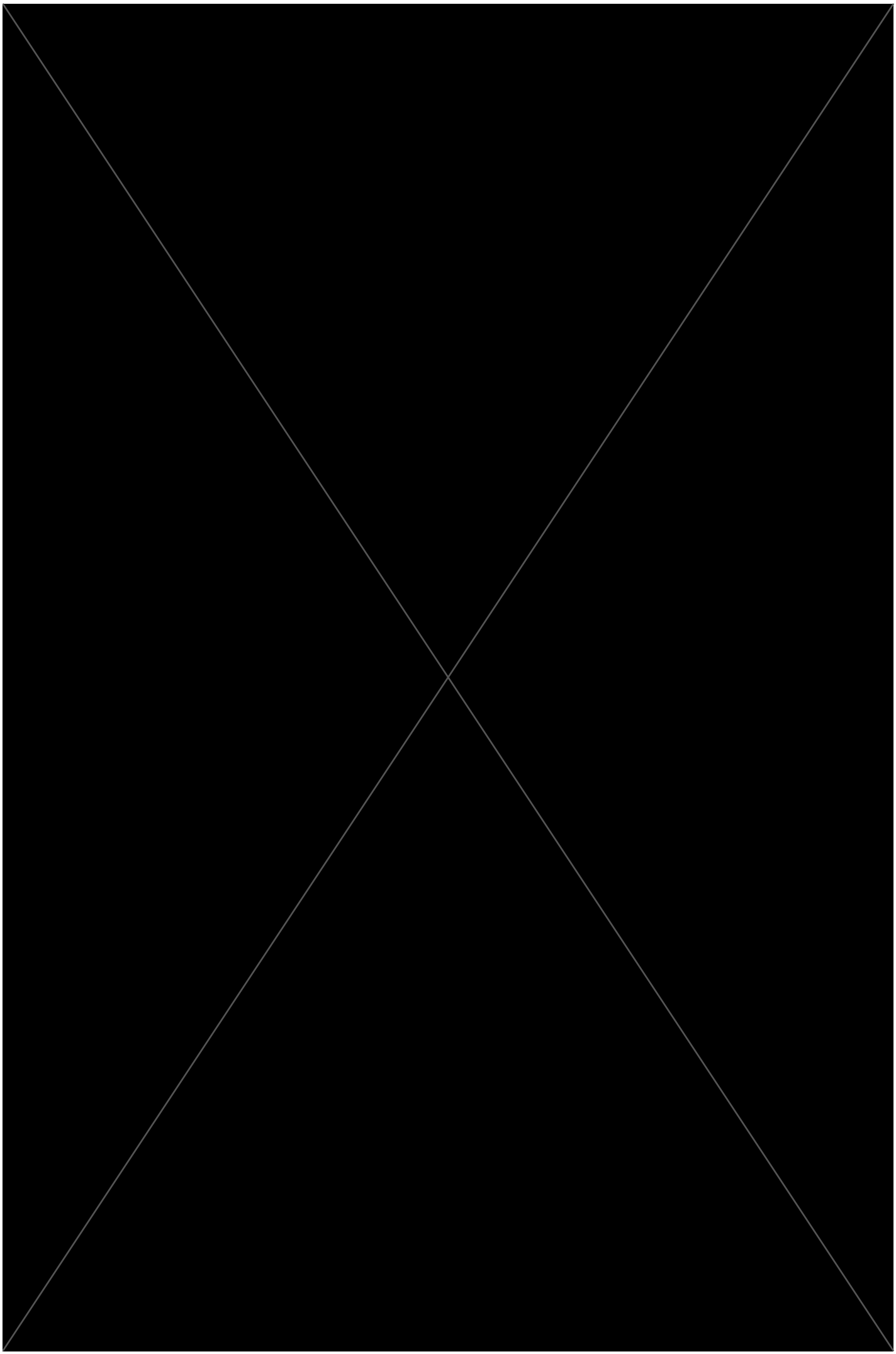


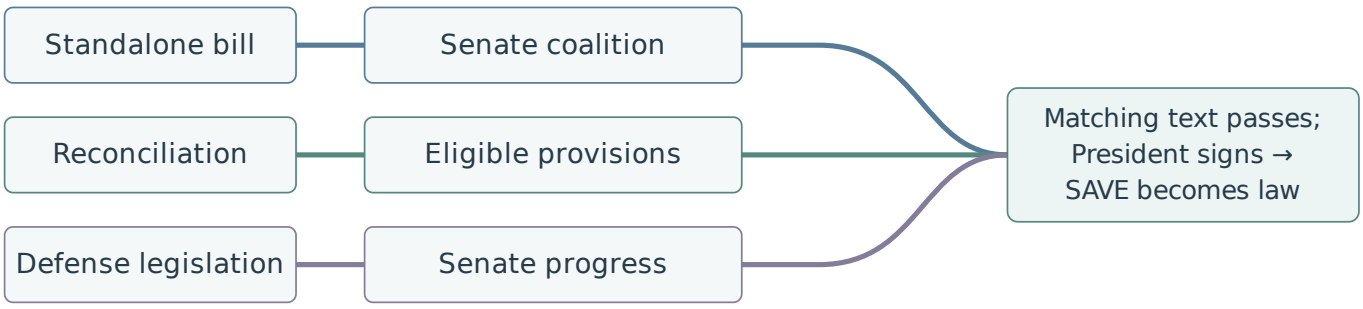




Republicans could seek durable policy through more than one bill.

Losing Congress would not immediately remove Republicans' ability to legislate. Until January 3, the outgoing majority could try to enact provisions that remain in force after the handover. The strongest concrete sign of that intention is the proposed "Last Supper" reconciliation package: Senator Moreno described a vehicle for Republican priorities, and Ron Johnson said staff were working with the House and White House on its contents. [1,28]

SAVE America belongs in this picture because election-law provisions are among the policies being discussed for that remaining window. A White House official reportedly favored reconciliation as its vehicle, while the Senate had not acted on the House budget framework. Thune reportedly opposed dropping the filibuster, leaving a standalone bill facing the need for Democratic votes to reach 60. [3,4,30]



Alternative routes to the same policy outcome. Each depends on final text, procedure and votes; the lines do not represent probabilities.

The incentive to act is stronger than the evidence of a completed path

Commitment Problem in Authoritarian Transitions helps explain why a coalition facing loss of bargaining power would seek durable protections before the transfer. Applied here, it makes a legislative attempt intelligible. It does not establish that the Senate can pass the desired provisions or that they qualify for reconciliation.

Political entrenchment draws attention to the means available. The House passed defense legislation containing SAVE text 216–212, but Senate cloture on a defense vehicle failed 50–46. Those are distinct procedural records. The Senate obstacle limits that route; it does not, by itself, eliminate a different vehicle. Conversely, identifying reconciliation as an alternative is not proof that its procedural requirements can be met. [54,55]

This leaves a narrower conclusion than either "Republicans will enact SAVE" or "the filibuster rules it out." The policy has several possible vehicles, all with unresolved requirements. A defense bill or reconciliation package enacted without SAVE would not accomplish that particular objective.

> **The decisive evidence:** Senate action on the framework, published provisions, procedural rulings and commitments sufficient for passage. Follow the text through the process. A package's name or announced ambition is not a substitute for what becomes law.

An extension could keep government open while shifting the next bargain to Democrats.

The December 11 funding deadline gives the outgoing Congress a decision it cannot indefinitely postpone. Another extension would preserve continuity and leave some terms to the new Congress. That is a plausible outcome: after the 2006 Democratic sweep, successive continuing resolutions carried funding into February 2007. [39,40]

But the same feature that makes an extension convenient also makes it politically costly for Republicans. Deferral would move the eventual settlement into a Congress controlled by Democrats. The outgoing majority therefore has a reason to seek terms now, even if agreement is difficult.

Why the pressures point in different directions

The bargaining mechanism in **Rationalist Explanations for War** is useful here: concessions are harder when they change future bargaining power. An extension can do exactly that. The opposing pressure is continuity. **Lesterland** emphasizes politicians' dependence on funders and organized interests, giving them reasons to avoid disruption to economically important spending. **Cycles of Constitutional Time** adds a reason to defer while avoiding blame for a lapse. These explanations identify competing incentives; they do not determine which will prevail.

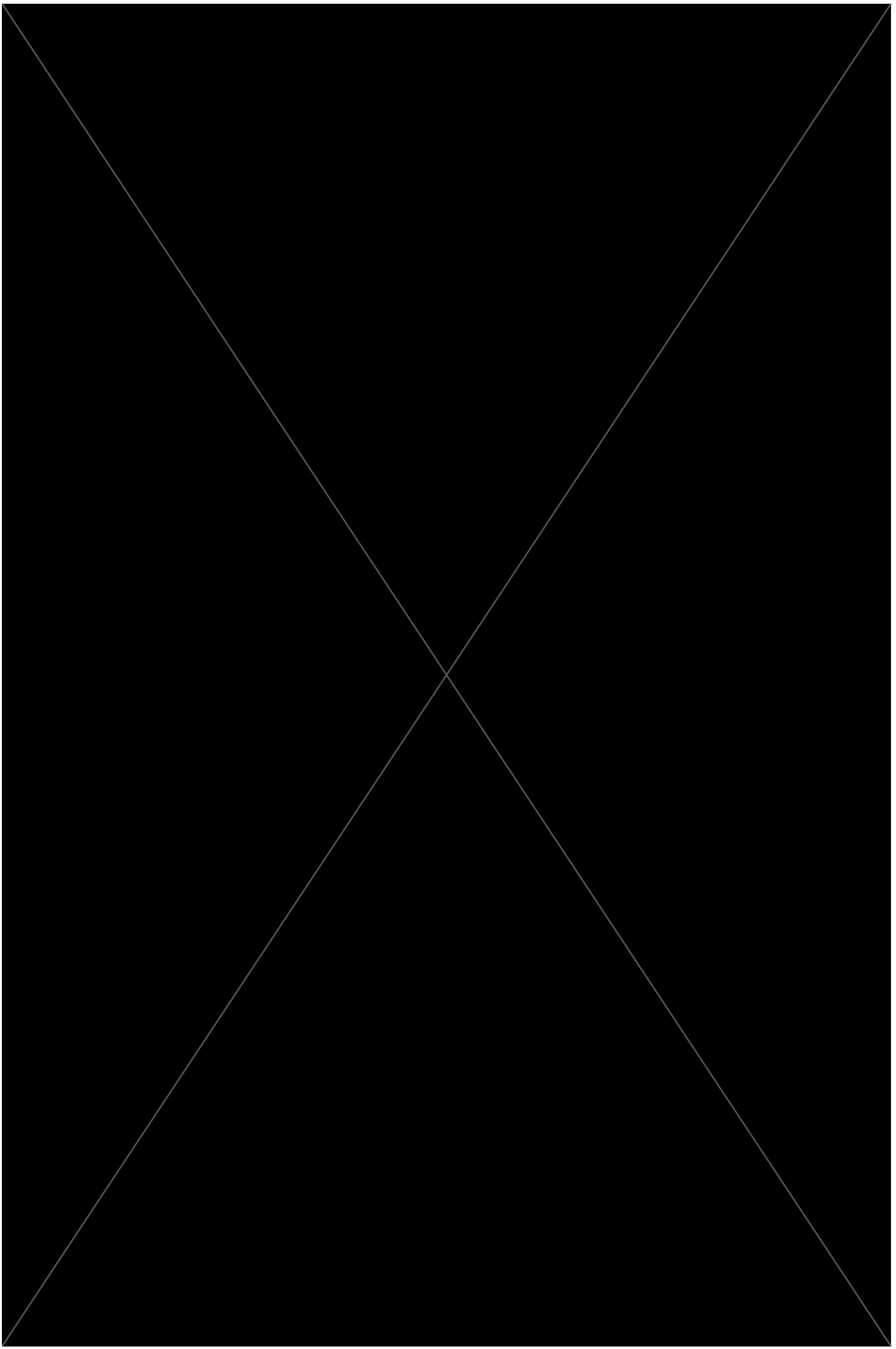
Possible outcome	Sequence needed	Consequence
Temporary extension, no lapse	Both chambers and the President accept temporary funding before the deadline.	Government remains funded; some terms are settled by the incoming Congress.
Full-year settlement, no lapse	Negotiators secure terms, votes and a signature before funding expires.	The annual bargain is settled before the handover.
Funding lapse	No replacement funding is enacted before the deadline.	Some agencies lose funding; a later deal must also end the lapse.

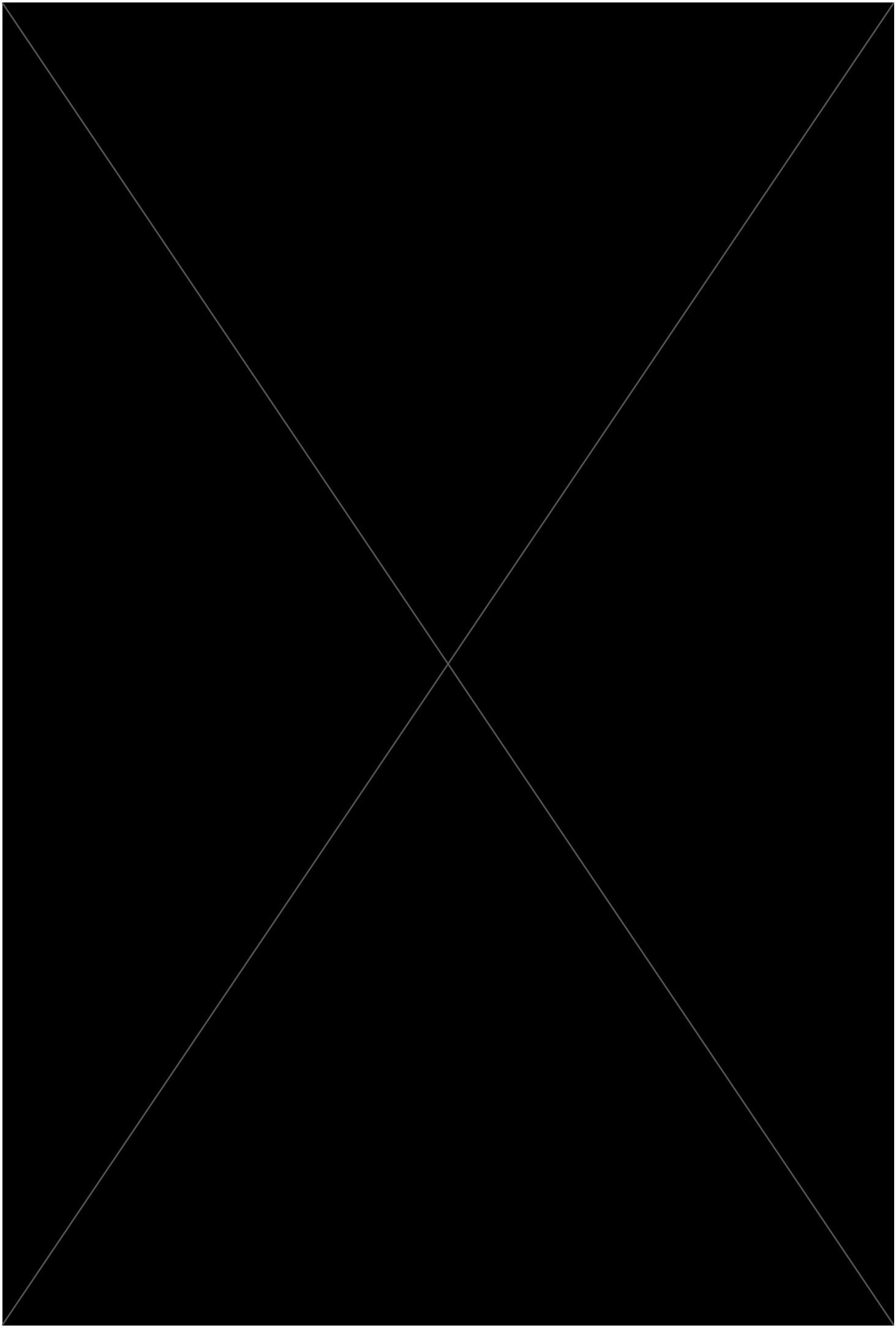
A signing condition could connect SAVE to the funding dispute

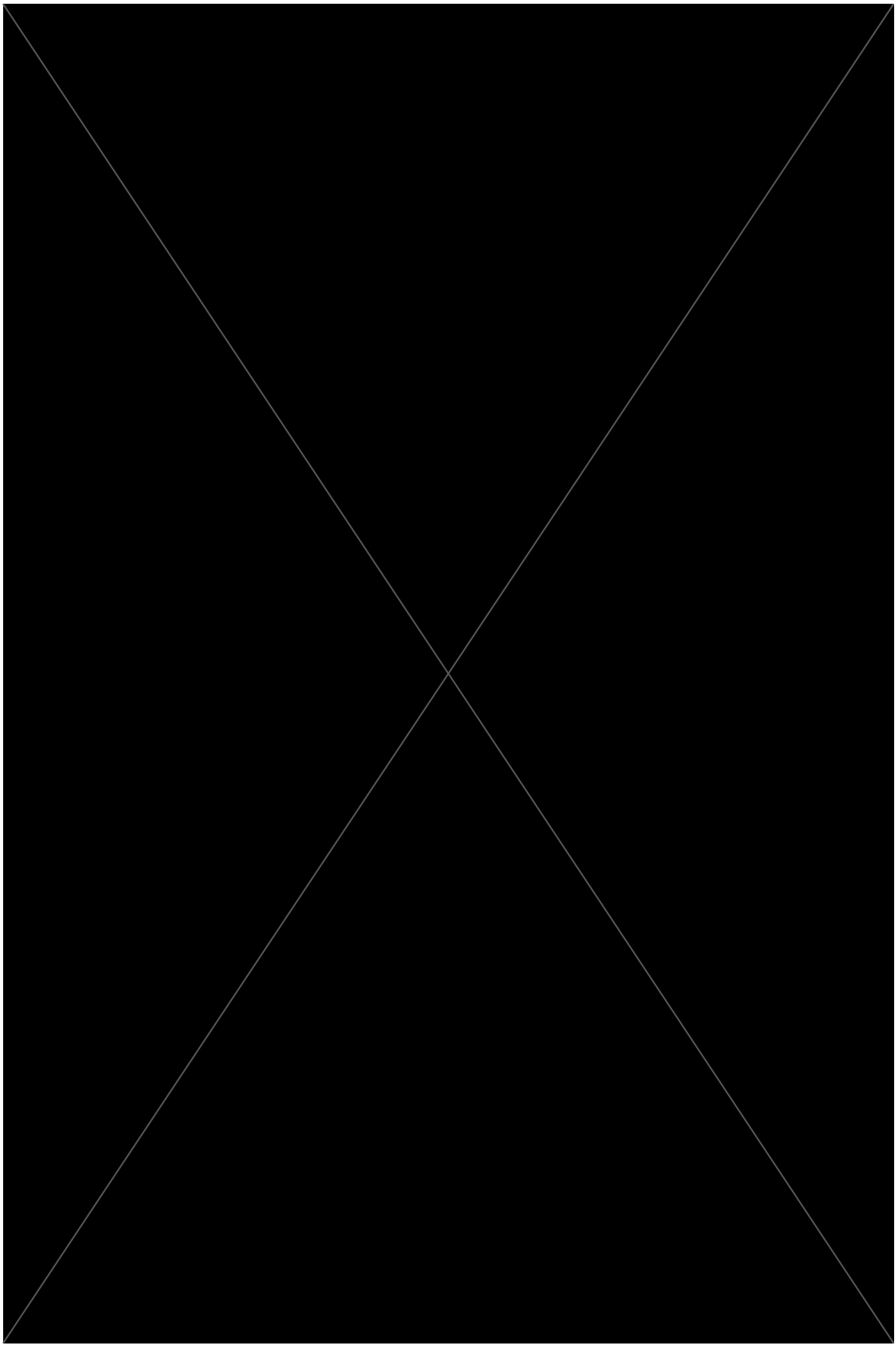
A presidential demand for SAVE as a condition of signing funding would join the two negotiations. **No statement tying that demand to December 11 was found in the available evidence.** It remains a possible development, not an established negotiating position.

The 2018 border-wall dispute illustrates the mechanism: a signing condition contributed to a confrontation followed by a shutdown from December 22 to January 25. **Elite Theory / Elite Fracture** offers a reason a threatened leadership might prefer standoff, but neither the analogy nor the theory shows that the same sequence will recur. [41,42]

> **The practical distinction:** an extension is a plausible central outcome, while a full-year agreement and a lapse remain live alternatives. Watch actual funding terms, the extension's end date, leadership commitments and the President's signing position. A lapse could later end in either kind of agreement.







Scope, sources and uncertainty

This assessment answers a conditional question: what Republicans might do if Democrats win majorities in both chambers in November 2026. Its principal horizon runs through January 3, 2027. It does not estimate the probability of a Democratic sweep, and additional conditions apply to state-level scenarios.

The evidence cutoff is October 31, 2026. This edition reorganizes existing research rather than adding new reporting. Some retrieved material predates that cutoff; dated claims should not be treated as continuously updated status information. Historical records, press accounts and legislative records are attributed in the source notes.

How theoretical arguments are used

Theories supply mechanisms that can explain why actors might respond in a particular way. Their application to this election remains an analytical judgment. An incentive to preserve influence does not establish the votes to pass a bill; a link between beliefs and ordinary participation does not establish a path to violence. The theory passages are paraphrases, not quotations or endorsements by the theories' authors.

The underlying analysis uses multiple theory-agent readings produced by one model with shared inputs. Agreement between readings is not independent confirmation. Its indicator cards are alpha, the theoretical fits were partial, and several important observations were unavailable before the election.

Why no headline probabilities are assigned

Several original estimates have wide ranges or weak reference-class fit. A per-candidate historical contest rate is not directly the probability of at least one contesting Republican in a chamber-deciding race. A broad certification-incident event includes dissent as well as refusal. Shared actors and inputs also prevent treating alternative legislative routes as independent chances that can simply be added. The qualitative judgments in the main text do not constitute newly calibrated forecasts.

Material gaps

Post-election statements, certification decisions and matched survey responses were not yet observable. The Senate Executive Calendar was unavailable. No statement linking a December funding signature to SAVE was found. The evidence does not establish the belief-to-coordination transition, a viable SAVE passage coalition or a specific state restriction text.

Underlying assessment and audit trail

[redacted] contains the full event definitions, theory debate, monitoring calendar and source notes (run 20261031-stor1574-final4). In particular, the SAVE debate withdrew both a positive adjustment based on motive and a negative adjustment based on one blocked vehicle; the evidence did not settle the direction.

The following notes retain the original reference numbers. Internal world-state records are identified as internal rather than presented as publicly accessible sources. The report's routes and monitoring implications are explanatory syntheses, not newly tested causal models.

Evidence and references

Numbers match the original report. Web links lead to the sources it cited; internal world-state records are identified as such. These entries reproduce the run’s source descriptions and have not been independently re-verified for this edition.

1. Sen. Moreno said that if Republicans lose, the Senate would pass a giant reconciliation bill of Republican priorities. — https://www.axios.com/2026/10/15/moreno-midterms-senate-republicans

3. A White House official said reconciliation is the favored vehicle for the SAVE America Act because it needs 50 votes, and is most likely to be finalized in the lame-duck session. — https://www.dailysignal.com/2026/08/31/white-house-official-outlines-presidents-priorities-congress-return/

4. Thune has refused Trump's pressure to change Senate rules and drop the filibuster, citing the need to stop Democratic legislation if Republicans lose power. — https://vinnews.com/2026/10/26/thune-scrambles-to-save-his-senate-majority-as-voters-voice-concern-over-the-iran-war-and-gas-prices/

5. The concession records by code: conceded 290, silent 46, contested_legal 15, contested_extralegal 14, conceded_late 11. — storm-base county records, world S15

6. The concession records hold 357 concessions in total. — storm-base county records, world S14

8. Incidents by code: DISSENT 50, DEADLINE_MISSED 20, REFUSED 9, COURT_ORDERED 7, DELAYED 6, PARTIAL 6, plus vote codes. — storm-base county records, world S18

18. The baseline is 25 incidents in 2020, 20 in 2022 and 35 in 2024. — storm-base county records, world S17

19. Otero County commission voted not to certify; on the Secretary of State's petition the state Supreme Court issued a writ of mandamus; the board then certified 2-1 on the deadline. — storm-base county records, world E1

20. Cochise County supervisors kept the canvass tabled past the deadline; a superior court granted writs of mandamus ordering the canvass, and the board certified 2-0 with one member absent. — storm-base county records, world E1

22. Georgia: the record says certification is a ministerial duty (Adams v. Fulton County, Ga. Ct. App. 2025: mandatory duty to certify). — storm-base county records, world E13

28. Budget Committee chair Ron Johnson said staff are working with the House and White House to develop what a lame-duck reconciliation package includes. — https://www.axios.com/2026/10/15/moreno-midterms-senate-republicans

30. The House passed a budget framework that included SAVE America on July 22; the Senate broke for recess before acting on it. — https://www.dailysignal.com/2026/08/31/white-house-official-outlines-presidents-priorities-congress-return/

35. The federal courts site shows 28 Article III vacancies. — https://www.uscourts.gov/judges-judgeships/judicial-vacancies/current-judicial-vacancies

36. The federal courts site shows 11 nominees pending. — https://www.uscourts.gov/judges-judgeships/judicial-vacancies/current-judicial-vacancies

37. Keith Sonderling, Trump's nominee for labor secretary, had not been confirmed as of the Daily Signal article. — https://www.dailysignal.com/2026/08/31/white-house-official-outlines-presidents-priorities-congress-return/

Evidence and references

Numbers match the original report. Web links lead to the sources it cited; internal world-state records are identified as such. These entries reproduce the run’s source descriptions and have not been independently re-verified for this edition.

38. Axios lists confirming nominations among the Senate Republicans' lame-duck to-do items. — https://www.axios.com/2026/10/15/moreno-midterms-senate-republicans

39. Axios lists funding the government past Dec. 11 on the Republicans' lame-duck to-do list, with emergency defense spending and the debt ceiling. — https://www.axios.com/2026/10/15/moreno-midterms-senate-republicans

40. Analogue where Democrats won both chambers: Congress funded the government through two successive continuing-resolution extensions, to Dec. 8 and then Feb. 15, 2007. — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lame-duck_session

41. Analogue: the federal government was in a shutdown from December 22, 2018 to January 25, 2019. — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018%E2%80%932019_United_States_federal_government_shutdown

42. In the shutdown analogue the President declared on December 20 that he would not sign any funding bill without border wall funding. — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018%E2%80%932019_United_States_federal_government_shutdown

45. Iowa special sessions can be called by the governor or by a two-thirds majority of the Iowa Legislature. — https://www.newsfromthestates.com/node/429415

46. Iowa Sen. Tony Bisignano (D) said talks on tax incentives for a steel company could be a 'Trojan horse' to let the Republican-led Legislature pass measures restricting gubernatorial powers. This is a Democratic senator's claim, not an observed act. — https://www.newsfromthestates.com/node/429415

47. As of the article, no proposals or language restricting gubernatorial powers had been officially released. — https://www.newsfromthestates.com/node/429415

48. A Senate Republican 'continuing appropriations' proposal to prevent state shutdowns if a governor does not approve a budget by July 1 did not advance. Democrats criticised it as a power grab that would let a GOP-controlled Legislature refuse to negotiate a budget with a Democratic governor. — https://www.newsfromthestates.com/node/429415

49. Cook Political Report rates the Iowa governor's race, between Rob Sand (D) and Zach Lahn (R), as 'leans Democrat'. Republicans are expected to keep both chambers of the Iowa Legislature. — https://www.newsfromthestates.com/node/429415

50. Georgia's summer special session ended with lawmakers rejecting Gov. Brian Kemp's call to redraw the state's political boundaries. — https://www.ajc.com/politics/2026/06/the-special-session-is-over-but-lawmakers-could-be-back-soon/

51. Ohio's General Assembly was scheduled to convene on January 5, 2026 and adjourn on December 17, 2026. — https://ballotpedia.org/Ohio_Legislature

54. The House passed H.R. 8800 (FY2027 NDAA) 216-212 on July 22, with the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act text included in the engrossed text sent to the Senate. — https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/IN12704.html

Evidence and references

Numbers match the original report. Web links lead to the sources it cited; internal world-state records are identified as such. These entries reproduce the run’s source descriptions and have not been independently re-verified for this edition.

55. Cloture failed 50-46 on July 14 on the motion to proceed to S. 4784; the majority leader entered a motion to reconsider, and as of September 1 the Senate had taken no further procedural steps toward taking up the bill. — https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/IN12704.html

61. 52-67% of Republicans and 10-19% of Democrats expect a few thousand or more cases of each type of fraud. — https://brightlinewatch.org/democracy-before-2026-midterms/

87. Republican confidence that votes are counted as intended rose from 58% to 67% between July and October 2026. — Electoral Integrity Theory, https://brightlinewatch.org/democracy-before-2026-midterms/

89. Expert forecast that five or more of the 25 best-known Republicans allege fraud affected results: median 75%, calibrated 53%, AIs 60%. Not conditional on a Democratic sweep. — https://brightlinewatch.org/democracy-before-2026-midterms/