

SWING VOTE SAM EXPLAINS

The Emergency That Never Ends

SAM SAYS

"An emergency from 1979 isn't an emergency. It's furniture."

Presidents can declare national emergencies, which unlock special powers. Congress can end them. Most just get renewed, year after year.

As of October 19, 2026, the Brennan Center counts 51 in effect. The oldest, over Iran, dates to November 1979 and was renewed again in November 2025.

Congress has ended one by law: COVID-19, in April 2023, after the White House had already said it would end. The off switch works. It just doesn't get used.

The facts

1. As of October 19, 2026, 51 declared national emergencies were in effect under the National Emergencies Act.[1]
2. The national emergency with respect to Iran dates to November 1979 and was continued again in November 2025.[2]
3. H.J.Res. 7, signed April 10, 2023 (Public Law 118-3), terminated the COVID-19 national emergency.[3]

What you can do

1. Ask your representative and senators which national emergencies they think should end. **house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative**
2. Show up, and send people who will use the off switch.

Scan to watch Sam explain it

swingvotesam.com/issues/emergency-powers

Sources

1. Brennan Center for Justice, "Declared National Emergencies Under the National Emergencies Act", updated October 19, 2026. https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/declared-national-emergencies-under-national-emergencies-act
2. Federal Register, "Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran", November 7, 2025. https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/07/2025-19829/continuation-of-the-national-emergency-with-respect-to-iran
3. U.S. Government Publishing Office, "Public Law 118-3 (H.J.Res. 7), approved April 10, 2023". https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-118publ3/html/PLAW-118publ3.htm

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