



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2017

No. 12

## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, we sing of Your steadfast love and proclaim Your faithfulness to all generations.

Today, strengthen our Senators to walk in the light of Your countenance. Abide with them so that Your wisdom will influence each decision they make. Lead them around the pitfalls that bring ruin, as You empower them to glorify You in all they think, say, and do. May the words of their mouths and the meditations of their hearts be acceptable to You. Lord, purge our lawmakers of self and fill them with Your peace and poise.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, last week, President Trump gave his first major address to the Nation. The week before, President Obama gave his last. These are different men. They come from different parties, but their speeches were more similar than you might think, and there were some com-

mon themes: The world is dangerous, our economy isn't living up to its potential, Americans are divided, worried about their futures and don't feel like Washington is listening.

Here is one quote:

Too many families, in inner cities and in rural counties, have been left behind—the laid-off factory worker; the waitress or health care worker who's just barely getting by and struggling to pay the bills—convinced that the game is fixed against them, that their government only serves the interest of the powerful—that's a recipe for more cynicism and polarization in our politics.

That was former President Obama at the end of his term. It is obvious the situation today for many families simply isn't sustainable. As my friend the Democratic leader said in his speech on inauguration day, "We live in a challenging and tumultuous time." Our economy, he cautioned, leaves "too many behind." Our politics, he warned, is "consumed by rancor," and we face threats "foreign and domestic."

Americans are reeling after 8 years of grand promises and diminished dreams, leftwing experiments and heavy-handed overreach. Small businesses are literally drowning in regulations, bigger employers, as well. College graduates are struggling to make it and too often simply move back in with their parents. The middle class feels under assault, as kitchen tables pile ever higher with health care bills, energy bills, and paychecks that fail to keep pace. Americans feel like they don't have a say in what is happening either.

So let us not underestimate the challenges President Trump is inheriting. They are indeed formidable. There is a lot to fix, but we can move forward if we work together. The first thing we have to do is move beyond this us-and-them mentality that has so often characterized the last 8 years. Our goal should be to give confidence to everyone, regardless of race, religion or income, regardless of where someone lives or whom they voted for. We are

all in this together. We rise and fall as one.

When I applied for the job of majority leader, I vowed to open up the Senate for a reason. I thought it would give more Americans a voice again. I thought it would give both sides skin in the game again. I thought it would bring us closer to durable solutions, and it has—on education, on transportation, on the fight against cancer, on so many other issues we passed meaningful legislation that can positively impact millions. The way we did it was simple—really simple, actually. We set the slogans aside. We listened to each other. We listened in good faith. We kept our focus where it truly belonged, on areas where both sides can agree. Wouldn't you know it, it turns out we actually agreed on a lot. It turns out we all want to give our kids a better future, turns out we all want better roads and infrastructure, turns out we all want a country that is healthy. It seems obvious, but we can forget these things in the midst of a divisive campaign. We can get lost in the politics and lose sight of our common humanity.

The campaign is over. The time for governing is upon us, and we face huge challenges. Many of these issues President Obama sought to solve. Sometimes his policies moved us forward. More often, they moved us backward or created new problems altogether. This is not an attack on the sincerity of his aims. It is a critique of the efficacy of his means.

### REPEALING AND REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we have seen quite clearly over the last 8 years which policies do not work. We now have the opportunity to try policies that can work. ObamaCare offers a great example. Democrats came into office in 2009 with a promise to unify the country and big majorities that allowed them to ignore half of it. They

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S367