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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROGER MARSHALL, a Senator from the State of Kansas.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, who taught us it is more blessed to give than receive. As we prepare to celebrate Presidents Day, thank You for the great gift of leadership. May this wonderful ability to mobilize people toward a shared objective become the strength of our legislative branch. Help our lawmakers find the correct balance that leads to true influence.

Lord, give them the wisdom to prefer listening to speaking and learning to teaching, as they seek to make bipartisan progress. Infuse them with the serenity to accept the things they cannot change, the courage to change the things they can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

We pray in your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 13, 2025.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ROGER MARSHALL, a Senator from the State of Kansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MARSHALL thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADERSHIP TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will vote on the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services. By now, it is beyond

clear that Mr. Kennedy is not remotely qualified to become the next Secretary of HHS. In fact, Mr. Kennedy might be one of the least qualified people that Donald Trump could have chosen for the job. There are so many others that would have been better.

I am very proud that every single Democrat will oppose Mr. Kennedy's nomination, because Democrats know better than to elevate a conspiracy theorist to the top healthcare job in the country.

I know some of my colleagues feel the same way privately. In fact, if the Senate held a secret ballot today, I would bet Mr. Kennedy would never come close to becoming confirmed and that many, if not most, Republicans would vote against him. I think, most likely, most Republicans would vote against him if there were a secret ballot.

But, sadly and unfortunately for America, Republicans are being strong-armed by Donald Trump and will end up holding their nose and voting to confirm Mr. Kennedy—what a shame, what a travesty.

I urge my Republican colleagues to think very carefully, one last time, before rolling the dice—before rolling the dice—on Mr. Kennedy.

A vote to confirm Mr. Kennedy is a vote to make America sicker. Mr. Kennedy has made a living not by promoting public health but by actively fighting it. Mr. Kennedy is the face of the modern anti-vaccine movement. Mr. Kennedy has spent decades profiting off vaccine misinformation.

Mr. Kennedy told me to my face that he would “defer to the President” on issues as personal, as deeply held, as important as abortion. How do we know that Mr. Kennedy won't defer to the President—who is far from an expert on healthcare—on other issues and healthcare issues as well? It is simple: We don't. But if he can change his view and defer to the President on something as deeply held as abortion, the

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



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S957