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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today the opening prayer will be offered by Reverend Dr. Charles R. Smith, pastor of the Madison Baptist Church in Madison, GA.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, the One who created us in Your image and the One who values every person as uniquely as our fingerprints, we invoke Your guidance with the realization that we are nothing without You. Guide those in this Chamber to recognize that honorable governance seeks the best for all; that today's actions bear tomorrow's fruit; that integrity should be championed over winning. Offer them wisdom to weigh their decisions not propagating partisan policy but based on fair legislation for everyone. Grant them fortitude to exemplify selfless service even to those individuals on the other side of the aisle, recognizing that what they do has a ripple effect, much like tossing a pebble into a pond.

We thank You that You cherish every person as an individual. We thank You that You hear our prayer. 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The Senator from Georgia.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the presence of our guest Chaplain today, Charles Smith, and his lovely wife Jennifer and his family members who have traveled from Madison, GA, and around Georgia to be here today as he serves our country as our guest Chaplain for today.

Charles has a doctor of ministry degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. His wife is a family and marriage counselor and an ordained minister. His niece Megan serves us in the Republican cloakroom and does so on a daily basis with great joy for all of us.

So we want to welcome Charles Smith, his family, and thank him so much for his ministry today, his witness today, but also thank him for all the leadership he has given to Megan, who does such a great job for us.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, ask most Americans to name two of the most basic duties of a Senator, and you are likely to hear some combination of the following: No. 1, protect the country. That means working with us to pass the National Defense Authorization Act. No. 2, fund the government. That means working with us to pass the 12 appropriations bills that fund it.

But some of our Democratic colleagues don't seem all that interested in these things. It is not just that their words tell us this story, their actions do as well. The Democratic leader has used the phrase "waste of time" to

refer to a bill that protects our country. Passing that bill usually inspires bipartisan cooperation, but this year it required overcoming senseless resistance from the other side before we finally witnessed that cooperation yesterday with the bill's passage.

Democratic Senators have used phrases such as "kind of a waste of time," and "a huge waste of time," to refer to the bills that fund our government.

Passing these bills used to be routine, and the new majority has worked hard to ensure that it does again after 6 years of inaction. That is why we passed the budget. That is why we passed the 12 appropriations bills through committee in a bipartisan way. But now Democrats have decided as part of some arbitrary political strategy to indiscriminately filibuster every last funding bill.

Now Democrats may no longer be interested in passing these bipartisan bills, but it doesn't mean they aren't interested in taking credit for the same legislation they are now blocking. Take the bill that funds veterans. Democrats voted with us to support it in committee, then they issued press releases bragging about its contents, and then they filibustered it. Take the bill that funds defense. Democrats voted with us to support it in committee, then they issued press releases bragging about its content, and then they filibustered it, repeatedly.

Today we will consider the bill that funds America's energy security and its water infrastructure. Democrats voted with us to support this bill in committee, too. In fact, over 70 percent of the Democrats in committee supported the bill that is before us today. Democrats issued press releases with nice things to say about the bill's contents. One lauded the bill for funding important energy efficiency advances in our military and for low-income families. Another reminded us the bill provides "robust funding" for vital programs that deserve to be funded. Today

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



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we will see if Democrats are seriously prepared to filibuster this bill as well.

This bill would strengthen our national security. The bill would enhance our energy security. The bill would root out waste with smart targeted reductions so we can put that money to better use, funding more important infrastructure projects, more innovative energy research, and more critical safety improvements for our dams and waterways.

This bill is also critically important to our home States. Kentuckians would benefit from initiatives to protect the Ohio River shoreline, from cleanup work in Paducah, and from construction of the Olmstead Lock and Dam and other vital inland waterway projects.

Mr. President, this is a good bill. It deserves our support on the merits. It is good for our constituents and good for our country. That should be reason enough to support this funding bill. I would also remind my Democratic colleagues that 70 percent—70 percent—of the Democrats in committee did support the bill before us today.

SCHEDULE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, let me finally announce the schedule for today. At 12:45 p.m. there will be a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the Energy and Water appropriations bill. That will be the last rollcall vote of the week.

RECOGNITION OF THE ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, for the record, the Democratic leader, Senator REID, is attending a funeral this morning and I am standing in his stead.

First, I will address the comments from the majority leader, Senator McCONNELL. I have to disagree with his opening that Democrats are not interested in funding the government, that Democrats are not interested in funding the Department of Defense. I may remind my friend from Kentucky, the Senator who is the Republican leader, that it was the Republican side that initiated the government shutdown 2 years ago. For 16 days the government was shut down in a vain attempt to protest the Affordable Care Act. Now that threat is before us again.

It is unfortunate we are facing this, but I don't believe it is fair to blame our side of the aisle for delay. You see, Mr. President, as early as June, we started saying we are facing an October 1 deadline, and we need to have a budget compromise, a budget negotiation. Why? Because there is a fundamental disagreement about funding our gov-

ernment in this fiscal year that began October 1.

The Republicans have argued to use wartime funds—\$38 billion worth—to supplement the Department of Defense. The leaders at the Department of Defense say this is the wrong approach. They cannot build a strong national defense with an injection of wartime funds which may or may not exist at the end of the process—may or may not exist next year.

I might add, coincidentally, that the Republicans failed—failed—to put additional funds in for nondefense spending. Some of it is related to national security—the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and so many agencies that keep us safe here in the United States. The failure of the Republicans to provide funds for critical agencies that provide health and education services is the reason we have reached an impasse in the budget negotiations.

It is why 3 months ago we on the Democratic side said to the Republicans: You are in charge. You are in the majority. But if we are going to have a process that ultimately succeeds, you need to engage on a bipartisan basis in this negotiation. They refused. They refused and they came up with a short-term spending bill—we call it a continuing resolution or CR—which takes us to the first or second week of December. Beyond that there is no certainty about what is going to happen.

The Senator from Kentucky talks about the appropriations process, where so many Senators voted for a bill and now are against it. I have been on appropriations committees in the House and the Senate for a long time. In the Senate we have an upside-down approach, where you vote on the overall bill first, then vote on amendments. In each of the cases the Senator from Kentucky refers to, many of us may have voted for the overall bill, hoping that amendments would solve the budget problems I have described. When those amendments failed to solve those budget problems, we said: This ultimate bill is not going to work, and we know it. That is the reality of the process in the Committee on Appropriations.

So in June we invited the Republicans to meet with the President and Democratic leaders to work out a budget compromise. There is an indication that some conversation is underway, but not enough.

Why have we reached this impasse? Frankly, it is because the Republican leadership—certainly in the House—is in disarray. Today there is going to be an election in the House of Representatives for a new Speaker. A group of ultraconservative Republican House Members were successful in ousting JOHN BOEHNER from the Speakership. Now they are going to try to replace him but with conditions. One of those conditions is, as printed in the paper this morning, that the new House

Speaker has to pledge to the Freedom Caucus—the tea party Republicans—that he will never, never agree to any compromise that is a bipartisan bill coming out of the Senate.

Now, how is that for a standard when you are trying to govern in this country—when you have a President of one party and the Congress in control of the other party? The Freedom Caucus says: Don't negotiate; don't compromise. That is a recipe for a shutdown, a sequestration, and a continuing resolution. Let me tell you what that does. If we get into a continuing resolution for next year—this year we are in, I should say—it is going to mean dramatic cuts in many agencies.

Yesterday the National Institutes of Health were called by Senator BLUNT, who chairs the appropriations subcommittee for that agency. We sat before Dr. Collins and his leading researchers for the United States of America, and we asked them: What happens if our budget process breaks down, if we go into sequestration, which is an across-the-board cut, or we go into a continuing resolution, which is a continuation of this year's budget? What happens at the premier medical research facility in the world, the National Institutes of Health? Dr. Collins told us in very honest and somber tones: It would mean that we would suspend research in areas like precision medicine, destined I think to save lives across the world. We would suspend brain research in areas like Alzheimer's disease.

Once every 67 seconds in America—once every 67 seconds—an American is diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Last year, we spent \$226 billion as a Federal Government in Medicare and Medicaid on Alzheimer's care. We estimate about the same number, over \$200 billion, was spent by families trying to care for those afflicted by dementia and Alzheimer's. There is a suggestion now that because our failure on budget negotiations will lead to the suspension of research, we would destroy any hope of finding a cure for this dreaded disease and scores of other diseases. That is how serious this conversation is. It is unfortunate that it has reached this point.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, when I was young and going to grade school, we feared the bomb. We were in a cold war. We were given duck-and-cover drills to get under our desk just in case there might be a nuclear attack on the United States of America. That is imprinted in my mind to this day—the fear which we had about this threat to our safety.

I wish to read a commentary that is making the rounds with wide circulation by a mother who talks about a similar concern for her children. She writes:

Two weeks ago, my second and fourth grade daughters came home from school and