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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are the shepherd of our souls. Because of You, blessings overtake us. Thank You for inscribing each of us on the palms of Your hands. Great is Your faithfulness.

Bless our Senators and those who labor with them. Give them strength to meet today's challenges with a peace that comes from total trust in You. Remind them that the way to find life is to lose it in service for others.

Surround us all with Your favor, as You complete the work You have started in each of us.

We pray in Your marvelous 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The minority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF KIM DINE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend the Republican leader will be here shortly. I have something to do downtown, so I will have to leave. I certainly do not want to get ahead of him. I know he is going to say something because we have talked about Chief of Police Kim Dine, who has retired.

I want to join with the Republican leader in recognizing the work of the U.S. Capitol Police Chief, Kim Dine. He spent his life in law enforcement. He spent his entire professional life serving and protecting the people of Washington, DC, and the entire metro area. He started as a young officer here in Washington 41 years ago and over the course of three decades has moved up the ranks of the Metropolitan Police Department, becoming assistant chief of police.

In 2002, he was selected to serve as chief of police of Frederick, MD. He served the people of Maryland with distinction for 10 years.

In 2012, our Sergeant at Arms asked Chief Dine to come back to Washington, this time as Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police Department. We are very fortunate that took place.

Chief Dine helped oversee President Obama's 2013 inauguration, and since then it has been event after big event: four State of the Union Addresses, Memorial Day and Fourth of July concerts, and, of course, Pope Francis's historic visit here last year. During all of those proceedings, it was his obligation to protect the people who are visiting and to protect the people who work within this beautiful Capitol Complex. At every one of those events, Chief Dine and his department did a superb job protecting 30,000 people—Senators, Congressmen, and staff—who are in the Capitol Complex virtually every day. And that doesn't include the visitors who come here.

So now, as the Chief embarks upon a well-deserved retirement, we thank him for his service. We thank his wife Robin and their two daughters for sharing their husband and father with us the past few years. I am sure this man was as taken care of at home as he has taken care of all of us in the metropolitan area. I hope his family takes satisfaction in the outstanding work he has rendered to the American people.

I thank you very much, Chief. We wish you nothing but the best.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF KIM DINE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this weekend U.S. Capitol Police Chief Kim Dine will retire his badge and say goodbye to the Senate after several decades of law enforcement service, including more than three right here in the Capitol.

Chief Dine was police chief in a nearby Maryland suburb when he first came to this position in December of 2012. You could say the appointment was a bit of a homecoming for him given that Chief Dine began his more than 40 years in law enforcement with the DC Metropolitan Police Department. He served there for 27 years and rose through the ranks, eventually becoming assistant chief of police.

I know it is never easy to leave the Capitol, but you have to imagine Chief Dine has a lot to look forward to in retirement. After all, this is a guy who has been known to get into the office before the sun rises and leave after it sets. Most would need some rest after so many years of that kind of schedule.

So here is what we would like to say: The Senate appreciates Chief Dine's willingness to serve our country. And after nearly four decades in law enforcement, we wish him all the best in his retirement.

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



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FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY AND SUBPOENA ENFORCEMENT RESOLUTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me state an obvious point. When it comes to filling the current Supreme Court vacancy—which could fundamentally alter the direction of the Court for a generation—Republicans and Democrats simply disagree. We simply disagree. Republicans think the people deserve a voice in this critical decision; the President does not. So we disagree in this instance, and as a result, we logically act as a check-and-balance.

There is no reason one area of disagreement should stop us from looking for other areas of agreement, though. We will continue our work in the Senate as the American people make their voices heard in this important national conversation. For instance, we will address another very important issue today, which I would like to talk about now.

Senator PORTMAN and Senator MCCASKILL are the top Republican and top Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. Over the past year, they have worked together in a bipartisan way to examine human trafficking. Their probe has revealed how trafficking has flourished in the age of the Internet. It has also revealed how many cases of sex trafficking, including cases involving children, have been linked to one Web site in particular: backpage.com.

One national group who tracks the issue has told the subcommittee this: Nearly three-quarters of all suspected child sex trafficking reports it receives from the public through its tip line have a connection to backpage.

Chairman PORTMAN and Ranking Member MCCASKILL have wanted to do something about this. They know they have to keep investigating. So they issued a subpoena to backpage. They wanted documents about the company's business practices. They wanted to know how it screens advertisements for warning signs of trafficking. As the leaders of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, they had every right to make these requests in the course of their investigation, but backpage has refused to comply. Does that mean Senators PORTMAN and MCCASKILL give up? Of course not. And we shouldn't, either. They jointly submitted a Senate resolution that would hold the company in civil contempt and force it to turn over this required information. This resolution passed through the committee with unanimous bipartisan support 15 to 0, and today it can be adopted by the full Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support too. We will have that opportunity this afternoon. If we do, it will allow the Senate's legal counsel to bring a civil suit in court and ask the court to order compliance with the subpoena. That is critical for allowing this bipartisan investigation to move forward.

I thank Ranking Member MCCASKILL for all she has done. I thank Chairman PORTMAN for all he has done.

We saw Senator PORTMAN's great work last week in passing bipartisan legislation to help address America's heroin and opioid crisis, and again today we will see Senator PORTMAN's great work in leading on another important issue and doing so once more in a bipartisan manner.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:45 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK GARLAND

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise today to address what I believe is the urgency of the moment, really the test of the time. We have a Constitution that was designed for three coequal branches of government. We know the importance of each of those branches of government and the roles they have are spelled out in the Constitution.

A fully functioning Supreme Court—one of the coequal branches—is of the utmost importance to the proper function of our democracy. Justices decide cases that shape the daily lives of all Americans. Even one Justice can deeply affect the rights and liberties of the American people for generations to come.

Yesterday, the President nominated Chief Judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court of the United States.

A clear and plain reading of the text of the Constitution says explicitly in article II, section 2, that it is the duty of the Senate to provide "advice and consent" to the President on key nominations, particularly Justices to the Supreme Court.

I, along with my 99 colleagues, took an oath of office. We swore to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and to faithfully discharge the duties of the offices we hold. There was no addendum to that oath that excused us from our responsibil-

ities during a Presidential election year. The people of New Jersey elected me to serve a full 6-year term. That means my duties and obligations as a Senator—or the duties and obligations of each of the 100 Senators in this body—should not be interrupted by a Presidential year. That is especially true when those duties are explicitly laid out in the Constitution and when the duties impact a coequal branch of government, such as the Supreme Court.

I have only served in the Senate since October of 2013. This is my first Supreme Court nominee to consider, and I look forward to thoroughly reviewing Chief Judge Garland's record, to meeting with him face to face, and hopefully, I believe rightfully, taking an up-or-down vote on his confirmation.

That is what all of us swore an oath and signed up to do when a vacancy occurs on the Supreme Court. That is the duty the American people expect of us—to abide by the Constitution and provide our advice and consent regarding a Presidential nomination of this significance—a lifetime appointment—to the Supreme Court, a coequal branch of government.

We may not ultimately agree on whether Chief Judge Garland should be confirmed. The Senate can vote no. Senators have that independent choice. It happens almost every day here where we disagree on issues. There is no guarantee in the Constitution that the President's nominee should get confirmed. But we should agree at least to do the job we were elected to do and to allow the confirmation process to move forward. That is bigger than any one party.

Now, as I understand it, Chief Judge Garland is highly respected, experienced, and is considered by many to be a deliberate jurist whom the Senate overwhelmingly confirmed in 1997 to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, which is known as the second highest court in the land. His nomination to be an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court is certainly deserving of our consideration.

Chief Judge Garland, in fact, has more Federal judiciary experience than any other Supreme Court nominee in history.

He currently serves as Chief Judge of the D.C. Circuit Court, a court where he has served for almost 19 years. Previously, he has served under both Democratic and Republican Presidents at the U.S. Department of Justice. He first worked as Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division of DOJ and later served as the Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General. In those posts, he supervised high-profile cases at the Department of Justice such as the prosecution of the Oklahoma City bomber, which ultimately brought Timothy McVeigh to justice.

To call his qualifications impressive is an understatement. Chief Judge Garland has dedicated his life to public