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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

God of wonder, beyond all majesty, You are worthy of our praise. Today, on this Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, give us the wisdom to reflect on our mortality and to examine our lives. Use our Senators as ambassadors of peace, reconciliation, and justice. May they work to remove malice, envy, revenge, deception, and bitterness.

Lord, inspire them with Your presence until their faith in You is visible and contagious. May they bear witness to Your love even when their motivations are misunderstood by their detractors. Give them the gifts of integrity and authenticity in their relationships with You and with one another.

We pray in Your great 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I think we were all really pleased last night to hear the President's unifying message. It was refreshing for everyone

after such a difficult election season. It was great to see even my friend the Democratic leader occasionally applauding the President last night. It is a reminder that we are all in this together.

Yesterday, I laid out my hopes for his address to Congress. I said that the middle class is ready for a new direction after 8 years of disappointments. I said that we all knew what needed to get done, too—issues like simplifying taxes to create more jobs, reforming regulations to get the economy moving, and repealing and replacing ObamaCare to bring relief to the middle class. It was great to hear the President touch on each of those issues last night.

It was also great to hear him talk about his outstanding nominee to the Supreme Court, Judge Neil Gorsuch—a judge who has earned widespread acclaim and who will be a worthy successor to Justice Scalia on the High Court.

Last night President Trump talked about a new spirit of optimism in our country. He talked about repositioning us for success, both at home and in a dangerous world. He talked about growing opportunity, better jobs, and a thriving middle class. Then, he actually put forward policies that could get us there. What a change from the last 8 years.

He also outlined some of the actions he has already taken to move these priorities forward. For instance, he took action yesterday to send the so-called waters of the United States rule back to the drawing board. He demonstrated that there are realistic ways to protect our Nation's waterways without excessive and duplicative regulations that infringe on the property rights of individuals.

Let me again commend him for protecting the middle class from yet another regulation based more on ideology than fact. It is just the type of thing Americans are so tired of—left-

wing regulations spun as one thing, but that really do another; left-leaning laws that purport to help the middle class, but that actually hurt middle-class families.

A great example of that is ObamaCare. Americans were promised that costs would go down, but, of course, they went up. Americans were promised more choice, but they got less. Americans were promised that they could keep their plans, but that was a broken promise as well.

No wonder Americans were so tired of what they have seen over the last 8 years. They are ready for something entirely new. They are ready to start believing in the future again. The President made clear last night that he is ready to work with Congress on policies that can actually move us forward. He will find many partners in Congress excited to get those things accomplished.

We share his commitment on other issues he outlined too. We agree that our children deserve better than failing schools. We agree that our veterans deserve better than failing bureaucracy. We agree that our brothers and mothers and friends and neighbors deserve better than the scourge of heroin and prescription opioid abuse.

In an era of divided government, Congress took what action we could on those issues. It was often significant action, and we are all proud of it. But we now have a chance to achieve even more. So, of course, we are excited about the opportunity to improve the lives of the men and women who sent us here. That is why we all signed up for this job in the first place.

I am not just talking about Republicans. I know our Democratic friends have different ideas than us on many of these things. I know the far left is pressuring them to burn the place down because it can't accept the results of last year's election. But everyone knows that won't get us anywhere at all.

Let's remember that we have a historic opportunity before us. We can

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



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keep refighting the last election over and over and over, or we can heed the President's message of unity last night. We can come together to accomplish big things. We can pull down the barriers of the past. We can uphold, in the words of the Democratic leader himself, our "moral obligation" to "avoid gridlock and get the country to work again."

Now, I know he said that just before the election. I know he hoped the election would turn out differently. But we each have a duty to accept the results. We each have a duty to bring the country together and to move it forward. That is now the challenge before our Democratic friends.

I ask them to meet the moment—to meet the moment. I hope they will because the American people are counting on us all. They are ready for a new start. We are determined to work hard on their behalf. As the President himself said last night, so is he.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, before I get into the substance of my remarks, I was listening to our Republican leader talking about compromise—not that he ever engaged in very much of it when he was leader last year—but compromise requires something to compromise over. We have nothing from the administration, nothing on infrastructure, nothing on trade, nothing even on ACA.

You want to sit down and talk? Let's see what your plans are. See if you can get your own act together before you are pointing the finger at Democrats.

The President's speech—let me say this: This President's speech was detached from this President's reality. The President, in this speech and in so many others, talks like a populist. He talks to the working people of America and promises them things. When he governs, it is nothing like that at all. He is favoring the very powerful special interests, making their lives easier, and putting more burdens on the backs of the middle class and people trying to get to the middle class.

A metaphor for this was his speech at the inauguration. He gave a speech—also aimed at the working people—and within an hour after that, he signed an Executive order that helped the banks

and added about \$500 to the mortgage of every new homeowner.

You can't just talk the talk, Mr. President. You have to walk the walk. On issue after issue, we haven't seen anything—or negative things for the working class.

We heard about infrastructure. A month ago, the Democrats put together an infrastructure plan of \$1 trillion. It was a strong plan. It has a lot of support throughout the country.

Where is the President's infrastructure plan? We haven't heard a peep about it. Some of his White House folks leaked that we will not get to infrastructure until next year. Mentioning it in a speech—infrastructure—is not going to employ a single new worker.

What about trade? The President talked about trade, putting America first. My views tend to be closer to President Trump's than they were to President Bush's or President Obama's on trade. Again, what we hear in the speech and what the President actually does are contradictory.

Throughout his campaign, the President took an issue near and dear to my heart and to the heart of Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina—China manipulating its currency. He had said over and over again in the campaign: On the first day I am President, I will sign an Executive order that labels China a currency manipulator.

They are. We know they manipulate their currency, and it has cost America hundreds of thousands, if not millions of good-paying jobs and caused a load of wealth to flow from our country to theirs.

This one didn't require congressional approval. This one didn't require a single Democrat to join in. All the President had to do was sign the order. We are now 40 days into this administration. Not only has he still not signed the order, but he is saying he may back off.

Last night, the President talked about research, wiping out rare diseases. Yet with the budget they proposed, given that they want to slash domestic discretionary spending by tens of billions of dollars and exempt veterans and Homeland Security, there is no alternative to the fact that the President in his budget, at the same time he is talking about medical research, is going to slash it.

Education. He talked about the great issue of education. The same thing: His budget is going to slash education to smithereens, hurting our students, hurting our teachers, hurting our schools.

Perhaps the most hypocritical of all was draining the swamp. That was one of the President's main themes when he was President-elect: Drain the swamp. Look who is in his Cabinet. His Secretary of Treasury, his Secretary of Commerce, and his NEC adviser are from Wall Street.

Is this the same man who said that we are going to go after Wall Street if we get elected? Wall Street is running

the economic show. The Cabinet is filled with bankers. The Cabinet is filled with billionaires, not people who feel for the average American. In fact, if you add up the net wealth of his Cabinet, it has more wealth than one-third of the American people total—close to 100 million people. That is cleaning the swamp? Give me a break.

The problem with the President's speech is very simple: His actions don't match his words. His words in the campaign are not matched by his actions. His words in his inaugural speech are not matched by his actions, nor are his words in his speech last night.

It was so funny that he spoke to a bunch of cosmopolitan news anchors, and he mentioned that maybe he will change his views on immigration. The media got into a buzz about that. Then, the speech he gave was one of the most virulently anti-immigrant speeches that we have heard any President ever give. He is saying one thing, doing another.

It is not the hypocrisy that bugs us, although it is there. It is the fact that he is not helping middle-class America. It is the fact that he is not making it easier for more people to travel and get into the middle class because he seems to have governed from the hard, hard right. The hard right is very far away from where the average American is.

Mr. Mulvaney's idea of a budget—maybe 10 percent of America, mostly ideologues, would support it. It is even far away from where the average Republican is. Yesterday, when the President proposed his budget, we had one of my colleagues on the Republican side saying it is dead on arrival. We had the majority leader saying that you can't cut the State Department foreign aid in half. He is far over, and that is hurting him and hurting us, hurting the American people.

The first 40 days have been a pretty rough 40 days for President Trump. It hasn't worked out very well. Why? It is not because he hasn't given a few good speeches. It is because he is governing from the hard right. He is governing far away from what the American people want. He is governing way off to the extreme.

A speech isn't going to change that. A speech isn't going to create one job or one infrastructure plan or one trade law that makes our trade laws, which need to be changed, fairer. No, no, it takes action. Unfortunately, when the President takes action, it is quite the opposite of what he says in the speech on the issues that affect the middle-class and working-class people.

If President Trump does not change how he governs—how he governs, not what speeches he gives—in the near future, then these 40 days, which have been of tumult, of contradiction, of turning one's back on the working class, will be 6 months and then will be a year and then will be 2 years.

The problem with the Presidency does not lie in the speeches the President gives, even though I might object