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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TODD YOUNG, a Senator from the State of Indiana.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Immortal, invisible God only wise, we praise Your Name. Lord, You are our strength and our hope for years to come.

Today, may our lawmakers make Your joy their strength. Awaken in them a desire to be guided by You so that their lives and labors will honorably represent Your purposes. Lord, give them wisdom to trust You to finish the work You have started in our lives, our Nation, and world. May they exercise self-discipline in all things, resolving to stay on the path of integrity. Remove from their lives anything that would hinder them from fulfilling Your purposes.

We pray in Your merciful 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. HATCH).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TODD YOUNG, a Senator from the State of Indiana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week marks National Police Week, an annual celebration in honor of the men and women who serve in local, State, and Federal law enforcement all across our country. We are all safer because of their efforts, and this week is an important reminder of their continuing service and sacrifice on our behalf—each and every day.

Traveling across the country, thousands of law enforcement officers gather in our Nation's Capital each year to mark this occasion. They come here to recommit themselves to the peace and safety of our communities and to show respect for their fallen brothers and sisters in uniform who have made the ultimate sacrifice. We are honored to have them in Washington and to join them in recognizing these officers.

I wish to pay a special tribute to the brave men and women who protect and serve my home State of Kentucky. These officers put themselves in harm's way to defend our communities every day, and we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Today, we also remember those officers from the Bluegrass State who tragically fell in the line of duty.

First, I want to pay tribute to Officer Nick Rodman of the Louisville Metro Police Department. Officer Rodman unfortunately passed away after a car

crash in Louisville while responding to calls of shots fired. He was 30 years old and had served in the department for 3 years.

The Rodman family maintains a strong tradition in law enforcement, and he proudly continued that legacy. The many individuals Officer Rodman touched over the course of his life will remember his compassion, patience, and dedication to family.

I wish to also pay tribute to Officer Charles Howley of the Oldham County Police Department. The day before his death, Officer Howley responded to a call reporting smoke in a daycare center. While ensuring all of the children and employees had evacuated, Officer Howley was exposed to a refrigerant. The next day, he suffered a fatal heart attack. Officer Howley was 51 years old and dedicated 20 years of service to his department and his community.

Officers Nick Rodman and Charles Howley displayed courage and heroism, and their service will not soon be forgotten.

I wish to also take a moment to thank the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police, who stand guard at the heart of our democracy. They protect the Nation's legislature, the people who work here, and the millions of visitors who travel here to see our government in action. We are grateful for their diligence and for their service.

I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing the Senate family's gratitude to law enforcement officers all across our country as we welcome so many of them to the Capital this week. I wish to reiterate our admiration for their honorable and dangerous work. We live in a safer society because of their brave efforts, and I am glad that we are able to take this opportunity today to thank them for their service.

NOMINATION OF JEFFREY ROSEN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote to advance another well-qualified nominee,

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



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Jeffrey Rosen, to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of Transportation. Mr. Rosen has extensive experience serving at both the Office of Management and Budget and at the Department of Transportation. When he last came before the Senate to be the Chief Legal Officer of the Department of Transportation, he was confirmed by voice vote. It is disappointing that we had to file cloture on this bipartisan choice this time around.

Mr. Rosen's work in both the private and public sectors has given him a unique insight into the budgetary and regulatory challenges that infrastructure projects face. I look forward to the Senate advancing his nomination later this afternoon.

RESERVATION OF LEADER 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 Rosen nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Jeffrey A. Rosen, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 55, Terry Branstad to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Terry Branstad, of Iowa, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Terry Branstad, of Iowa, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China.

Mitch McConnell, Jeff Flake, Bob Corker, Roger F. Wicker, Cory Gardner, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, Pat Roberts, Joni Ernst, Mike Rounds, Todd Young, Rob Portman, John Thune, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, James M. Inhofe, John Cornyn.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture motion be waived.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Rosen nomination.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first let me thank my friend and colleague from Iowa for letting me go forward. The two Charles in the Senate work together whenever we can.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

First, Mr. President, I want to thank our Capitol Police, the New York police, and police around the country for the outstanding work they do. Much like our troops overseas, our law enforcement officers risk their lives for our safety.

As we welcome many police officers to the Capitol this week, I would like to express, on behalf of the Senate, our gratitude for their service, their sacrifice, and their countless daily acts of courage. Particularly, I want to say that in New York City, where we are so proud that crime is the lowest of the 25 largest cities in the country, we thank our New York City Police Department for a job well done. I would also like to thank the many police departments, sheriffs' offices, and so many others of our law enforcement in the State of New York. I have gotten to know them, respect them, and admire them as human beings and for the job they do.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Getting back to a less happy subject, Mr. President, the events of last week tested some of the fundamental precepts of our democratic system, including the rule of law and the independence of our law enforcement agencies that were designed to be a check on any abuse of power.

The President of the United States fired the FBI Director, who was conducting an active investigation of the President's campaign and its ties to Russia. The Attorney General, who had recused himself from that investigation, played a role in that dismissal and continues to be involved in the selection of the new FBI Director. The White House gave pretextual reasons for the firing, which were contradicted by the President himself a few days later when he admitted that he had planned to fire Director Comey for weeks and that he was thinking about Russia when he did it. The President then suggested there were tapes of conversations between himself and Director Comey, threatening to release them if Mr. Comey spoke to the press.

These are not the actions of an administration that respects the rule of law or treasures fidelity to the truth. These are not the actions of an administration that is eager for and even open to an independent investigation into a very serious matter—the interference of our elections by a foreign adversary.

The Founding Fathers, in their infinite wisdom—the more I am around, the more I am impressed with them, and I was impressed to begin with—designed three coequal branches of government with appropriate powers to check and balance the others. The Founding Fathers explicitly worried about foreign powers trying to influence our elections and government. They actually wrote into the Constitution protections against that very threat. Their concerns, expressed over 240 years ago, gain new prominence and meaning today, perhaps more than at any time in the past.

We in Congress—both parties—need to exercise the powers afforded to us by the Constitution to check and balance. We need to see that we get all the facts. We need to see that the Russia investigation is allowed to proceed as independently and as impartially as possible. We need to hold this administration accountable for any abuse of their powers.

So first of all, if there are "tapes" as the President has suggested, he should turn them over immediately to Congress and the investigators. To destroy them would be a violation of law. If there are no tapes, he should apologize to James Comey and to the American people for misleading them.

Second, the fact that the President has said that he may have taped Mr. Comey makes the need for a special prosecutor all the more important. If it is true, if there are tapes, a special prosecutor would have the ability to