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Senate

The Senate met at 11 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.

Almighty God, source of all goodness, use our lawmakers today for Your glory. Make them undaunted people who strive to know Your will and experience Your power. Provide them with exactly what they need to accomplish Your purposes. May they receive Heaven's approbation for their faithful service to You and country. Lord, transform their intractable problems with solutions from Your throne. We commit the work of this day to You, receiving Your strength to honor Your Name.

And, Lord, we thank You for the faithfulness of our summer pages. Bless these young people as they prepare to leave us.

We pray in Your generous 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The President pro tempore.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1460

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1460) to provide for the modernization of the energy and natural re-

sources policies of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Rao nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Neomi Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until the cloture vote will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. HATCH. 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 majority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Senators and the White House are continuing discussions on the path forward for bringing relief from ObamaCare and its collapsing markets. We have made good progress, and we will keep working. As we do, our focus will remain on the major ObamaCare problems that continue to hurt Americans all across our country.

Under ObamaCare, premiums have skyrocketed. Over the past several years, ObamaCare has caused premiums to climb by an average of 105 percent in the vast majority of States on the Federal exchange, and it has caused them to triple in some States.

Next year, ObamaCare is expected to raise premiums again, as high as 30 percent or greater in States like Connecticut and Virginia, by as much as 40 percent or greater in Maine and Iowa, and by as much as an astonishing 80 percent in New Mexico. Obviously, Americans deserve a lot better than that.

Under ObamaCare, choices have diminished, even disappeared, in States all across our country. ObamaCare has left 70 percent of counties with little or no insurance options on the exchanges this year. Even worse, next year, dozens more counties could have zero choice at all—potentially leaving thousands trapped, forced by law to purchase ObamaCare insurance but left without the means to do so. For instance, as we learned just yesterday, as many as 14 of Nevada's 17 counties could now be left without any insurance options under ObamaCare at all in 2018. Americans deserve a lot better than that.

Under ObamaCare, mandates have forced families into plans they don't want or can't afford, preferred doctors have become less accessible to many

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



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patients, and plans have grown less desirable but more extensive. Americans deserve better than that. That is why we are continuing to work hard. Fixing ObamaCare's failures and protecting families from its consequences is not an easy task.

It is disappointing that our Democratic colleagues made clear early on that they were not interested in joining our efforts in a serious, comprehensive manner, especially given how many of their constituents have been hurt by the law they themselves voted for and continue—continue—to defend. The Republican conference continues to work through solutions to help those who have been hurt by this failing system because, as we can all agree, ObamaCare's status quo is simply unsustainable and unacceptable. We have to act, and we are.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks before the vote.

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

REMEMBERING ARTHUR J. JACKSON

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, we lost another great American this month with the passing of Arthur J. Jackson. He received the Medal of Honor in 1945 for his service in the Pacific theater of World War II. His name may not be as familiar as it once was. In retirement, he lived a quiet life. I didn't want to let his death pass without paying tribute to him, his family, and the extraordinary acts of courage with which he defended our country. Although, to be sure, "extraordinary" doesn't really describe the half of it.

It was September 1944, and Private Jackson, a 19-year-old Ohio native, was serving with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division on the island of Peleliu. Their mission sounded simple enough: Take the island as quickly as possible, inch ever closer to retaking the Philippines, and ultimately defeat Japan.

Simple it wasn't. His platoon was hailed by a steady stream of fire from a heavily fortified position. To charge forward would be to march toward certain death, and that is exactly what he did. He attacked a pillbox, holding about 35 enemy soldiers, and as his Medal of Honor citation reads, "[P]ouring his automatic fire into the opening of the fixed installation to trap the occupying troops, he hurled white phosphorus grenades and explosive charges brought up by a fellow Marine, demolishing the pillbox and killing all of the enemy."

The enemy fire continued unabated, his cover was light at best, and yet Private Jackson proceeded to storm one position after another—wiping out a total of 12 pillboxes and 50 enemy soldiers. It was a stunning act of bravery. I can only imagine the pride of President Truman when he pinned the Medal of Honor on Private Jackson's uniform. I can only imagine the awe of his fel-

low Americans as they showered him with ticker tape in a New York City parade to celebrate.

Yes, Arthur Jackson was one of the greats, and like with many great men, his career had a somewhat tragic ending. After a stint in the Army, he rejoined the Marines and was stationed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in September 1961. It was only months after the Bay of Pigs and just over a year from the Cuban Missile Crisis. Tensions were high; suspicions were too.

On one night, then-Captain Jackson discovered a Cuban busdriver in a restricted part of the base. He wasn't supposed to be there, nor was he authorized to be there. The man had been identified as a spy for Fidel Castro's regime but was allowed to keep his job for the time being. Captain Jackson and a fellow officer escorted the man to a back gate to see him off the premises, only to discover the gate was locked. While the other officers went off to find tools, Captain Jackson pried the lock open, and, suddenly, the man lunged at him, aiming for a sidearm. Captain Jackson fired back in self-defense and killed the man on the spot.

Instead of reporting the man's death, however, he and some of his fellow Marines buried the body on the base. Many decades later, he told a newspaper columnist he feared, if he reported the death, he would be tried in a Cuban court and possibly tortured.

He had hoped no one would find out, but word got out, and he was forced to leave the Marine Corps. He ended life as a mail carrier in California. It was a disappointing end to an until-then brilliant career. This was a man who loved his country, who put everything on the line to defend it, and if one night that love blinded his judgment, it only shows the intensity of his commitment.

Arthur Jackson went on to work for the Veterans' Administration in San Francisco before moving to Boise, ID, in 1973. He lived out the remainder of his life there, where he was beloved by the community. As a neighbor of his put it, "He flies the U.S. flag and the Marine Corps flag every day. It bothers him if someone flies a dirty or tattered flag. He tells them to take it down and replace it."

A little thing with a big meaning: Arthur Jackson showed as much love for the flag as he did for our country, and now we lost him to the ages. We still have his memory, his example, his stories of derring-do, which will inspire future generations of Americans for decades to come.

REMEMBERING JOE DALE BURGESS

Mr. President, I attended the signing ceremony at the White House last week for the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act. It was a happy occasion, but I received some sad news.

A son of Arkansas who served in uniform passed away earlier this year at the far-too-young age of 31. His name was Joe Dale Burgess. Though he was not widely known, he was especially

well loved by all who did know him. Today I want to recognize him briefly for his service.

Joe Dale served in the U.S. Army—specifically, Delta Company, 2-506th Infantry Battalion, 101st Airborne Division; 2-506th, the same unit in which I served in Iraq.

In March, 2008, he was deployed to Khost Province in Afghanistan, where he took the fight to the enemy for 12 straight months. He was a fearless soldier, but his platoon leader says what he will probably be best remembered for is being an awful comedian. He loved to crack jokes and play pranks, even though, as his best battle buddies attest, he didn't show a particular talent for either of them. He always got laughs, and he always lifted their spirits. When you are living in a war zone, I can tell you that counts for a lot.

But in his battle buddies' minds, Joe Dale means more than memories of sharing a few laughs. What stands out is his humility. His platoon leader says he was completely selfless. He did whatever was asked of him—no matter how unpleasant, no matter how tedious, how irritating, or how dangerous. He never lost sight of the mission. He never forgot why he was there, and it made an impression. Ask any one of his battle buddies what they think of Joe Dale, and you will not get a bad word out of them, not one in the whole bunch. His platoon leader says: "We would all gladly serve with him again." That is a pretty good measure, the quality of a troop.

I am sorry to say Joe Dale, who endured a tour of duty that cost the lives of seven soldiers in his company, died in April of testicular cancer. It had spread to his spine, which after several surgeries left him paralyzed. He suffered several other afflictions: PTSD, pain in his joints, trouble sleeping. He didn't ask for care or a disability rating from the VA until it was too late.

It seems so unfair that this man—a man who braved the mountains of the Hindu Kush, a man who was awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Army Commendation Medal—ultimately succumbed to disease at home at such a young age. In fact, it seems almost cruel because he left behind a fiancée, Alice Hart, and a 2-year-old daughter, Zoe Hart-Burgess. I suppose we must remember that the Lord God in Heaven has His own purposes, and He works in His own mysterious ways.

To see the outpouring of love for this man—a quiet man, a humble man, a man whose only ambition was to serve his country—it tells you, indeed, that Joe Dale Burgess was one impressive man. May he rest in peace.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KENNEDY). The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.