



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2017

No. 158

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Hear our prayers, Eternal God, as You bend Your ears toward us. Provide for the needs of the high and low, the rich and poor, the just and unjust.

Empower our Senators to love even their enemies, to bless those who curse them, and to pray for those who seek to misuse them. Lord, give our lawmakers lips that speak wisdom, hearts that love purity, and minds that embrace understanding. Deliver them from fear, even in calamitous times. May they not trust in wealth or might but put their faith in You, the author and finisher of destinies.

We pray in Your marvelous 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 3, 2017.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning our thoughts and prayers continue to be with those in Las Vegas who suffered a horrendous massacre. We will all be praying for them and hoping they can recover from these grievous wounds.

THE BUDGET AND TAX REFORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, last week the chairman of the Budget Committee unveiled a comprehensive budget for fiscal year 2018 that the committee will consider this week. This comprehensive budget resolution provides a path to balance by restraining Washington's spending, by reducing the tax burden, and by putting our country on a trajectory for better economic growth. I look forward to considering it on the floor after the committee finishes its work.

Not only will this budget put our country on a better fiscal track, with reduced spending, it will also provide Congress with legislative authority to enact much needed tax reform for hard-working American families.

The tax framework released by the administration and Congress's tax-writing committees is a template that will guide these committees as they work toward producing pro-American tax reform. The framework envisions a

21st-century tax code that is built for growth, that supports middle-class families, and that promotes American workers and American jobs. It is the framework our committees will look to as they work through a transparent and inclusive process in pursuit of its important goals, such as more jobs, fairer taxes, and bigger paychecks.

Basically, here is what our framework envisions: We want to take more money out of Washington's pocket and put more in yours, simply put. I know the chairman of the Finance Committee is committed to goals like those. I know I am. I hope our friends across the aisle will work with us in a serious way to achieve them as well because after decades of lost economic opportunities, it is time to get our economy on the right track again so it can finally grow at its full potential.

Let's shift our economy into high gear with pro-jobs tax reform. Let's put our finances on a better path with Chairman ENZI's budget. Let's watch the good work of each initiative advance within the Finance and Budget Committees this week, including the Finance Committee hearing on tax reform this morning.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, last week Congress passed legislation to reauthorize the FAA, including its authority to collect and spend money for repairs and replacement parts for our air traffic control system. I am proud that we worked together to get this bill over the finish line. Now the FAA can continue to play a critical role in the Federal Government's response to the powerful hurricanes that have hit our country.

HURRICANE RECOVERY EFFORTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the President is on his way to Puerto Rico

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S6267

to survey the hurricane damage personally and see how the Federal Government can continue to assist in the recovery efforts.

Our thoughts remain with the hurricane victims as they continue to piece their lives and communities back together.

During his visit, the President will have the opportunity to see the resilience of the Puerto Rican people. He can also witness the overwhelming support of their fellow Americans who have volunteered to help deliver relief. Much of that support has come from the military, including the men and women of Kentucky's own Air and Army National Guard, who have helped bring relief to Texas, Florida, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Just last week, the 101st Airborne Combat Aviation Brigade deployed from Fort Campbell in my home State to help support relief efforts in Puerto Rico.

President Trump will also have the chance to see the groundswell of generosity from our communities. Many donated money, food, and other essentials. Other brave Americans left their homes behind to go to the disaster sites to offer aid.

I am especially proud to recognize some of the Kentuckians who have volunteered to join the relief efforts in the wake of these storms.

The Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services selected eight fire departments from around my State to send to Florida to assist local operations after Hurricane Irma. Working 12-hour shifts, these firefighters responded to 911 calls in Tampa as residents began to move back into their homes.

Throughout my State, churches and nonprofits sent volunteers to help however they could. One religious organization arranged more than 200 volunteers to help flood victims in Texas and Florida. In all, they served over 78,000 meals, helped with laundry, and distributed many bottles of water.

The Kentucky Humane Society stepped in to care for pets that were affected, and chapters of the American Red Cross from across the Commonwealth have mobilized to help where needed.

The Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives sent dozens of linemen to Georgia to help restore power after Hurricane Irma. The joint effort from 17 of our State's electric cooperatives represents one of the largest mutual deployments in Kentucky's history.

These Kentuckians, along with so many more, have generously given their time and labor to help their fellow Americans during this time of suffering. And they aren't alone. Compassionate men and women from around the country have joined the cause to help ease the pain of the victims.

Along with my colleagues in the Senate, I am committed to continuing to do our part to support relief efforts with FEMA, the Department of Defense, and the rest of the administra-

tion. We will soon receive a supplemental funding request from the administration. When we do, I expect Congress will act quickly to ensure that the men and women providing critical support in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have the resources they need. The Senate will continue to stand with those suffering from these devastating storms.

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 and resume consideration of the Cissna nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lee Francis Cissna, of Maryland, to be Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, the Nation continues to reel from the awful events of Sunday night in Las Vegas—the most deadly mass shooting in modern American history. It has gotten even deadlier in the last 24 hours, with 59 dead and 527 injured—some wounded by gunfire, some injured because they were trampled in the chaos. There were 22,000 concertgoers who fled for their lives from the scene. The police found 23 guns in the hotel room of the monster who committed this atrocity and 19 more at his home. Some of them had been modified to cause even more carnage.

Of course, as always, the beauty of the American people and the first responders pulled through. I saw on TV today a man who had been shot. Two young women came and risked their lives while those shots were going.

They took off his belt and tied a tourniquet around his upper thigh because he was bleeding profusely from his leg. They saved his life. He said he will never know who they are, but they saved his life. That story, I am sure, will be repeated over and over again. The valor, the bravery of the average American and the greatness of our first responders is the only counterpoint to the evil, the carnage, the horror we have all witnessed.

We cannot banish evil or madness from the Earth, but we sure can do what we can in our power to make our country a safer place. We need commonsense reforms, and these reforms have broad public support.

In the face of tens of thousands of gun deaths every year, too many Republicans in Congress have tried to enact the dream agenda of the NRA and the gun lobby. They have pursued a national concealed carry law. Can you imagine if that were to have passed? This horrible man could have concealed carry under the laws of Nevada and gone to Times Square in New York City or to Walt Disney World in Florida and just shot away.

Most of our police organizations are against this concealed carry bill. In light of the carnage, in knowing of the evil that exists, with the power of evil magnified by guns and automatic weapons, how can we try to pursue it?

What about gun silencers? There is a move actually in this Congress—it is in the House right now, and I am sure it has support on the other side of the aisle in the Senate—to make it easier for citizens to acquire silencers. Why? Let me tell you something. One of the few ways the police had to go after the shooter was trying to hear the sound of where the guns were coming from.

Thank God our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have pulled back on this bill. It is not the first time. They had to postpone a hearing on the bill when the congressional baseball team was attacked during an early morning practice. When two mass shootings force you to delay a bill that would make those mass shootings harder to detect and stop, maybe it is a sign that you ought to let go of the bill once and for all.

Of course, we have this absurd NRA nostrum that if everyone were to have a gun, we would all be safe because if people were in an arena—a place—where someone was shooting, they could shoot them back. They sure could not have shot back at someone who was 32 stories up in a hotel. This idea that the only thing that can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun is absurd in this situation. It is absurd in many situations.

So where do we go from here?

This place has been gridlocked on the issue of gun control for a while. President Trump, before he ran for office, was for certain sane, rational, limited aspects of gun control. After Sandy, he called for the gun laws to be tightened. I know when he ran, that the power of