

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 6, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Wednesday, December 6; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of our Democratic colleagues.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

CONFIRMATION OF KIRSTJEN
NIELSEN

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, we just concluded a few minutes ago the confirmation of the President's nominee for the next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

As it turns out, the Presiding Officer is the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, which has jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security. I have the privilege of being the immediate past chairman of the committee. The Presiding Officer and I have worked together on a wide range of issues that actually pertain to the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security.

I don't want to speak out of turn, but I believe both the Presiding Officer, who is as well the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and I believe that one of the most important ingredients of success of any organization—I don't care whether it is a football team, a body such as the U.S. Senate, a hospital, a school, a State, a country—the key is always leadership. The key is leaders who are always interested in figuring out what is the right thing to do; people who believe in the Golden Rule, treating other people the way they want to be treated; and leaders who focus on excellence in everything they do. They surround themselves with the best people they can find. They embrace the idea that if a program or whatever is not perfect, let's make it better. The best leaders with whom I have been privileged to serve are those who just don't give up. When they are sure they are right, they just don't give up.

We have had a series of leaders, and I have been privileged to know every

Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security since the very beginning of time, when I served as Governor and when I served in the Congress. I served with the first Secretary we had and others who have succeeded him—most recently, John Kelly, retired Marine four-star general who came from his command in SOUTHCOM to become Secretary of Homeland Security. He is now at the White House serving as the Chief of Staff to the President. We are grateful to him for his service.

Since he has moved on to that post, it has left a vacancy to lead the Department of Homeland Security. I think Elaine Duke is filling in quite nicely as the Acting Secretary. She was previously Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security. Now that Kirstjen Nielsen has been confirmed, we will see whether Elaine Duke will step back and be the Deputy. I think a number of us hope that she will, but that is not our decision to make.

The vote today in favor of Kirstjen Nielsen's confirmation was, I believe, 62 ayes and 37 nays. Every now and then, we have the opportunity to vote and it is a close call. Not all of our votes are easy; some are more difficult than others. But for a number of us, this was a close call.

I think Kirstjen Nielsen is arguably bright. She is well-spoken. She has appeared before our committee and taken any number of questions. She was asked and has answered hundreds of questions from committee members and questions for the record. She has been good enough to meet with me not once but twice. I said to her yesterday when we met that I think she is a person with a good heart and good values—again, well-spoken and bright. She is especially strong with respect to cyber security.

The real question mark for me—one of the question marks for me, among others—was, for someone who has at best only led organizations with maybe a couple dozen people to now be thrust into—or selected to serve in this position, where she will be leading 240,000 people at the Department of Homeland Security, spread out all over the world, is a daunting challenge. As someone who has been privileged to spend 23 years of my life in the Navy as a naval flight officer, then as a treasurer, a Congressman, a Governor, a Senator, and I led the National Governors Association—for me, leading an organization of that size would be daunting. I would expect that the same is true for Kirstjen Nielsen.

John Kelly, who for 6 months was our Secretary, has a lot of confidence in her, and I have a lot of confidence in John Kelly. JOHN MCCAIN and I introduced him as the ranking member and the chairman when General Kelly was nominated to be Secretary. JOHN MCCAIN sat on one side of the nominee, and I sat on the other. I think we have taken his recommendation to heart, and that was maybe the tie-breaker for some of us.

When I spoke with Kirstjen yesterday, we talked about her core values and what guides her in making decisions. I think some of it is faith-based, which I find encouraging; the idea of treating other people the way we want to be treated; the willingness to welcome people to our home, our country, who are strangers.

So we will see how it plays out. I think it is critically important that—just as I try to surround myself with people who have strength and fill in for my weaknesses, my hope is that is exactly what will happen when she assumes the responsibility to lead the Department of Homeland Security.

So I would say to Kirstjen Nielsen: Congratulations on your confirmation, and we look forward to working with you, hopefully agreeing a lot more often than we disagree. Good luck and God bless.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. CARPER. Next, Mr. President, I have a couple of charts here. I don't know whether the Presiding Officer can see them from where he is sitting. I can barely see them from right here.

The first chart we are going to take a look at deals with the—on this side over here, we have median household income for Americans since 1987. Over on this side, we have corporate profits in the billions of dollars.

When we come back here to 1987, we look at the orange line here, and that is median household income in 2016 dollars. The median household income in 1987 was just a shade over \$50,000. All of these years later, in 2017, it is just a little bit higher. It has gone up a little bit but not a whole lot—maybe close to \$60,000, but I don't know that it is any higher than that. It has gone up a little bit, really, over the last few years.

The green line here on our chart is corporate profits. When we go back to 1987, corporate profits were equal to about—it looks like \$30,000 billion, and if I am not mistaken, that would be maybe \$30 trillion. I hope I have that right. That was 1987. If you look at what has happened, it has gone up and down. This is during the great recession when we fell off the cliff and almost fell off the world. In 2007, 2008, we started to climb back out of it. Today, the corporate profits have roughly doubled in this country since 1987—roughly doubled—while median household income is growing a tiny bit but actually not that much.

Let's look at the next chart, and then I will not speak from the charts. I guess the lesson here again is that corporate profits have gone up rather nicely. There were some ups and downs because of the great recession, but they are on an uptick now.

This is a look at the national deficit and debt. I know the Presiding Officer has a great concern about this.

I came to the House I guess in 1983. I had been State treasurer for a State

that had the worst deficit in the country. The State of Delaware tied with Puerto Rico. We were a mess.

Finally, Pete du Pont, a Republican, did a wonderful job for 8 years as Governor. I had the opportunity to serve with him in the State treasury and later on to become the Governor of the State of Delaware, when we went to a triple A credit rating for the first time in State history.

I came here in 1983 as a Congressman who was concerned about debts and deficits. My sense is that here in the Senate and the House, we don't have a lot of deficit hawks these days. If we do, their voices are not heard very loudly. We are on a course that is unsustainable in terms of our accumulation of more debt.

This is an interesting chart because it goes back to really the beginning of World War II, the war my dad was in and my uncle served in. There is a lot of red ink here, and it shows the deficit as a percentage of gross domestic product, and it reached about 30 percent right in the middle of World War II. After the war, we have the green down here where we actually had some surpluses in the late 1940s and the early 1950s. We actually had a surplus in 1968. Then we went from 1968 to about 1998 and never balanced the budget, all of those years at one time. The last 4 years of the Clinton administration, we balanced our budget four times. It was a bipartisan deal.

The chairman of the House Budget Committee, if I am not mistaken, was a Republican from Ohio, John Kasich, who is now the Governor of Ohio. John and I came to the House together in 1983. He came as a deficit hawk as well. He and the Clinton administration obviously did a nice job to help to balance four budgets. We haven't done so well since then. Since then, we have shown, right from here up to the present, which would be right around there, one deficit after the other—deficits that peaked out over the last year of George W. Bush's administration, when we were again falling into the great recession, and we have spent a lot of money in stimulus to try to get us out of recession.

The debt dropped from about \$1.4 trillion per year down to about one-third that much, and now it is starting to go up again. The debt last year—the year that ended on September 30—the deficit had bounced back up to \$666 billion again in 1 year—a lot of money. The prospect going forward is not encouraging; it is actually discouraging.

The tax cut bill that was passed in this Chamber just a few days ago—last Saturday morning, in the middle of the night—called for tax breaks, some for individuals for a while, some for corporations that tend to be more permanent in nature. But for me, maybe the most troubling aspect of the tax bill that was enacted last Saturday morning, aside from the way it was pushed through, is the idea that we got, right here on the Senate floor, I think some-

time around the middle of the evening last Friday night, a 400-page amendment, over 400 pages that we had never read, never seen, with scribbling on the side of the pages. The idea was that somehow we were supposed to read that and understand it and then vote it up or down in an amendment in like 4 or 5 hours. Good luck. That just doesn't happen. That would be the triumph of man's hope over experience.

I always ask these four questions when people ask about what we should do in tax reform. I say, No. 1, it ought to be fair. What we have actually passed is something where most of the benefits, the lion's share, go to people who are, frankly, very wealthy. Folks who are lower and lower middle income may realize some benefits in the first few years following the implementation of the new tax cut, but over time—say, by 2025—families with incomes up to \$75,000 per family are going to be realizing not a net gain from the tax cut but actually a net loss, which is not good.

I always ask: Is it fair? I think it is not fair when you look at the numbers and see how middle-income folks fare and those who happen to be wealthier fare.

The second question I always ask is this: Will it foster economic growth or diminish it? I focus a lot of my time and energy on economic growth, job creation, and job preservation. Senators, Presidents, and Governors don't create jobs. We create a nurturing environment for job creation, job preservation, and workforce, transportation infrastructure, protection of intellectual property rights, public safety, access to water and wastewater. There are a lot of things that contribute to economic growth and so forth. Tax policy is important. Commonsense regulation is important as well.

But my second question is this: Does the tax reform bill that we passed foster economic growth? Not really. To a modest extent, some, but not really. One of the things it does is it suggests uncertainty and the lack of predictability going forth, which I don't think businesses really care for.

One area where we, frankly, decided not to spend any money this time is the area where we could actually get the biggest bang for our buck in terms of growing GDP. We have a transportation infrastructure that is woefully inadequate these days, in terrible shape—roads, highways, bridges, rail, ports, and airports. We have many broad areas in the country that don't have access to the internet.

We just passed a tax bill that is going to increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. Unfortunately, none of that goes to pay for or to make investments in things that would grow GDP by a lot and would provide employment opportunities—not just for a couple hundred thousand people but for millions of people, over the next decade or so. None of that is there.

The third question I always look at in terms of tax reform is this: Does it

simplify the Tax Code or make it more complex? The new provision that was adopted is going to increase by this much the thickness of the Tax Code, or by about another 15 or 20 percent—not making it simpler or easier to understand, but actually more difficult.

The last piece I consider is this: What is the effect on the deficit? Pumping up the deficit by another \$1.5 trillion is making the situation even worse.

We are going to go to conference now, the House and Senate. My hope is that it will be more bipartisan than what we saw here in the Senate. It needs to be. I quoted last week and I quoted again today an old African-American proverb: If you want to go fast, travel alone. If you want to go far, travel together. Our Republican friends, at least on this side of the Congress, for the most part have chosen to go fast and to go alone. That is unfortunate. The last time we did tax reform, we did it together. It took 3 years, but it was a more lasting and, I think, a better outcome.

DACA

Mr. CARPER. I want to pivot for just a moment, Mr. President, and talk about workforce. Most people, when they think of Dreamers and DACA, think of young people who were born in other countries and maybe at a very early age were brought here by their parents and maybe have no recollection of the countries they grew up in. But they have been here now. They came here, were raised here, and were educated here, many of them in our public schools. A number of them had the opportunity to go to college.

Delaware State University is a historically Black university in Dover and is the home of the Hornets. It is a wonderful land grant school that I have been heavily invested in as Governor and even now to make sure they rise and continue to improve. I am very proud of all of the progress that has been made there. I was invited by their president, Harry Williams, to come to their campus a couple of months ago. We met with Dreamers, "DACAs," students born in other countries who were brought here by their parents years ago.

I have met a lot of college students in my day. I have been joined on the floor here by Senator DURBIN from Illinois. He has probably met at least as many as I have—probably more, because he is from a bigger State.

I don't think I have ever been more impressed by a group of college students in my life than the young men and women I met that day. We literally happened to be there at 11 in the morning that day, when the President's administration announced that the time for the Dreamers was going to expire in 6 months, unless Congress was somehow able to put together an agreement and pass legislation—which is hard to do without the support of the administration.