



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2017

No. 208

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.

Eternal God, in this season of gladness and cheer when many celebrate Your breakthrough at Bethlehem, we pause to thank You for Your mercy and grace. While we were sinners, You initiated the process of our redemption and restoration. Great is Your faithfulness.

Lord, make our lawmakers ambassadors of reconciliation for Your Kingdom, using them to demonstrate Your precepts and represent Your purposes. As they strive to bring the illumination of Your wisdom to a dark world, may people see their labors and glorify Your Holy Name. Because of our Senators' faithful service, may our Nation experience the unity of Your healing presence.

Lord, let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with us.

We pray in Your merciful 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. SULLIVAN). The majority leader is recognized.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, last night, the United States accomplished

something really remarkable. After years of work, dozens of hearings, and an open process, we passed a historic overhaul of the Nation's Tax Code. It will deliver real relief to families and small businesses all across our country. We passed tax reform to spur the American economy, to encourage job creation and grow economic opportunity, to bring jobs and investment home, and to put more money into the pockets of hard-working men and women whom we represent. We voted to repeal ObamaCare's individual mandate tax so that low- and middle-income families are not forced to purchase something they either don't want or can't afford. We voted to responsibly develop more of Alaska's oil and gas potential, strengthening our economy and our national security in the process.

I would like to commend my colleagues in the Senate for their work to pass these historic reforms and bring our Tax Code into the 21st century.

I want to extend special thanks to Senate Finance Committee Chairman ORRIN HATCH, a skilled legislator whose expertise was essential to shepherding this legislation through a challenging process while faced with complete and total obstruction.

I thank Chairman MIKE ENZI for his assistance and Chairman LISA MURKOWSKI and Senator DAN SULLIVAN, who worked tirelessly to bring the people of Alaska a victory on energy exploration for which they have been waiting for almost 40 years.

I am grateful to the other Senate conferees—Senators CORNYN, THUNE, PORTMAN, SCOTT, and TOOMEY—who worked day and night to get this legislation across the finish line.

And of course, in addition to Senator HATCH, his colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee deserve our gratitude as well: Senators BURR, CASSIDY, CRAPO, GRASSLEY, HELLER, ISAKSON, and ROBERTS. This could not have happened without all of them.

Of course, a great deal of credit goes to President Trump, Vice President PENCE, and their dedicated White House team. Their efforts were absolutely essential to this process, and we are proud to have worked together to deliver on a key part of the President's agenda.

It goes without saying that tax reform would have been impossible without Speaker RYAN, Chairman BRADY, and the Members of the House who share our commitment to make taxes lower, simpler, and fairer. I am proud to call them my colleagues.

When the final version of this historic law passes the House later today, it will await the President's signature. Then, families and small businesses—like so many in my home State of Kentucky—can begin to enjoy the benefits. Our constituents called out for relief from the Obama economy, and Congress delivered.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on a different matter, the Senate's work this week is not finished. Before Friday, Congress must agree on funding to sustain the necessary operations of the Federal Government. I know that all our colleagues on both sides of the aisle want to keep the government funded and attend to a number of other urgent priorities. I am confident we can work together to do just that. Americans are counting on us, after all.

To begin with, our men and women in uniform are counting on us to provide the resources they require to fulfill their missions and keep the country safe. The burden of the Budget Control Act has fallen disproportionately on our All-Volunteer military. Under that law, defense cuts have outpaced non-defense cuts by \$85 billion since fiscal 2013. At the same time, the previous administration insisted that new defense spending be matched equally by

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



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new nondefense spending, notwithstanding the actual needs of our military.

This week, let's dispense with the arbitrary standard—as we did earlier this year—and provide our warfighters with the funding they need to accomplish the tasks put before them.

Americans whose premiums are soaring or whose coverage is in jeopardy because of the failures of ObamaCare are counting on us to take bipartisan steps toward stabilizing health insurance markets.

The parents of 9 million children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program are counting on us to renew the program's funding.

Our country's law enforcement professionals are counting on us to renew an important foreign intelligence program that helps them defend the homeland from those who wish us harm.

Veterans are counting on us to renew the popular Veterans Choice Program and preserve their flexibility to access care outside of the VA system.

Just as we have done in the past, we need to pass a routine pay-go waiver to avoid a draconian sequester that none of my colleagues want to see take effect. Americans are counting on us not to inflict harmful cuts on Medicare and other essential operations.

I look forward to working together in the coming days to fund our government in a manner that does right by the American people.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The majority leader.

RECOGNIZING THREATS TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND EXPRESSION AROUND THE WORLD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 277, S. Res. 150.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 150) recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered

made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 150) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of May 3, 2017, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RECOGNIZING THE CREW OF THE "SAN ANTONIO ROSE", B-17F, WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES DURING WORLD WAR II

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 326 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 326) recognizing the crew of the San Antonio Rose, B-17F, who sacrificed their lives during World War II, and honoring their memory during the week of the 75th anniversary of that tragic event.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 326) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of November 9, 2017, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL ERNIE PYLE DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 345.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 345) designating August 3, 2018, as "National Ernie Pyle Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 345) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of November 30, 2017, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF THE "LOS ANGELES"-CLASS ATTACK SUBMARINE THE USS "JACKSONVILLE" AND THE CREW OF THE USS "JACKSONVILLE"

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 362, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 362) recognizing the service of the Los Angeles-class attack submarine the USS Jacksonville and the crew of the USS Jacksonville, who served the United States with valor and bravery.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 362) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. 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.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night the Senate passed an awful, partisan rewrite of the Tax Code. I said a good deal about the bill over the course of the debate and added my concluding thoughts into the RECORD before the final vote, but let me just reiterate one point. The Republican tax bill will cement the Republican Party as the party of the wealthy and the party of the big corporations against the middle class and the working people of this country.

Corporations get permanent tax breaks. The individual tax breaks expire. By 2027, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, 83 percent of the middle class—that is almost 145