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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.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.

Our Father in Heaven, You clothe Yourself with light as with a robe. You spread the glorious Heavens with Your mighty hand. Listen now to our prayers, and forgive us for our conscious and unconscious transgressions.

Lord, bless our lawmakers until all they do may find the goals You have inspired. May they live this day with a greater dedication to serve You and humanity. Give them grace to fill every hour with an awareness of Your love, mercy, and grace.

We pray in Your great 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). 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 pro-

ceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Stuart Kyle Duncan, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today our colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee will vote to report the President's choice for the next Secretary of State.

It is really hard to imagine someone more thoroughly qualified than Mike Pompeo. His career is a success story on every single level. He graduated first in his class from West Point, served as a U.S. Army officer, and attended Harvard Law School. Then came success in business, and then Mike's neighbors elected him to Congress in 2010.

That impressive resume explains why, a little more than a year ago, a large bipartisan majority of Senators confirmed Mike as CIA Director. His qualifications were perfectly obvious, and, by all accounts, his track record at the CIA shows that vote of confidence was exactly the right decision. He has demonstrated mastery of the daily briefings he both receives and delivers. His high-quality counsel on sensitive matters has won the confidence not only of our national clandestine service but also of the Commander in Chief, and he has returned our CIA to the aggressive gathering of foreign intelligence. Along the way, he has built a reputation for listening to all points of view, trusting career staff, treating everyone fairly, and acting decisively.

In Mike Pompeo, the United States will have a chief diplomat who will enjoy the total confidence of the President and is uniquely qualified to reinvigorate our Foreign Service and represent our interests abroad. It is hard

to imagine a better nominee for this mission, at this moment, than Mike Pompeo. I look forward to upholding the tradition of this body and voting to confirm him this week.

The Senate will also vote later this afternoon to advance the nomination of Kyle Duncan of Louisiana to serve on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Duncan's legal credentials show that the President has made another outstanding choice.

With degrees from LSU and Columbia under his belt, he built an impressive record in litigation, rising to serve as appellate chief in the Louisiana office of attorney general.

His accomplishments also extend to private practice, where his work earned the respect of his colleagues and peers, including his opponents in court.

A few weeks ago, a law professor and litigator who sparred with Kyle Duncan in a high-profile case wrote:

Kyle Duncan is a magnificent nominee for the Fifth Circuit. . . . His confirmation should be supported by all who value judges committed to fairness and scrupulous application of the law.

A bipartisan group of current and former State solicitors general wrote to our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee to praise his nomination. Here is what they said:

As frequent advocates in the U.S. Courts of Appeals, we are well-acquainted with the qualifications and characteristics that make good judges, including intellect, integrity, legal experience, and temperament, all of which Mr. Duncan possesses in ample quantities.

They went on to say:

We came to know him as a highly skilled lawyer with an easygoing demeanor, and as someone we could routinely turn to for advice and interest on issues of mutual interest. Even though we have worked for state Attorneys General of different political stripes, we all agree that Kyle Duncan has the personal and professional qualities that should typify the federal judiciary.

No wonder the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the

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



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Federal Judiciary awarded Mr. Duncan its highest rating of “well qualified.”

I urge every one of our colleagues to take his credentials, experience, and bipartisan support into account. Let's vote to advance the Duncan nomination this afternoon.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, on another matter, in the last several weeks, we have focused on the contrast between the economic policies that my Democratic colleagues favor and the policies this Republican President and Republican Congress have put into effect.

Under nearly a decade of Democratic leadership, the American people saw slow and insufficient growth. For most workers in most industries, significant wage growth was nearly nonexistent; new opportunities were few and far between; and the new prosperity that was created was spread unevenly across the country.

Metropolitan areas with more than 1 million residents did OK under Democratic policies. Big cities captured nearly three-quarters of the limited job growth and more than 90 percent of population growth between 2010 and 2016. The rest of America fell further and further behind. Year after year, rural America, suburban America, smalltown America, and small cities across the country saw almost no progress. That is not a record to be proud of, and it is not one that Republicans would stand for. That is why we are implementing an inclusive opportunity agenda to get wages, opportunities, and prosperity growing again for all Americans.

We have cut job-killing redtape and passed historic tax relief for middle-class families, workers, and job creators. It is delivering results for Americans whom the Obama economy left behind. I hear frequently from workers and small business owners in my State about how lifting these burdens is changing their lives.

I recently heard from Senator GRASSLEY about the good things tax reform is doing in the State of Iowa. In Cushing, IA—population 220—the Anfinson Farm Store is using the new Tax Code to raise worker wages and give employees bonuses. Across the State, the 162 full-time manufacturing workers at Dyersville Die Cast are receiving their own tax reform bonuses. Iowa families will see lower heating and cooling bills, since tax reform is letting the State's utility companies deliver \$147 million in consumer savings. Iowans should be proud that both of their U.S. Senators voted for the historic reform that made all of this possible.

South of the border, in Missouri, it is a different story. There, too, tax reform is a big win for working families and small businesses. From big employers like Walmart to local businesses like Mid-Am Metal Forming, Missouri workers are reaping the benefits, but, unfortunately, only one of Missouri's Senators voted for it. The State's senior Senator voted on strict

party lines to block these historic tax cuts from reaching workers and families.

Maybe my Democratic colleagues still prefer the leftwing policy playbook that funnels jobs and prosperity into the biggest and richest cities but does very little for States like Missouri and Iowa. I am proud of Republicans who are taking things in a different direction, and all kinds of Americans are doing better because of it.

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. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NATIONAL PARK WEEK

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today marks the start of National Park Week.

As a fifth-generation Montanan and as someone who grew up in Bozeman—in fact, Mom and Dad moved there in 1964, just a short drive from America's first national park, Yellowstone—I am very excited to take this opportunity to celebrate the parks that are so very special to so many because, in Montana, hiking, backpacking, fishing, and white water rafting are a way of life.

I grew up spending as much time outdoors as possible, and I continue that tradition with my children today. In fact, my idea of a great time in August is to take our dogs, as many of our kids as we can get together—according to their schedules anymore—and take our backpacks and spend several days together in enjoying Montana's outdoors. As a father, I am grateful to share these experiences with our four children and instill in them a love for the outdoors. Frankly, what better place to do that and enjoy the outdoors than in our national parks.

While Montana is privileged to have two world-famous national parks in Glacier and Yellowstone, national parks are the pride of so many States from Florida to Colorado, to Maine.

Speaking of Maine, I am very glad to have partnered with my colleague from Maine in leading this week, as well as with an additional 26 of our colleagues around the country, supporting this resolution. I am pleased we will have the opportunity to recognize the tremendous value our national parks bring to so many.

As this week begins, I have one challenge for everyone. I challenge you to find time in your schedules and visit a national park. Our national parks are what make us distinctly American. In fact, you can go to findyourpark.com and find the closest park to you. I hope to see all of you out there sometime this year.

With that, I would like to turn it over to my colleague and my friend, the former Governor of Maine and now the Senator of Maine, ANGUS KING, who

joins me in leading National Park Week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I thank my distinguished colleague. I want to join with the chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Senator DAINES, to support this resolution which was adopted unanimously last week recognizing this week as National Park Week in this country.

When I left office as Governor of Maine in January of 2003, my family and I the next day took off in a 40-foot RV to see the country. My children were 12 and 9 at the time, and we basically circumnavigated America over the next 5½ months.

Just before coming to the floor, I went down the list of the parks we went to. The point I want to make is—and I get a bit emotional about this. This was the greatest experience of my life, to have taken my children to these parks with my wife, Mary; and to have seen and experienced them and experienced the people at the parks was just an unbelievable life-changing experience.

We went to Arches—I am doing them in alphabetical order, not geographically—Bad Lands; Big Bend in Texas, which, by the way, is one of the most beautiful places in the country and one of the least visited national parks; Bryce Canyon; Canyonlands; Capitol Reef; Carlsbad; the Grand Canyon—of course, every American should see the Grand Canyon. No picture, no movie, no helicopter movie, nothing can prepare you for the Grand Canyon; Mesa Verde; Olympic National Park in the State of Washington; the redwoods and sequoias in California; Shenandoah, just a few hours from here; St. John in the Virgin Islands; Yellowstone; Yosemite; and Zion. These are gems.

It has become commonplace to reference Ken Burns' statement that the national parks are “America's best idea,” starting with Yellowstone but spreading across the country. They mark our history, they mark our tremendous natural resources, and they are just pure inspiration.

I hope our colleagues can go, if only for 1 day. If you have 1 day, you can leave Washington and be in Front Royal, VA, in about an hour and a half and go down the Skyline Drive of Shenandoah National Park, one of the most beautiful places in the country and within a couple of hours of Washington. These parks are near every place. There are so many gorgeous and extraordinary places among this system.

In Maine, we have two—one is a national park and one is a national monument. We have Acadia National Park, which is the fifth most visited national park in the country, and it is enormously important. These parks are not only important to our spiritual well-being and the ability of our people