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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

King of Glory, robed with honor and majesty, enter the hearts of our law-makers today, and use them for Your glory. Fortify them with the knowledge that You will never leave or forsake them.

Lord, show them Your ways and teach them Your path. Leaning on Your wisdom, may they make ethical decisions that will receive Heaven's approval. Undergird them with Your might, enabling them to accomplish with Your power what they could not do on their own.

We pray in Your wonderful 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 17, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Sen-

ator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 847, Gina Haspel.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Gina Haspel, of Kentucky, to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Gina Haspel, of Kentucky, to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, James Lankford, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, John Hoeven, David Perdue, Lindsey Graham, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, James E.

Risch, John Thune, Todd Young, Ron Johnson, Cory Gardner.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, the Intelligence Committee took an important step toward confirming Gina Haspel to become the next Director of the CIA. A bipartisan majority voted to report her nomination favorably to the Senate. I look forward to promptly moving to a confirmation vote.

The committee's confidence is indicative of the strength of Ms. Haspel's testimony and her 30-plus-year record of CIA service. Throughout the process, she demonstrated candor, integrity, and a forthright approach to the committee's questions. She displayed the talent and expertise that make her uniquely qualified to face America's biggest national security challenges, whether in the area of counterterrorism or renewed international competition among great powers.

Out of the spotlight, whether at Langley or deployed abroad, Ms. Haspel has quietly earned the respect and admiration of those who matter most—the men and women of the CIA and distinguished current and former intelligence community leaders.

The safety and security of the American people depend on capable intelligence leadership. Gina Haspel is 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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right woman at the right time. Senators on both sides of the aisle agree. So I urge each of my colleagues to rise to the occasion and swiftly confirm our next CIA Director.

TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, with Republican policies shaking the regulatory rust off of the U.S. economy, American job creators, entrepreneurs, and working families have been thinking big again.

For 8 years, Democrats pushed a one-size-fits-all agenda that heaped outsized benefits on the largest cities and left the rest of the country struggling to catch up. Now Main Street businesses across America feel the wind is at their backs. So they are expanding their operations, buying more equipment, and hiring new workers.

For too long, taxpayers grappled with an outdated Federal Tax Code that seemed to keep more of their hard-earned income every year. Now, thanks to Republican tax reform, working families are seeing paychecks grow, special bonuses hit their bank accounts, and will send thousands of dollars less to the IRS next year.

Now that Congress and the President have put a stop to the last administration's rampant, top-down Federal rule-making, U.S. manufacturing is churning back to life as well. The new economic climate that is taking hold across the country has producers feeling more confident about planting deeper roots right here in the United States—new capital investment, new factories, new American jobs.

Novelis, a leading producer of rolled and recycled aluminum, broke ground just this week on a new factory in Guthrie, KY. The company is choosing the Commonwealth in which to build the 400,000-square-foot facility and create at least 125 new jobs, and they are not keeping any secrets about what is helping them make this investment. Here is a quote: "A favorable economic environment," including "the significant positive impact of tax reform in the U.S., reinforces Novelis' decision to expand at this time."

This is not just a Kentucky phenomenon. According to new survey data from the National Association of Manufacturers, more than 93 percent of U.S. manufacturing firms have a positive outlook. Already, 77 percent of manufacturers are reporting hiring new workers, and 86 percent say they are investing in plants and equipment.

Many American communities revolve around these manufacturing facilities. Sadly, during the Obama years, they were among the most likely to be left behind by the so-called "recovery," but now that is changing. Today, manufacturing wages are growing at their fastest pace in 17 years. These are just a few signs of our Nation's economic comeback under Republicans' pro-growth, pro-opportunity agenda.

Remember, not one of our Democratic colleagues voted with us to set

this train in motion—not one. They voted against cutting redtape for American manufacturers. They voted against the tax reforms that are growing paychecks and helping to create new jobs. They voted against the newly lowered utility rates that benefit both families and employers.

My Democratic colleagues like to talk about supporting the middle class. These days, it is looking more and more like that is all it is—just talk. Yet, while they occupy themselves with partisan politics, Republicans will keep on clearing the tracks and letting the American economy roll on ahead.

TRIBUTE TO BRENDAN DUNN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now, speaking of tax reform, I have to bid farewell to an outstanding member of my staff.

Brendan Dunn has been a key member of my leadership office team for the last 6 years. He has made an outsized impact as a trusted counselor and friend.

I, actually, stole Brendan from the Finance Committee in 2012. I am not sure if Chairman HATCH ever quite forgave me for it. If you have ever had the pleasure of witnessing Brendan in action, you will understand why he is a sought-after commodity, whether you need deep expertise on tax policy or the perfect movie quote for any occasion.

Brendan has been my trusted adviser on issues including tax policy, banking, trade, and pensions. So I am just glad that his last few months in the office could be a calm and laid-back period. All he had to do was play a leading role in crafting generational tax reform and help steer it across the finish line. Oh, then came Dodd-Frank reform, for good measure.

This Maryland native holds degrees from Holy Cross, Fordham, Georgetown, and Notre Dame, but you would not know that this unassuming leader and reliable source of comic relief holds a J.D. and a Ph.D. in political philosophy unless you needed to. That is the kind of guy Brendan is.

His many contributions to my team have benefited this body, the people of Kentucky, and the Nation. I know everyone who has gotten to work closely with him is sad to see him depart the Senate. I certainly am. Yet I have a hunch that his lovely wife, Lee, and his children—Patrick, Audrey, and Mary—will not mind seeing a little bit more of him.

So I offer Brendan my sincere thanks for a job very well done and wish him Godspeed for what lies ahead.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PAUL. 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.

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.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2019—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 36.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 384, S. Con. Res. 36, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2019 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2020 through 2028.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 45 minutes under the control of Senator PAUL or his designee and 45 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, this year there will be no budget presented by the Republicans or the Democrats. I think that is a bad idea. I think the government should have a budget. There should be a document that says what we are for, what we are against, and how we are going to spend our money. I think it is particularly important because we are incurring so much debt.

We may remember when Republicans campaigned against enormous spending by President Obama and \$1 trillion annual deficits. Now we are faced with enormous spending and \$1 trillion annual deficits from Republicans. I think it is important that we have a discussion about this.

Do we have too much debt? Some will say: Well, I have debt for my house, and that is not bad. The country has a lot of debt that they borrow against capital expenditures—things that don't expire. I think there is some truth to that. You can have a manageable amount of debt, particularly if it is against something you are borrowing that doesn't go away. But if you are borrowing money for the grocery store or for your apartment, that might be a bad thing. It will not last very long. You will do it for a month or two, and pretty soon the bank will come calling. So there is a point at which debt is too cumbersome, and there is too much of it.

Carmen Reinhart of the University of Maryland and Kenneth Rogoff of Harvard did a study linking debt to economic growth. They concluded that when a country exceeds 90 percent of their GDP, when their debt is almost