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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROB PORTMAN, a Senator from the State of Ohio.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God Almighty, may our law-makers take refuge in the shelter of Your wisdom and providence. Remind them that You are the potter and they are the clay. As they trust You to make the vessel You desire, fill their hearts with willingness to know and do Your will.

Lord, give them the wisdom to trust You to open doors that no one can shut, and close doors that no one can open. Do for them more than they can ask or imagine. In all they do, may they live for Your glory.

We pray in Your sacred 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, January 22, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ROB PORTMAN, a Senator from the State of Ohio, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

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.

FEDERAL REGISTER PRINTING SAVINGS ACT OF 2017

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 195, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 195, a bill to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell amendment No. 1917 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 1918, to change the enactment date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in 2 hours every Senator can vote to end

this government shutdown. At 12 noon we will vote to end the Democratic leader's filibuster and advance instead a bipartisan bill that would put this mess behind us.

The bill before us does three things that every Democrat and Republican should be able to support. First, it ends the shutdown and restores full funding for the Federal Government through February 8. Second, it extends health insurance for 9 million vulnerable children. Third, it will enable Congress to resume serious bipartisan talks on the important issues facing our Nation.

I respect the passion that many of our friends in this Chamber, both Democrat and Republican alike, bring to the major issues before the Senate—all of these issues. Each of us brings our own views and personal perspectives to discussions of immigration policy, healthcare reform, or details of government spending.

But we should not let the political feuds or policy disagreements obscure the simple fact that every Member of this body cares deeply about the challenges facing our country. All of us want to make life better for the American people.

Bearing this in mind, I hope and intend that we can reach bipartisan solutions on issues such as military spending, immigration and border security, and disaster relief before the February 8 deadline.

But yesterday evening, I restated my position that these negotiations can't last forever. Should these issues not be resolved by the time the funding bill before us expires on February 8, so long as the government remains open, it would be my intention to take up legislation here in the Senate that would address DACA, border security, and related issues, as well as disaster relief, defense funding, healthcare, and other important matters.

Let me be clear. This immigration debate will have a level playing field at the outset and an amendment process

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



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that is fair to all sides, and it would be my strong preference for the Senate to consider a proposal that could actually be signed into law. A bipartisan, bicameral group is already negotiating, and I look forward to completion of its work.

But it is abundantly clear that the Senate cannot make progress on any of these crucial matters until the government is reopened. We need to move forward. The very first step is ending the shutdown. It is evident that this government shutdown is doing nothing—absolutely nothing—to generate bipartisan progress on the issues the American people care about. Every day we spend arguing about keeping the lights on is another day we cannot spend negotiating DACA, defense spending, or any of our other shared priorities.

Let's join together and put the filibuster behind us and get back to work for the American people.

RECESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 11:30 this morning for conference meetings.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 10:33 a.m., recessed until 11:30 a.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. JOHNSON).

FEDERAL REGISTER PRINTING SAVINGS ACT OF 2017—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise today to urge Senate Democratic leadership to end their reckless government shutdown.

It is no secret that over the years I have made clear that I don't like funding our Federal Government from one shortsighted, bandaid bill to another. We must establish a path forward to responsibly fund our government for the long term. It is the responsible and right thing to do for our military, for future generations, for our veterans, and for the American people.

But rather than finding a long-term funding solution to ensure stability in our military, the Senate Democratic leadership has decided to shut down the government. What does that mean for our military? Well, for starters, critical defense projects have come to a halt. We could also see delays in maintenance of our critical aircraft, ships, and weapons systems at a time when our adversaries are becoming more aggressive and more advanced. Our servicemembers, who put their lives on the line every day for our country, don't know when they will receive a paycheck.

I have an adviser right now who is deployed to the Middle East. I received an email from him this morning. He said: It is really hard for all of us here knowing that our government is shut down. But every day it is the same for us here in Afghanistan. We will do what we need to do.

God bless him for that.

Iowa National Guardsmen are deployed overseas right now. One of my former units, the 248th Aviation Support Battalion, is spread out through the Middle East, doing their mission while we struggle to find a way forward for them here in Washington, DC.

Military schools have been canceled. I spoke to an Active-Duty Army officer this morning. She was scheduled for her precommand course this weekend, and her orders were canceled. She told me: I will not be able to go to that precommand course before I deploy. She will head overseas not having had a vital course to instruct her on leadership in the military. The likelihood of her picking up that course again in the future is near zero—near zero.

Additionally, having served as a battalion commander in the Iowa Army National Guard during our last government shutdown, I can tell you that these shutdowns have a significant impact on our National Guardsmen. A shutdown prohibits our citizen soldiers from participating in drill and training exercises essential to our military readiness.

Our public affairs officer sent out this notice this morning from the Iowa National Guard. The headline:

IOWA NATIONAL GUARD FEELS EFFECTS OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

More than 1,000 full-time federal technicians furloughed

That is in Iowa alone. "Approximately 400 personnel sent home from weekend training." That is just Iowa.

And 110,000 National Guardsmen were affected after this last weekend because of the shutdown. Should these men and women be called to defend our Nation in the face of danger, it is critical that they are properly prepared, and a government shutdown does not allow this. During the time that the government shutdown goes on, we are not able to maintain our equipment; that hurts our readiness. Our personnel can't do their wellness and medical checks; that hurts our readiness. Our military members can't get to their schools for advancement in their careers; that hurts our readiness. And once those orders to schools have been canceled, you can't just pick up on Tuesday or Wednesday or Thursday and say: OK, I am going to school now. There are only so many slots allocated, and if you miss that training period, you may be waiting months, perhaps even a year, in the National Guard to pick up those schools.

During a shutdown, our folks are furloughed. Depending on how long the government is shut down, our citizen soldiers might not receive enough training days to be adequately prepared for duty. This could also mean that their time serving throughout the year might not be included in their total years of service, potentially further jeopardizing their benefits and pay.

What a lot of folks here who haven't served in the military—the Reserves,

Guard, or Active Duty—don't understand is that in the Reserves and Guard you have to meet so many points in a year for that to be considered a good retirement year. If you fall a few days short of that, the entire year does not count toward your retirement. The entire year does not count toward your retirement.

Despite their rhetoric otherwise, Senate Democrats are turning their backs on our men and women in uniform by putting our military's resources and readiness in jeopardy. It is inexcusable.

Additionally, the legislation the Senate voted on Friday night would have reauthorized the Children's Health Insurance Program for 6 years—6 years—providing approximately 80,000 Iowa children with access to important healthcare services, especially in the rural and underserved areas.

Unfortunately, Senate Democratic leadership is playing political games and has opposed our efforts to ensure this critical funding is in place for children in Iowa and across the country. Instead, the Senate Democratic leadership's shutdown hurts Iowa's low-income children, puts rural and underserved areas at a major disadvantage, and disrupts States' abilities to ensure sound financial planning for their healthcare programs.

Folks, the reality is, this shutdown happened because Democratic leadership didn't get everything they wanted in this funding bill. They didn't get everything they wanted. As a result, they decided to hold hostage our military, our military's readiness, our children's healthcare, and our government.

You see, the Senate Democrats who chose to play politics also set arbitrary—arbitrary—deadlines regarding Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, also known as DACA. I, too, want to ensure that Congress finds a solution for DACA recipients. We have many, many recipients in Iowa. Many of my colleagues want to see resolution on this as well.

America is a nation of immigrants, and our diversity truly is our strength. It is incredibly important that we find a fix for DACA recipients, as they are so important to the fabric of our communities and to our future.

Many young, undocumented children were brought here truly through no fault of their own. Congress has been and must continue to work together to identify and pursue a measured approach that addresses DACA recipients' unique situation and also respects the importance of our immigration laws, keeps our borders secure, and discourages future illegal immigration.

There is still time to achieve a solution. There is still time. But holding the government hostage and stalling important discussions on DACA really is nonsensical.

Some of my Democratic colleagues are starting to show a willingness to work through these issues and reopen the government, and I am asking them