



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 2018

No. 116

## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, most holy, wise, and powerful, You are the Governor of the Universe. Keep our lawmakers this day in health of body, soundness of mind, and purity of heart. Infuse them with a spirit of courage that comes from believing that their times are in Your hands. Lord, strengthen them to labor for the fulfillment of Your purposes, empowered by You to navigate through life's turbulent waters. Direct them through every difficulty, comfort them in times of sorrow, and supply their needs according to the riches of Your grace.

We pray in Your great 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, July 11, 2018.

To the Senate:

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

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

ORRIN G. HATCH,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. COTTON 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.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian Allen Benzckowski, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

#### NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday I had an opportunity to meet with Judge Brett Kavanaugh as we begin preparations for his confirmation process to the Supreme Court. It is really impossible not to come away impressed. Judge Kavanaugh is the real deal. He has the all-star legal resume and the top-light academic credentials. His extensive judicial record is defined by fairness, thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and analytical precision. I was already confident the President had

made an outstanding choice. Now I am even more confident. My colleagues here and Americans around the country won't have to take my word for it; just look to one of Judge Kavanaugh's former professors at Yale Law School. Here is what Professor Akhil Amar wrote in the New York Times: "It is hard to name anyone with judicial credentials as strong as those of Judge Kavanaugh."

Current faculty at Yale Law described him as a "true intellectual," "a leading thinker," and "a wonderful mentor and teacher to our students."

Even at Harvard, his alma mater's archrival, a scholar agrees that Judge Kavanaugh is "a generous, honorable, kind person."

Ask the legal professionals who have clerked for him on the DC Circuit. They are in a better position than most to speak to his writing as a jurist. In a letter to our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, 34 of them share that Judge Kavanaugh "drafts opinions painstakingly, writing and rewriting until he is satisfied each opinion is clear and well-reasoned, and can be understood not only by lawyers but by the parties and the public."

As the confirmation process gets underway, I have a distinct feeling this isn't the only testimony of this sort that we will be hearing. Judge Kavanaugh seems to impress everyone with whom he crosses paths—at least those who haven't blindly announced in a fit of partisanship their opposition to this nomination before he was even named.

I am glad that President Trump has made such a strong selection, and I look forward to our colleagues in the Judiciary Committee taking up this nomination.

Mr. President, speaking of the personnel business, we are continuing this week to process President Trump's qualified nominees for other important positions in the judicial and executive branches. Yesterday, we confirmed 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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22nd circuit court judge since January of 2017.

Now we are considering Brian Benczkowski, the President's choice to serve as Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division at the Department of Justice. His resume includes distinguished service in five different leadership positions at the Department of Justice under three Attorneys General. His nomination has won praise from a number of former Justice Department officials who served under Presidents of both parties. Their letter describes this nominee as "a tireless worker . . . a fine leader and colleague . . . honest and a straight shooter." I look forward to voting to confirm him later today and to continuing to confirm more of the President's team.

#### JOB GROWTH

Mr. President, on one final matter, last week, the Labor Department released its monthly jobs report. As has become a pattern, it contained good news about the state of job opportunities across our country. In June alone, our economy created 213,000 new jobs, with contributions from nearly every sector. That continues a prolonged streak of strong jobs performance month after month, quarter after quarter.

The pro-growth, pro-jobs policies of this united Republican government—from historic tax relief to sweeping regulatory reform—are helping unleash this wave of new opportunity and new prosperity for America's workers and middle-class families.

More than 600,000 Americans entered the workforce last month alone—another sign that the Obama-era stagnation continues to lose its grip on our communities. The rate of hiring reached its highest level in more than a decade. Here is another promising sign: the rate at which Americans are quitting their jobs voluntarily. Economists tell us this is an important sign of a healthy job market because it indicates workers are moving upward, seeking better pay or superior benefits at a different employer. That number just hit its highest level in more than 17 years.

More jobs; more opportunities; more Americans coming off of the sidelines and getting back into the workforce; more Americans moving up the ladder to bigger and better things and opening up their current positions for other jobseekers at the same time—helping to produce conditions like these is what Republicans had in mind when we chipped away at the regulatory rust that kept American job creators from doing what they do best. That is what we had in mind when we used the Congressional Review Act a record 16 times to relieve bureaucratic bloat that had forced job creators and entrepreneurs to cut back or close up shop. That is what we had in mind when we overhauled our Tax Code so it better rewards workers and more strongly encourages job creators to deepen their roots in American soil. Republicans are

proud of this thriving job market, and we are proud that our policies are playing a part in making it happen.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant Democratic leader.

#### THAI RESCUE MISSION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the world breathed a sigh of relief. For almost 2 weeks now, we have had our attention focused on 12 children, Thai soccer team players who were lured into a cave with their coach and were thought to be lost for days. They couldn't be found in that flooded cave.

Then came the good news that they were discovered. They were still alive. It was a miracle.

Then came an extraordinary challenge: how to safely bring these 12 children out of this trap they were in and bring them to safety. I cannot imagine the effort that was undertaken. It included countries from around the world and the United States coming together to provide extraordinary levels of assistance at great cost to save the lives of these 12 children, to bring them out of this trap they were in and reunite them with their families.

All the prayers and all the hard work, all the bravery and all the investment paid off. These children are safe, as is their coach. They are currently being tended to for medical care, but the day will soon come when they will be back in the warm embrace of their families.

It was a great illustration of the caring heart of people around the world for children they had never seen; children who, through no fault of their own, found themselves in a deadly circumstance; children separated from their families with no hope when it came to their future. People responded. It was a great moment for the world to reflect on those children.

#### FAMILY SEPARATION

Mr. President, I wish to reflect on some other children. I wish to reflect on the 3,000 children forcibly removed from their parents' arms at the borders of the United States of America over the last several months. These children were victims of the zero tolerance policy of the Trump administration—a policy which Attorney General Sessions announced that resulted in those who appeared at the border, whether or not they were there for legitimate claims of asylum, being treated as criminals, and, treated as criminals, their children were removed from them.

I met with some of those children. It was 2 weeks ago in Chicago. It was at one of the agencies that the Department of Health and Human Services has used for decades to provide safe care for children who are unaccompanied at our border. Historically, those children came to the borders of United States without an adult, but in this circumstance, there were 66 children in Chicago who fit a different definition. While at the border, they were actually removed by the U.S. Government from the arms of their parents.

Of the 66 children in the Chicago facility, 22—one-third of them—were under the age of 5. It is an important fact to keep in mind as we consider what has happened.

I come to the floor to speak about the Trump administration's shameful policy of forcibly removing innocent children from their parents. Since our Nation's tragic failure during World War II to rescue Jewish refugees who fled Hitler, generations of Americans and leaders of both political parties—Republicans and Democrats—have tried to set an example for the world by providing safe haven to the world's most vulnerable people.

Ask the Cuban Americans which country opened its doors for them when they tried to escape the communism of Fidel Castro. It was the United States of America, and we are better for it. Three Members of the U.S. Senate are Cuban Americans who can trace their lineages to that refugee flow from the island to our shores.

Ask the Soviet Jews, who were persecuted under Soviet rule and who finally found freedom of religion and opportunity here in the United States, whether the U.S. refugee policy was good for them. Of course, it was, and it was good for America.

Ask those who came out of Vietnam, who stood by our side during that bloody war and came to this country as refugees to escape persecution, whether that was the right choice for them. It was, and it was the right choice for America, most certainly.

Now we face the worst refugee crisis in history, and what is the United States of America's official policy? The Trump administration is doing everything in its power to prevent innocent victims of war and terrorism from even seeking safe haven in our country.

The Northern Triangle countries of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala are the sources of the vast majority of migrants who arrive at our southern border. These people are driven to our borders by horrific gang and sexual violence. What is at the root cause of that violence? It is the appetite for narcotics in the United States. It is the drug money that flows south from our border into Mexico and Central America. It is the firearms that flow by the thousands into South and Central America from the United States of America. This creates these gangs and creates these cartels that bring such violence on local people.

These countries have among the highest homicide rates in the world. Girls face a constant threat of sexual violence and rape and have little protection from local authorities. Is it any wonder that in desperation so many of them seek our shores and seek our country for the safety of their kids? This is why families are taking extraordinary risks to flee to our border. Any parent would do the same to save a child.

What has been the Trump administration's response to these families