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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 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 Lord God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, thank You for this fresh opportunity to do Your will on Earth.

Guide our lawmakers. Give them consciences void of offense toward You and humanity and honesty of conduct. May they bring You their daily challenges, casting their cares on You. Lord, help them to draw more fully from Your inexhaustible resources, claiming Your promise to provide for all their needs. Use them to bring peace, justice, and prosperity to our Nation.

And Lord, bless the members of the illustrious fall 2017 page class as they prepare to leave us.

We pray in Your loving 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. YOUNG). The majority leader is recognized.

### WORK OF THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this week, the Senate has moved past a partisan paralysis and checked off several important items for the American people.

On Monday, we passed the bipartisan measure that funds the government

through February 8. But that bill didn't only end the shutdown, it also extended the State Children's Health Insurance Program for 6 years. That is long-term security for millions of vulnerable children and peace of mind for their families. And the bill delayed three onerous taxes that ObamaCare would otherwise have imposed on the American people.

Yesterday, I filed cloture on commonsense legislation to protect unborn children who can feel pain. There are only seven countries left that still permit elective abortion after 20 weeks, including us, unfortunately, China, and North Korea. On issues of human dignity, this is not the company we ought to keep. I look forward to voting to advance this bill next week.

We also made important headway in another vital area—the personnel business. We confirmed three of President Trump's highly qualified nominees for important posts. We have a new Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Mr. Powell. We have a new Secretary of Health and Human Services, Mr. Azar. And we have a new Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, our former colleague Sam Brownback. Here in the Senate, Mr. Brownback championed legislation to combat human trafficking and work to facilitate cooperation on issues facing vulnerable children. As the voices of religious minorities are being suppressed around the world, I am glad they will have Ambassador Brownback to speak up for them.

Of course, a great deal of work lies ahead of us. In the near future, we need to make bipartisan progress on areas such as immigration and border security, disaster relief, healthcare, and securing adequate funding for our Armed Forces. It is my strong preference that Senators reach bipartisan agreements on these issues in advance of the February 8 deadline. Fortunately, with the government shutdown behind us, serious discussions have resumed on all

these matters. A bipartisan, bicameral group, including Senators CORNYN and DURBIN, is hard at work on immigration. We will also hear from the White House on Monday, and I look forward to the framework they will present.

I am optimistic these ongoing negotiations will lead to results; nonetheless, I came to the floor on Sunday night and again on Monday to restate a possibility I had previously discussed with Members with diverse views on immigration policy. I restated that if the February 8 deadline for the current funding bill passes and a long-term agreement still eludes us, as long as the government remains open, the Senate will proceed to a variety of priorities on the subject of immigration, including border security, the DACA issue, and other aspects of immigration policy.

The bill I choose to introduce for debate will have an amendment process that will ensure a level playing field at the outset. The amendment process will be fair to all sides, allowing Members to offer their own legislation for consideration and votes. While I obviously cannot guarantee any outcomes, let alone supermajority support, I can ensure the process is fair to all sides.

I am glad that my restating this simple position helped my Democratic colleagues to persuade their leader to abandon his filibuster and permit the government to reopen. The American people are waiting for us to act as soon as possible, so I hope that hard work and honest discussions will yield agreements before February 8.

### TAX REFORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, on Tuesday, President Trump will deliver his first State of the Union Address. He will have good news to deliver on a variety of fronts. I am particularly looking forward to his remarks on our economy.

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



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Consumer confidence is up. Unemployment is down. Markets are breaking records. From small businesses to our largest job creators, pay raises, bonuses, and plans for new investments are all in season.

Of course, the engine of American prosperity is the American people, but smart policy can help by getting the government out of their way.

Last December, Republicans in the House and the Senate joined the President to deliver once-in-a-generation tax reform. Every day, more evidence piles up that tax reform is already working for the American people. The headlines are full of major employers announcing pay raises and bonuses for workers, as well as new investments.

For example, Brown-Forman—a global spirits company headquartered in my hometown of Louisville that employs more than 1,000 Kentuckians—announced yesterday that tax reform will help the company to start a new charitable foundation for community investment and commit \$120 million to fund employee pensions.

Soon, thanks to tax reform, a Main Street small business owner will finally be able to realize her dream to expand into the vacant shop next door. Of course, that will mean hiring more help.

Soon, thanks to tax reform, a father-and-son manufacturing plant will be able to afford the new equipment they have been eyeing and give their workers new skills in the process.

Stories like these may not make waves here in Washington, but believe me, they will be front-page news in communities all across our country. From coast to coast, Americans' lives will improve as Main Street businesses operate for the first time under a 21st-century tax code.

This is not just a tax law for the big guys. Now even the smallest businesses will be able to take a significant deduction on their business income, giving them more money to buy new equipment, hire new employees, or provide health coverage for their team.

So much focus has been on bonuses, pay raises, and 401(k) matches, and for good reason. But we should not forget all of the jobs that will be created when businesses decide to invest more because they can immediately deduct their capital expenditures. I am already hearing from small business owners this law was designed to help.

Before tax reform, one franchise restaurant owner in Kentucky wrote me to say that “the current high tax rate that I pay as a pass-through entity reduces the amount of earnings I can reinvest into my business, employees, and community.” She went on to say, “I am very encouraged that tax reform is under way in Congress and hope that it can be accomplished in a timely manner.” Well, Republican majorities in Congress and the President did just that.

In Nicholasville, KY, another constituent of mine operates a rental busi-

ness for event equipment. He recently explained that “the relief that will be provided by the new tax bill gives companies like mine the capital to purchase new inventory . . . as well as hire additional employees.”

Summing it up, American enterprise is thriving. Tax reform helped make it happen.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 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 R.D. James, of Missouri, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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 Democratic leader is recognized.

##### DACA AND OTHER ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, there are now only 13 days remaining before the continuing resolution expires on February 8. In that short amount of time, we must seek a budget deal, an agreement on healthcare legislation, and a bipartisan bill to protect the Dreamers and provide for border security. All these items are important. All of them are urgent, and we are working hard to get them all done.

On the issue of immigration, the bipartisan group of moderate Senators should continue trying to find a consensus. I think that is an excellent idea. The White House, unfortunately, has proven unreliable and wildly unpredictable. Within the course of hours, they say different things. Every time the President moves forward on one thing, his staff pulls him back and undoes what he said. The action should be here in the Senate to find a narrow deal on DACA and border security.

Now, as we have found time and again, when we open up the negotiations to discussions of broad immigra-

tion reform, there is no end to what each party says could be on the table. Republicans want vast curtailment of legal immigration. Democrats want to discuss a pathway to citizenship for 11 million. That is a recipe for delay when we can't afford one. Some on the other side are insisting on expanding this beyond the DACA and border security issues. That will just delay. That will just make sure that things don't work.

My Republican colleagues, particularly the leader and his more moderate Members, should feel the pressure to get this done, or else this administration will start separating families, taking kids out of school, servicemembers out of our military, and workers out of our companies. They will rip them from the American fabric in which they are embedded. What a tragedy that would be.

So the clock is ticking on Dreamers, and we don't have time for extraneous issues that some on the right or the left might want to add that have nothing to do with DACA or border security. The clock is also ticking for pensioners, for victims of opioid addiction seeking treatment, and for our veterans seeking quality healthcare. We have other issues: rural infrastructure, childcare, things that Democrats want to get done in this deal. We have to get a budget deal and a DACA deal that can get 60 votes—13 days before Dreamers get a lot closer to deportation; 13 days to help our economy, our communities, and the middle class, who have been waiting for over a year for this Congress to do something for them, instead of just helping business interests.

FBI

Mr. President, now I want to focus on one more thing that really should disturb every American, and it certainly disturbs me—recent events concerning the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

For decades, the FBI has been our Nation's premier law enforcement agency, admired from one end of the country to the other. TV shows and movies all talked about how good the FBI was. We know because we trust them with protecting our country against many-faced threats: drug trafficking, terrorism, white-collar crime.

In 2016, the FBI—not politically, but just in the way it works to keep being vigilant to protect us in our security—was tasked with another mission of great importance—investigating Russia's interference in our elections.

As that investigation progressed, it found that members of the Trump campaign had concerning associations with the Russians in the lead-up to the election. That was pure law enforcement. That wasn't some political direction. Now that that investigation led by Special Counsel Mueller has resulted in two guilty pleas and two more indictments of Trump campaign officials, there seems to be a fervor on the other side to discredit what the special counsel's investigation has already revealed. That should give serious pause to Democrats, Republicans, and all