



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

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

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2018

No. 126

## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable THOM TILLIS, a Senator from the State of North Carolina.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God, our hope for years to come, we offer You our thanksgiving. Thank You for Your steadfast love that sustains us every hour. Thank You for Your faithfulness that allows us to dwell in peace.

Lord, we are grateful for the joy we receive by observing the works of Your hands, finding pleasure in the beauty of the sunrise and the glory of the sunset.

Today, use our Senators for the glory of Your Name. Guide and direct them, that they may mount up with wings like eagles, running without weariness, and walking without fainting. Guide them with the light of Your truth.

Lord of all, to You we raise this our prayer of grateful praise.

We pray in Your bountiful 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, July 26, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable THOM TILLIS, a Senator from the State of North Carolina, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,  
President pro tempore.

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

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

### NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to talk this morning about the President's qualified nominee for the Supreme Court. A number of us have already met with Judge Kavanaugh. Four Senators from both sides of the aisle have meetings scheduled. By all accounts, including my own, he is a fair and thoughtful jurist with a brilliant legal mind, but some Senators have a different view than their colleagues and different from the experts.

Here is how the junior Senator from New Jersey characterized this nomination with the senior Senator from Massachusetts right beside him. Here is what he said:

We are walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

You are either complicit in the evil, you are either contributing to the wrong, or you are fighting against it.

This is from a member of the Judiciary Committee. He hasn't even met with Judge Kavanaugh. He hasn't heard a word of testimony, and he is citing Scripture. He is proclaiming that this nominee is pure evil of Bib-

lical proportions. He is claiming that the Senators and the American people who have an open mind on this nomination are complicit in the evil. This is truly outrageous.

Not a single Democrat has come forward to condemn what he had to say. Our friends on the left are locked in this bizarre competition to wear out the volume knob and outdo each other with this angry nonsense.

Before the President even selected Judge Kavanaugh, the junior Senator from California, another member of the Judiciary Committee, declared that whoever he nominated would bring about "the destruction of the Constitution of the United States." She made up her mind before any hearings or any testimony and before there was even a nominee, in fact.

Less than 24 hours after Judge Kavanaugh was announced, the senior Senator from Connecticut followed suit. He said: "Judge Kavanaugh is your worst nightmare." This is another member of the Judiciary Committee.

So for those keeping score at home, Democrats want you to believe that Judge Kavanaugh is your worst nightmare, who will put the American people in the valley of the shadow of death and destroy the Constitution all by himself. Oh, and don't forget that anyone who doesn't agree with them is "complicit in evil."

Whom do they expect to believe this stuff?

Here is another quote: "This is a nominee who wants to pave the path to tyranny." That was our colleague, the junior Senator from Oregon, at a rally with far-left special interests.

Here is another quote: "The nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh will threaten the lives of millions of Americans for decades to come." That was a quote of the former Democratic Governor of Virginia, who actually used to chair the Democratic National Committee.

It is hard to keep a straight face when you hear this hysteria. Really,

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



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you can't keep a straight face at all when our Democratic colleagues say these things and then turn around and insist they need extra time, extra information, and extra documents in order to make up their minds.

Do the people making these comments sound like they are openminded? Do they sound persuadable?

The Democratic leader has insisted that Judge Kavanaugh's long and extensive judicial record isn't enough and that Democrats need to see practically every scrap of paper from the Bush White House before they can decide. But about 2 weeks ago, when the ink was barely dry on Judge Kavanaugh's nomination, he himself told a national television audience—this is the Democratic leader—that he will “oppose him with everything I've got.” That doesn't sound undecided to me. It doesn't sound like a guy who needs documents to make up his mind.

Let's be clear about what this is all about. Judge Kavanaugh has been a judge for over a decade. He has written over 300 opinions. He just produced over 6,000 pages of documents as part of his questionnaire, and many more documents will be produced in the coming weeks. In fact, it is likely that more documents will be produced with respect to his nomination than for any Supreme Court nomination in our entire history.

But it is becoming pretty clear that none of this will really matter. I am sorry to say that for most Senate Democrats, I am afraid it would not matter if there were a million pages of documents or 10 million or 100 million. It wouldn't make any difference. No matter how many documents are produced, many of our Democratic colleagues are making it abundantly clear that they are never going to support this nominee.

The complaint about documents is not about assessing his record in an openminded, fair, and dispassionate way. It is all about the desire to obstruct and delay. The American people will give this demagoguery and these delaying tactics the short shrift they deserve.

#### ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, later today Vice President PENCE will visit Wheeling, WV, to discuss Republicans' pro-growth agenda. For the better part of a decade, the people of West Virginia heard a lot of talk from Washington.

During the 2008 Presidential campaign, then-Senator Biden told a crowd in Charleston, WV, that he supported the coal industry and that the Democrats' policies would help West Virginia's economy. “This is about jobs,” he said.

But the Obama-Biden administration turned out to be a crash course in the difference between rhetoric and results. Across the entire private sector, fewer Virginians were employed the day

President Obama left office than on the day he was sworn in. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the State's manufacturing workforce shrunk by more than 13 percent from 2009 through 2016, and its mining and logging workforce collapsed by 37 percent.

Let's be clear. Public policy is not the only factor at work in our economy, but there is no denying that Washington can make life harder for job creators or make it easier. The Obama economy was a tough pill to swallow—tax hikes and burdensome regulations. Their policies cut against the rhetoric, and the outcome was disappointing.

That was then. This is now. When Vice President PENCE lands in West Virginia today, he will be able to share a different story. He will be able to say that, thanks in part to regulatory relief and generational tax reform, the number of Americans saying that now is a good time to find a quality job hit a 17-year high just 2 months ago.

He will be able to say that West Virginia's unemployment rate has been lower in every month of this unified Republican government than it was during any month of the Obama Presidency.

It is the American people who are achieving all of this. Republicans are just happy that our policies are helping to create conditions for workers and job creators to thrive.

#### APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this week, the Senate has continued our regular appropriations process. We are considering four important funding measures that will account for about an eighth of discretionary spending.

This bill will keep resources flowing to a long list of key government functions. We are talking about everything from food safety inspections to anti-drug enforcement, to child nutrition, to the Forest Service. It attends to a number of specific policy priorities that we all hold in common, like providing major resources to rebuild America's infrastructure and to fight against opioid abuse.

My constituents in Kentucky will benefit from new funding for rural development grants and loans and more resources to fight everything from illegal drugs to invasive species like Asian carp. Communities in every single State will win because of this work.

I want to express gratitude to Members on both sides of the aisle: our subcommittee chairs, who helped to shape the bills in this minibus, Senators MURKOWSKI, COLLINS, HOEVEN, and LANKFORD; all of our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee and their fearless leaders, Chairman SHELBY and Vice Chairman LEAHY, for keeping this process bipartisan and for keeping it moving; and Senator MURKOWSKI, once more, for her work in managing this legislation here on the floor.

I am proud of the regular appropriations process we are rebuilding to-

gether. I am proud that we have been able to process several amendments and hope we can continue to process even more. But I am especially proud of the good things this legislation will do for families and communities nationwide.

#### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 184 AND H.R. 1201

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there are two bills at the desk that are due for a second reading en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 184) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

A bill (H.R. 1201) to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### 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.

#### INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, FINANCIAL SERVICES, AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 6147, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6147) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Shelby amendment No. 3399, in the nature of a substitute.