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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Gracious God, we praise You today for Your love that sustains our earthly journey. When evil flourishes, we keep our eyes on You, trusting always in the unfolding of Your powerful providence.

Today, inspire our lawmakers to discover the fulfillment of resting in the assurance of Your amazing grace. As our Senators remember how You have provided for this Nation in the past, may they develop a stronger faith in the protection You will give us in the future. Guide them into the future surrounded by the shield of Your favor. Lord, keep them close to You and to each other as they fulfill their sacred calling as legislators.

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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 28, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SENATE BRIEFING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, key members of the administration will be coming to the Senate at 11 a.m. this morning for an all-Members briefing with respect to Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Senators on both sides of the aisle have legitimate concerns about the war in Yemen, the terrible humanitarian plight of Yemeni citizens caught in the crossfire, and the multiple U.S. interests wrapped up in this conflict.

The U.S.-Saudi relationship is a longstanding and critical one, but Senators on both sides of the aisle also have legitimate concerns about the recent conduct of the Saudi Government. All of us want to see our critical foreign partners behave responsibly. I have been encouraged to hear both Secretary Mattis and Secretary Pompeo call for an end to the war in Yemen and for accountability following the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. So I look forward to hearing from both Secretaries today and learning more about the administration's strategy to achieve these and other important objectives.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, there is a lot more work to do. That has been our message after returning

from the Thanksgiving holiday. The Senate is staying focused on wrapping up this year's remaining priorities: getting more of the President's team in place, confirming well-qualified nominees to our Federal courts, and attending to the pressing legislative business the American people need and expect us to handle.

Yesterday, the nomination of Stephen Vaden to serve as general counsel at the Department of Agriculture was confirmed with bipartisan support, and the motion to advance the nomination of Karen Kelley for Deputy Secretary of Commerce was cleared by an even wider margin.

But these important steps haven't always come easily. As I mentioned yesterday, between the day the Vaden nomination was favorably reported by our colleagues on the Agriculture Committee and yesterday's confirmation vote, 351 days elapsed—351 days on the Executive Calendar.

These stories are similar for so many of the President's well-qualified nominees: Needless delays, a recordbreaking number of cloture votes, and then many go on to clear this Chamber with bipartisan support. In some cases that support is nearly unanimous, but my Democratic colleagues made this body drag its feet regardless.

We will press on and continue this week to make progress and put to rest the various outstanding items that have to be completed before the end of the 115th Congress.

Today, the Senate will vote to confirm Karen Kelley to serve as Deputy Secretary of Commerce. By any metric, Ms. Kelley has the experience and economic acumen to continue a record of outstanding service in that role—a record she has already begun by serving capably in her acting capacity since last year. I hope each of my colleagues will join me in voting to confirm her.

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



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Then the Senate will turn to consideration of the judicial nominee, Thomas Farr, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

Mr. Farr is a graduate of Hillsdale College, Emory Law School, and Georgetown University. Over a nearly 40-year career in law, he has developed expertise in labor relations and constitutional law. The American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary—a body that has frequently been held up by our Democratic colleagues as the gold standard—has awarded Mr. Farr its highest possible rating, unanimously “well qualified.”

Our friend, Senator BURR, has testified that his fellow North Carolinian has “the requisite expertise, character and judgment required for the federal bench” and that “he will serve in this role honorably.”

I urge all of our colleagues to join me in voting to advance his nomination later today.

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. DURBIN. 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.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Karen Dunn Kelley, of Pennsylvania, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Illinois.

GUN VIOLENCE AND REMEMBERING POLICE OFFICER SAMUEL JIMENEZ, DR. TAMARA O'NEAL, AND DAYNA LESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if I came to the Senate floor each day and told the story of another victim of gun vio-

lence in the city of Chicago, it would be a full-time job. Trend lines are improving ever so slightly, but the deaths from gun violence in that great city continue to break our hearts. Hardly a day, a week, or month goes by that we don't hear another story of some child, innocent bystander, infant, or elderly person victimized by gun violence. Last week, there was an extraordinary event which captured the hearts of the people of Chicago and Illinois.

This Monday afternoon, hundreds of police officers from Chicago and Northern Illinois—and some from as far away as Boston and New York—stood at solemn attention, lining the roadways around the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the Chicago suburb of Des Plaines.

The night before, a powerful blizzard had dumped 7 inches of snow in the Chicago area. It was very cold, but it was not cold air that caused many of the officers gathered outside the chapel to feel numb. It was grief. They had come to pay their respects to a fallen brother and hero.

Chicago police officer Samuel Jimenez was shot and killed a week earlier when he tried to stop a shooting at Mercy Hospital & Medical Center on the city's South Side.

I am going to put this array of photos up because I want to address each and every one of them, the individuals on there. This is Officer Jimenez. He was 28 years old, married to his high school sweetheart, the loving father of three little kids.

Killed in the same shooting were these two women: Dr. Tamara O'Neal, an emergency room physician, and Dayna Less, a first-year pharmacy resident. Both women worked at Mercy Hospital. The man who shot all three of them also died, from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

Let me speak of this hero and these healers for a moment. Officer Samuel Jimenez was 28 years old, married to his high school sweetheart, Crystal. Together, they had three children—two little girls and a boy. Friends said his eyes lit up whenever anyone asked him about his kids.

Officer Jimenez had been a member of the Chicago Police Department for less than 2 years. He had already earned two honorable mentions for exceptional performance. He and his partner were in their patrol car around 3:30 Monday afternoon, a week ago, November 19. A call came over the police radio about an active shooter at Mercy Hospital. The gunman shot Dr. O'Neal in the parking lot and then ran into the hospital. Officer Jimenez followed. He was shot and killed in the hospital lobby.

The gunman shot Ms. Less as she stepped off an elevator. He then shot and killed himself, after first being shot by a Chicago policeman.

At the funeral, Officer Jimenez was remembered as a loving husband, father, and friend, and as dedicated to protecting others. He grew up in North-

west Chicago, the youngest of nine children. Before joining the police department, he worked at Dunkin' Donuts, bused tables at Moretti's Ristorante & Pizzeria. He even delivered mail in the suburbs. His instructors and classmates at the police training academy remembered him as a stellar recruit, always eager to lend a hand, always there with a warm hello.

He completed his 13-month probationary period with the police department just last August. Officer Jimenez and his partner didn't have to respond at Mercy Hospital. You see, that hospital was outside the district they were assigned to, but they went anyway, not even hesitating for a second because they knew people were in danger.

Dr. Tamara O'Neal was an emergency room doctor. That is one of the hardest, most stressful jobs in the hospital. Dr. O'Neal picked that profession because she thought it was where she could do the most good for people who needed help. She was 38 years old. She joined the staff of Mercy Hospital less than 3 months ago, after a 3-year residency at the University of Illinois at Chicago—the same school where she earned her medical degree.

Her colleagues remember her for her outgoing personality and her willingness to go out of her way to help others. They say she used to stay long after her shift ended to make sure her patients were taken care of. She was also a woman of great faith. She was the choir director of her church in Indiana, and she drove there every Sunday—60 miles each way—to lead the congregation in song. Her brother was the pastor of the church. Dr. O'Neal helped raise money every year to buy school supplies for children in the church whose families were strapped for money. She loved taking her nieces and nephews into the city of Chicago to show them new attractions, new restaurants.

Dayna Less was 24 years old. Had the shooting happened 1 day later, she would still be alive. She was leaving that next day to spend Thanksgiving in Indiana with her family. She graduated from pharmacy school at Purdue last May, after 6 years of study.

She was engaged to be married in June to a young man she met at church camp when they were both just 9 years old. Dayna Less loved the Chicago Cubs, working at Mercy Hospital, and traveling.

Before coming to Mercy, she spent 8 weeks on pharmacy rotation in Kenya. She wrote about her experiences there in a blog. This is part of what she wrote:

Watching patients die from things that would 100 percent be treatable in the US is extremely disheartening.

It's been very important for me to focus on the positive things we are doing here because it can be difficult to see how we are making a difference. But, it's worth it when you fight for something and it actually happens! Even if it's as small as making sure a patient gets their medication, we are doing something that matters.