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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN KENNEDY, a Senator from the State of Louisiana.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father, You are the God of our salvation. Thank You for this sacred moment of prayer. We think of Your goodness even in the night seasons, for Your ways are reliable and sure. Remind our Senators that before honor comes humility, as they seek to serve You and country. Give them the wisdom to put their complete trust in You, knowing that You will direct their steps. Lord, use them to do Your work on Earth. Keep them calm in the quiet center of their lives so that they may experience serenity in life's swirling stresses.

We pray in Your merciful 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, February 13, 2018.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable JOHN KENNEDY, a Senator from the State of Louisiana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,  
President pro tempore.

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

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

### SOUTHEASTERN KENTUCKY FLOODING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment this morning to discuss events in southeastern Kentucky. Because of heavy rainfall over the weekend, residents are enduring widespread flooding in several counties. Homes have been evacuated. A number of people have been forced to relocate to temporary shelters. Even where the floodwaters have begun to recede, a number of roads remain blocked because of water or mudslides. We are thankful that no injuries have been reported at this point. My staff in Eastern Kentucky is working closely with local officials, and I am monitoring the situation and receiving updates.

As always, we are deeply grateful to the emergency responders who rescued a number of people from their homes or their cars. Helping their fellow Kentuckians through this hardship, they have again earned our thanks.

### IMMIGRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, the Senate took an initial step toward considering proposals to address DACA, border security, and other immigration issues. This week's debate comes as no

surprise to my colleagues. For a month now, I have repeatedly stated my intention to bring these issues to the Senate floor following a government funding agreement. Senators have had plenty of time to prepare. There is no reason why we should not reach a bipartisan solution this week, but to do this, we need to get the debate started, look past making political points, and focus on actually making law.

Making law will take 60 votes in the Senate, a majority in the House, and a Presidential signature. Yesterday, a number of my colleagues announced a reasonable proposal that I believe is our best chance to actually make law. It attends to my Democratic colleagues' stated priority: a compassionate solution for 1.8 million illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. In exchange, it also delivers on the President's stated conditions. Their solution provides funding to secure the border, reforms extended-family chain migration, and recalibrates the visa lottery program.

This proposal has my support. During this week of fair debate, I believe it deserves the support of every Senator who is ready to move beyond making points and actually making a law. If other proposals are to be considered, our colleagues will have to actually introduce their own amendments, rather than just talk about them.

I made a commitment to hold this debate and to hold it this week. I have lived up to my commitment. I hope everyone will cooperate so that this opportunity does not go to waste.

### TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, last week, as part of our bipartisan funding agreement, the Senate approved much needed disaster relief for communities hit by last year's devastating storms. This was an important accomplishment, but it isn't the only way this Congress has helped Americans begin to rebuild.

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



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Recently, Florida Power & Light, the State's largest utility, announced that their savings from tax reform will completely cover the costs of rebuilding critical infrastructure in the wake of Hurricane Irma. Absent tax reform, consumers would have paid for much of the repairs in the form of higher rates. Now the utility can cover the cost itself, saving Florida families an average of \$250.

In other States, from Montana to Massachusetts to my home State of Kentucky, utilities are planning to directly pass along their savings by cutting consumers' monthly bills.

Of course, lower utility rates aren't the only way tax reform is helping middle-class Americans. Week after week, the headlines are full of more bonuses, more pay raises, and more new benefits for hard-working Americans as a direct result—a direct result—of tax reform. With all of this good news pouring in, it is easy to forget how hotly the debate over tax reform was contested.

Republicans argued that letting middle-class families keep more of their own money and giving American job creators a 21st-century tax code would unleash prosperity and directly help American workers.

Our Democratic colleagues gambled on a different prediction. Every single House Democrat voted in lockstep with their leader. She predicted tax reform would bring about Armageddon. Every single Democrat in the Senate rallied behind their leader, my friend from New York. He declared that there was "nothing about this bill that suits the needs of the American worker."

We always knew one side would be proven wrong. Either tax reform would benefit middle-class families and help reignite the economy or it would not. The early results speak for themselves. In the great State of Missouri, 20 companies, and counting, have already announced tax reform bonuses, raises, or benefits. That includes thousand-dollar bonuses for 2,500 workers at Central Bank of St. Louis and at Great Southern Bank in Springfield and more bonuses at Mid-Am Metal Forming in Rogersville. One of the Senators from Missouri voted for the policy that made all this happen. Their other Senator tried to block it.

In Ohio, tax reform has already led Jergens to double employees' annual raise. It has enabled Sheffer Corporation, a cylinder manufacturer, to give workers four-figure bonuses. Here is how Sheffer's CEO responded to Democrats who have been trying to talk down these bonuses: "Some people have said that's 'crumbs,' but for the Sheffer people, we consider that fine dining."

Remember, these bonuses and pay raises are just the tip of the spear. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act also directly helps families by cutting tax rates and expanding deductions. In every paycheck, American workers will keep more of what they earn.

Only one Senator from Ohio voted to put all this middle-class progress on the menu. Every single Democrat in the Senate and the House voted to stop tax reform. Fortunately, for middle-class families in Missouri, in Ohio, in Kentucky, and across the Nation, Republicans overcame the obstruction and passed this historic bill.

#### 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.

#### BROADER OPTIONS FOR AMERICANS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2579, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 302, H.R. 2579, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the premium tax credit with respect to unsubsidized COBRA continuation coverage.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we are in the midst of debate in the Senate on the issue of immigration. It is the first time in 5 years we have taken up this issue. There are many compelling reasons for us to get this right.

On September 5, President Trump announced that he was going to end the DACA Program, a program created by an Executive order of President Obama's that protects 780,000 young people who are undocumented in the United States. The elimination of that program officially on March 5—just a few weeks away—will mean that these young people and many just like them will be subject to deportation and no longer allowed to legally work in the United States.

President Trump challenged Congress to do something about it, to pass a law. As you can see, more than 5 months have passed, and we haven't done that. But we have a chance this week to get it right. We have a chance to make this work.

This morning, I come to the floor for a brief time to tell the story of two

young women. The first one is named Tereza Lee. Tereza Lee is the reason for the DREAM Act, which is legislation I introduced 17 years ago.

Tereza was born in Brazil. Her parents were from Korea, but they traveled to Brazil first. She was brought to the United States at the age of 2 and made it to Chicago, IL.

Her father wanted to be a Protestant minister and to start a church. That was his dream, and he worked at it. They were a poor family. They didn't have much money to start with, but he pursued his dream. He gathered some people together in church settings.

Her mother went to work at a dry-cleaners in Chicago, which is not uncommon. The vast majority of dry-cleaning establishments in that city are run and owned by Korean families. It is a hard job, a lot of hours, but she was prepared to work to feed her family and to raise Tereza and her brothers and sisters.

During the course of her father's ministry, Tereza started banging away at an old piano at the back of the church and fell in love with the instrument. Someone gave her family a discarded piano, and she spent hours each day practicing. She signed up for something called the Merit Music Program in Chicago, which is available for kids in public schools who can't afford lessons, and she developed her skill as a pianist. At the point she reached high school, she actually was playing with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. People took notice of it and said: Tereza, you have to go forward with this amazing skill of yours and apply to the best music schools. She did. She applied to the Juilliard School of Music and the Manhattan School of Music, and she was accepted.

She did run into a problem. When it came time to fill out the forms to go to school, there was a section where she had to declare her nationality or citizenship.

She said to her mom: What do I put here?

Her mom said: I don't know. We brought you here on a visitor's visa, and we never filed any more papers.

Technically, Tereza was an undocumented person in America. She didn't have legal status. So she contacted our office and asked what she could do. That was 17 years ago. We took a look at the law, and the law is pretty brutal for those who are undocumented in this country. It basically said to this 18-year-old girl: You have to leave the United States for 10 years and petition to come back in and apply for green card status and citizenship. Ten years? Brought here at the age of 2, she was banished by our laws in the United States and given no future.

That is when I introduced the DREAM Act—for her initially but for many others in similar circumstances, kids who are brought here to America as infants and toddlers, young children, young teenagers who had no home, who had no country. They go to our public