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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, who has been our guiding light throughout life's seasons, keep our lawmakers within the circle of Your divine will. Lord, give them hearts that seek Your wisdom, feet that flee from evil, and hands that serve Your purposes for our Nation and world. Empower them to be faithful to You and their calling to do Your will on Earth, inspiring them with Your purpose to live lives above reproach. May they be guided by integrity as they permit righteousness to deliver them from trouble. Make them worthy of Your redemptive love.

We pray in Your great 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Under the previous order, 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 to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Paul B. Matey, of New Jersey, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday the White House released its budget proposal for fiscal year 2020. Understanding the President's key priorities and vision for Federal spending is critical to the success of the entire funding process here in Congress.

Republicans agree that we need to remain focused on important goals, such as the continued rebuilding of our military, keeping up the fight against opioid abuse, and addressing the ongoing security and humanitarian crisis at our southern border.

As the senior Senator from Kentucky, I was especially encouraged to see the President's commitment to our Nation's veterans front and center, including a request to fully fund construction of the new Robley Rex VA Medical Center in my hometown of Louisville.

Together with my Senate colleagues, I look forward to carefully reviewing the administration's priorities as this year's funding process moves ahead.

NOMINATIONS

Madam President, on another matter, building on last week's progress, the Senate will consider two more of President Trump's outstanding judicial nominees, in addition to another executive branch nominee, this week.

The first item of business is the nomination of Paul Matey of New Jersey to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Matey holds degrees from Scranton and Seton Hall Universities, as well as clerkships on our Nation's Federal courts. He has served the people of his State in the Office of U.S. Attorney in New Jersey and has built an impressive record.

I hope my colleagues will join me in voting to advance and confirm Mr. Matey and these other distinguished nominees so the Senate can fulfill our responsibility to the American people.

MEDICARE FOR ALL

On a final matter, here is a quote: ''I think the $33 trillion price tag for 'Medicare for all' is a little scary.'' That came from a Democratic Member of Congress who happens to sit in a leadership role. She sounds worried, and I don't blame her.

The new House Democratic majority has wasted no time—no time at all—rolling out one half-baked socialist proposal after another. Apparently, the remarkable job growth, wage growth, and new opportunities pouring into communities across America have failed to persuade my Democratic friends of a simple reality: Things go pretty well when government gets its foot off the brake and lets American families live their lives without oppressive supervision from Washington Democrats. Apparently, that is just inconceivable, because the outlandish, government-driven proposals to take over one economic sector after another continue to roll in.

We have all heard about the Green New Deal—the far left's master plan to hurt American energy independence, disrupt millions of workers' livelihoods, put entire industries out of business, and let Washington regulators redesign every building in America, while letting China and other countries off the hook. That is just for starters. We have all heard about the price tag as estimated by the one research outfit that has actually taken a shot at hanging some numbers on all the vague, pie-in-the-sky language. They calculated the total could exceed $90 trillion.

But let's not lose sight of the other party-defining, socialist pivot many Democrats are rushing to embrace: Medicare for None. Yes, Democrats

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

have taken the pulse of the American people, and here is what they have decided: They have decided that American seniors want their Medicare hollowed out until the only thing left is the name. They have decided that middle-class families are eager—eager—to be kicked off their health insurance plans and forced into a one-size-fits-all government alternative. Oh, and they have decided that taxpayers up and down the income scale are clamoring—just clamoring—to send much more of their money to the IRS. No choices. No options. No alternatives. No more Medicare as we know it. Every single American has to obediently take a seat and buckle up for the Democrats' wild ride toward government-run health insurance.

The sequel to ObamaCare and its soaring premiums is coming soon to a Democratic press conference near you. This time, they want to turn the entire system over to those bureaucrats and make it unlawful—unlawful—to possess competing private coverage. That sends quite a message, doesn't it? My colleagues are so confident American families will love their new government-mandated healthcare plan that they feel compelled to outlaw any competition.

It has already been quite an experience watching liberal leaders grapple publicly with the question of whether, in fact, their movement is seriously going to double down on these socialist policies.

Michael Bloomberg said this sort of proposal ''would bankrupt us for a very long time.'' Speaker PELOSI herself had to wonder publicly, ''How do you pay for that?'' Well, if you are Vermont or Colorado—two places that have flirted with the idea of single-payer healthcare—there is a simple answer: You don't pay for it because you can't.

In 2014, when Vermont grappled with a proposal to implement a State-run, single-payer system, the Governor's office was forced to conclude from its own analysis that the cost of the program would nearly double State spending in its first year of implementation and could lead to $100 million deficits within 5 years. That was in Vermont.

In 2016, Colorado Democrats put forward a ballot measure to pursue this in their State. Once again, the program's costs were projected to exceed the entire State's budget. So voters rejected it. In Colorado, 80 percent of them rejected it, to be exact.

Those are just two States, but this is exactly the kind of broken mathematics that Democrats are now hoping to force on our entire country—an estimated $32 trillion over the first 10 years, at least. That is more than the government has laid out in the last 8 years, combined, on everything—on everything.

I am sure we will be advertised the same old leftwing talking points about millionaires and billionaires magically paying for all of it. How often have we heard that? As I have noted before, it is just not possible. There are not enough millionaires and billionaires in the entire country to pay the tens of trillions of dollars this takeover would require. Even if the IRS seized every cent Americans earned beyond $1 million—all of it, took all their money—it wouldn't even cover half the hole this proposal would leave in the Treasury. That is why one economist wrote that ''the simple fact is that Medicare-for-all would require a dramatic shift in the federal tax structure and a substantial tax increase for almost all Americans.'' Almost all Americans.

Even leading Democrats can't help but laugh at this stuff. This was Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York describing this idea in the context of his own State. This is what the Democratic Governor of New York said:

> No sane person will pass it . . . you'd double everybody's taxes. You want to do that?

So parts of the Democratic Party here in Congress are running towards a policy that even the stalwart liberal Governor of New York derides as out-of-this-world expensive and impractical. No wonder some Democrats are worried about the radical rumblings within their party.

Fortunately, the American people don't have to worry a bit—at least not for now. This craziness will never get through the U.S. Senate.

Madam 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. Madam 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

DECLARATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY

Mr. SCHUMER. By the end of this week, the Senate must vote on the resolution to terminate the President's declaration of a national emergency.

There are three very clear reasons to vote to terminate. First, there is no factual basis of an emergency at the border. The President made that clear when he said he didn't need to do this. If we allow Presidents to declare emergencies for such nonemergency-type situations because they want to do it, we are headed down a very bad road.

Second, the emergency would cannibalize funds intended for our brave men and women in uniform in order to pay for the wall, including military construction, and maybe even military pay and pensions.

The bottom line is, we hear from the other side how we have to make sure we give our soldiers what they need. We completely agree, but all of a sudden, when there is this wall, we take it away from the soldiers; we take it away from military readiness. That is not a trade most Americans would make.

Third and most important is the danger to our Constitution. The emergency declaration is an injury to this great Constitution under which we live. It claims powers for the Presidency that were explicitly given to Congress. It distorts the separation of powers, and it sets a dangerous precedent for future Presidents.

The bottom line is, one of the things the Founding Fathers gave the most thought to was the balance of power and how to prevent an overpowerful and overleaning executive branch. That is why they gave Congress the power of the purse. Are we going to reverse 220 years of a balance of power because a President is demanding a wall that Congress couldn't get him, that Mexico couldn't pay for? It goes far beyond the wall, whether you are for or against it. It goes far beyond all these other issues. It goes to the very nature of our government, and it will set us on a path that historians will come back and look at as a very bad turning point for America.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Madam President, yesterday the Trump administration released its annual budget. These Trump budget requests have become so outlandish, so removed from reality, that even Republicans in Congress can't work with that budget and can't treat them seriously. They are essentially statements of principle from an administration that doesn't care about governing. What does it care about? What are its priorities? That is what they talked about because I bet they know not a single Republican would vote for the budget.

We looked at the budget and what it would mean for my home State of New York. The President's budget would cut millions of dollars from the Department of Justice programs that hire police officers, provide their equipment, and combat the opioid epidemic. The budget would cut millions from New York's educational programs that would help schools throughout our State, including those schools on military bases. It would hurt afterschool programs and STEM initiatives teaching our young people about science and math. The cuts to NIH would devastate New York's hospitals, particularly rural hospitals, and would cut back on our great medical research. We are all living longer and healthier, in part, because of the medical research done by NIH. Hardly anyone wants to cut that. The President did.

The cuts to Medicaid would affect 6.5 million New Yorkers who rely on it. I think that story can be repeated for just about every State. New York is a very diverse State, with large urban, rural, and suburban populations, and every one of them is hurt across the board from safety and security to education and healthcare, to infrastructure and economic development. The Trump budget would be a gut punch to New York's middle class. The same is true for the Nation.