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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, You know all about us. You know when we sit down and when we rise up. Forgive us when we fail to acknowledge Your sovereignty over our lives or to trust the unfolding of Your loving providence. Thank you for the gift of freedom to choose. Help us to use Your admonition as a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.

Guide our lawmakers. Bring their hearts under Your control as You infuse them with a deeper love for You and humanity. May they seek to cause justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

We pray in Your great 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. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 9, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a

Senator from the State of Mississippi, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

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 to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Daniel Desmond Domenico, of Colorado, to be United States District Judge for the District of Colorado.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Later today, the Senate will vote to advance the nomination of Daniel Domenico to serve as U.S. District Judge for the District of Colorado.

After we vote on his confirmation, we will do the same for Patrick Wyrick, nominated to a vacancy in the Western District of Oklahoma.

Mr. Wyrick is a two-time graduate of the University of Oklahoma and held a

clerkship in the Eastern District of Oklahoma at the outset of his legal career. That career included time in private practice, as the State's Solicitor General and, most recently, as Associate Justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

I am sorry to say that this week will mark 1 year since Mr. Wyrick's nomination was first received in the Senate. I hope each of my colleagues will join me in long-overdue support for its prompt consideration on the floor.

Over the course of the week, as I have outlined, we will consider four other well-qualified nominees who have been waiting on the Executive Calendar for far too long. We will build on the action taken last week to restore some reason and sanity to the nominations process, which has suffered in recent years under the burden of partisan obstruction.

Before the week is through, we will also turn to the nomination of David Bernhardt to lead the Department of the Interior. The Senate has confirmed Mr. Bernhardt twice before to serve that Department as Deputy Secretary and as Solicitor. When you hear the nominee and review his credentials, it is easy to see why. Mr. Bernhardt has significant private practice experience, as well as a past record of service at the Department.

Along the way he has earned the respect of those who rely on the public lands the Department of the Interior is charged to oversee, from Native American leaders to sportsmen's groups. He has been praised as a "proven leader" who "act[s] with integrity" and has "the right approach and skill set."

I hope each of my colleagues will join me in voting to confirm him later this week.

MEDICARE

Madam President, on a completely different matter, we are continuing to watch as our friends across the aisle take big steps in their party's continued march toward the far, far left. As I

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



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understand, they will soon introduce the Senate version of the radical healthcare proposal that I have come to call Medicare for None.

It is only the latest installment in the steady drumbeat of calls for socialist central planning that we have been hearing from our Democratic colleagues as of late.

Earlier this year, we saw the Speaker of the House declare her top priority as the Democrat politician protection act, an effort to literally rewrite the rules of free speech in American elections and give political campaigns a big dose of taxpayer dollars, all so the outcome of the political process could be more to the Democrats' liking.

We have seen all but a tiny handful of our Democratic colleagues unable to reject an absurdly intrusive and mind-bogglingly expensive plan to forcibly remodel the U.S. economy and American families' lives until they are sufficiently "green."

Now, perhaps as soon as this week, the latest new scheme will make landfall in the Senate. I am sure it will grab a new round of headlines, but under the Cadillac hood, it will offer only the same old push mower engine, the same tired, debunked logic that Washington knows best and the American people can't be trusted to decide what is best for themselves and their families.

That tired, old engine cannot power the kind of healthcare that Americans deserve. The legislation my colleagues want to brand as Medicare for All hollows out the actual Medicare Program that our seniors rely on until the only thing left is the label. Then it takes that label and slaps it on a brandnew, untested, government-run plan that every single American would be forced into—forced into—whether they like it or not. In fact, competing private insurance policies, such as the ones that 180 million Americans currently use, would be banned outright—gone.

For the privilege of having their existing Medicare or existing employer-provided plans ripped away from them by the same old Washington experts who brought us ObamaCare with sky-high premiums and deductibles, out-of-pocket costs, and dysfunction—for that privilege the American people would have to pick up a historic \$32 trillion tab. That is just the rough estimate for the first 10 years—\$32 trillion over 10 years. That is more than the Federal Government has spent on everything—everything—over the past 8 years combined. It is so much that even senior Democrats aren't claiming to know how it will be paid for. That price is so steep that even left-leaning analysts are admitting that the tax burden is virtually certain to land on the shoulders of the middle class.

Here is the Washington Post, verbatim: "Medicare-for-all in particular would require tax hikes on middle class families."

To give you a sense of scale for this nightmare, one think tank has cal-

culated that "doubling all Federal individual and corporate income taxes"—doubling them—"would be insufficient to fully finance the plan."

Doubling all of the corporate and individual income taxes would be insufficient to fully finance the plan. Doubling what Americans send to the IRS in income taxes would take away all of the competition and choice in the health insurance market. The failures and foibles of ObamaCare, as painful as they are for so many families, would likely be just the warmup act to this socialist bonanza.

Apparently this is what my Democratic colleagues believe will pass for a political winner. We are looking forward to that debate.

I will give them this: With Republicans standing for preserving what works and fixing what doesn't, for reducing tax rates instead of shooting them sky-high, and for strengthening the employer-sponsored and Medicare Advantage plans that American families actually rely on instead of snatching those plans away, my Democratic friends are certainly working hard to paint a contrast—and we welcome it.

S. 1057

Madam President, on one final matter, even as the Senate grapples with these kinds of major disagreements, I want to highlight that there were still bipartisan accomplishments constantly coming out of this Chamber. They don't always make national front-page news, but they often represent hugely significant progress for the American people.

Just yesterday afternoon, the Senate passed legislation from Senator MARTHA MCSALLY to formalize a landmark drought contingency plan for the Colorado River Basin. Our Senate colleagues from the West have been working with State and local leaders literally for years to develop this bipartisan, bicameral solution. Seven States, countless local and Tribal authorities, and both the United States and Mexico have skin in this game, so hammering out this coordinated plan was no small feat.

Now that this agreement will be codified in Federal law, tens of millions of Americans will be able to rest easier, knowing that their supply of drinking water and irrigation will be better protected from water shortages.

I want to congratulate all of our colleagues who worked hard to make this happen, particularly Senator MCSALLY and Senator GARDNER, who have been strong voices for this agreement and the people of Arizona and Colorado. I look forward to the President signing this into law in the very near future.

COLORADO RIVER DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN AUTHORIZATION ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the order of April 8, 2019, the Senate, having received from the House H.R. 2030 and the text being

identical to S. 1057, the bill is considered read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The bill (H.R. 2030) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. THUNE. Madam 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.

H.R. 1602

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, there is one thing pretty much every American can agree on. It is that illegal robocalls are a major nuisance. Who hasn't been annoyed after answering the phone and discovering it is an automated message asking you to purchase some product or provide sensitive personal information?

But, of course, these calls aren't merely a nuisance. Scammers use these calls to successfully prey on vulnerable populations, like the elderly, who may be less technologically savvy. It is no surprise that people are deceived. I think most of us have received robocalls that sounded pretty credible, and the practice of spoofing numbers adds another layer of deception. Scammers can disguise the actual number they are calling from so the call looks like it is coming from a legitimate number. You may recognize the number calling you as a trustworthy local number, but the actual call may be from a scam artist.

I remember an article from my home State a couple of years ago that reported that scammers had successfully spoofed the number of the Watertown Police Department. So to anyone who received that call, it looked as if it was really the Watertown Police Department calling.

If the source looks credible and the call sounds credible, it can be difficult not to believe it, which is why people fall prey to robocall scam artists every single day, sometimes with devastating consequences.

Scammers' goal is to steal the kind of personal information that can be used to steal your money and your identity. When scammers are successful, they can destroy people's lives.

There are laws and fines in place right now to prevent scam artists from preying on people through the telephone, but unfortunately, these measures have been insufficient. Almost a year ago today, when I was chairman of the Commerce Committee, I subpoenaed Adrian Abramovich, a notorious mass robocaller, to testify before the committee. His testimony made it clear that current fines are insufficient to discourage robocallers. Robocallers just figure that those fines are part of the cost of doing business.