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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 7, 2019, at 12 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, MAY 6, 2019

The Senate met at 3 p.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.

Ruler and Redeemer, Creator and Sustainer, we pause to acknowledge Your majesty and might.

Because of You, we live and move and breathe and prosper. Lord, You continue to shower us with undeserved blessings; great is Your faithfulness. As our Senators and staffs do liberty's work, sustain them with Your might. Provide them with prudence and discretion for each task. Remind them that if You are for them, neither demons nor deviants can prevail. Help us all to focus on today's challenges and trust You to take care of our past and future. Transform discord into harmony as You hasten the day when peace will reign.

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 (Mr. HAWLEY). Under the previous order, the 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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph F. Bianco, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, May has been recognized as National Foster Care Month for over 20 years to bring awareness to the challenges that foster youth face.

Through my work on the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, I have had the opportunity to hear firsthand what children in foster care need. They need love, support, safety, and permanency. They need a family. I salute all those who dedicate their time and resources to help these kids.

In moving forward, I will continue to work to find better solutions and to se-

cure better outcomes for youth in foster care.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for an additional 1 minute as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, last week, the Department of Labor released its monthly scorecard for the U.S. workforce.

The unemployment rate fell to 3.6 percent, which is the lowest rate since December 1969—a new 50-year low. Moreover, an additional 263,000 jobs were created. Job gains have averaged a robust 218,000 over the past 12 months. Additionally, for the ninth straight month, year-over-year nominal wage gains have equaled or exceeded 3 percent.

It is good to see this administration's tax reform and pro-growth policies continuing to improve the daily lives of all Americans.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, over the weekend we were given yet another tragic reminder of the daily

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



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threats that face our friends and allies in Israel.

While American families enjoyed a spring weekend, those who make their home in the border regions of the Jewish State were subjected to a barrage of hundreds of rockets and other projectiles launched from within Gaza.

The attacks were carried out by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. They targeted civilian populations. They killed a worker at a cement factory, a truckdriver in a border village, a man in the yard of his own home, and a rabbi as he left his car to run for cover.

They caused countless Israeli citizens to scurry to bunkers for safety, unsure whether rockets would rain upon their farms, apartment buildings, schools, or hospitals. These attacks, we should remember, are targeted at Israel's innocent civilians. They are intended to kill, to maim, and to terrorize.

In the face of such brazen acts of terror, it is of course Israel's right to take swift and decisive action to defend its people. Frankly, it is an existential necessity.

And it is the responsibility of every peaceful nation to condemn the terrorist organizations behind them and to continue to expose those governments and private entities that provide illicit support for their actions. Foremost among them is Iran, which has become a critical lifeline for the terrorist activities of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

I know my colleagues will join me in expressing sympathy for the families of the victims and for the communities left to rebuild the wreckage of these latest attacks. Furthermore, I hope this weekend's attacks could at least spur some action here in Congress, where Senate-passed legislation to renew and strengthen our partnership with Israel is still sitting over in the House, where it has not been permitted a vote. That thoroughly bipartisan legislation contains several provisions to strengthen our security ties to Israel and also to combat the scourge of anti-Semitism.

Behind these attacks lurks the same hatred that motivated the violence at Chabad of Poway last month and the Tree of Life synagogue last year—the same ugly bigotry that takes refuge within the BDS movement while masquerading as a legitimate political stance. It is the same tide of discrimination that an overwhelming majority of European Jews report is on the rise in their own communities, even as the Holocaust remains a vivid living memory. This disturbing trend has already taken its toll on communities of faith and on peaceful Jews in Israel and around the world, but when America does any less than our level best to confront it, we further undermine the cause of our friends and allies in this free Jewish State.

I hope this terrible violence can again spur my colleagues in the House to act on the bipartisan legislation

that has been languishing over there for weeks. It was the first item we took up this year.

Clearly, the need to reaffirm our commitment to the safety, security, and sovereignty of Israel is just as important as it ever was.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE ENZI

Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, I was saddened to hear over the weekend that our friend and colleague Senator MIKE ENZI will not run for reelection. At the end of next year, he will retire with 24 years of service to the people of Wyoming, and the rest of us will have to step up to make up for the loss in expertise and in principled leadership his departure will create.

When MIKE first arrived in the Senate, he brought with him experience in business and government that made him an immediate asset on a host of different issues. With an MBA under his belt, he had returned home to lead his family shoe sales business through a successful expansion. As the two-term mayor of Gillette, WY, he had presided over an economic and population boom, and over the course of 10 years in the State legislature, he had lent his accountant's eye to help other small businesses succeed through better policy.

So it is no surprise that MIKE got right to work as a leading voice on the Federal budget, tax policy, and healthcare. Over four terms, he has taken every opportunity to make an outsized impact on policy for the people of Wyoming and for our entire country.

In 2006, as chairman of the HELP Committee, MIKE provided the guiding hand that delivered the first major pension reform legislation in a generation and provided more security to the retirement income of millions of Americans through bipartisan policy.

In 2017, as chairman of the Budget Committee, he helped lay the foundation for the generational reform of our Nation's Tax Code and championed important elements for small businesses and retirees.

In these cases and in many more, getting MIKE involved in an issue meant deploying a powerful force for fiscal responsibility, restraint, and policy practicality. You always felt more sure something would turn out well when MIKE was on the case or part of the team.

But seeing as our friend has built nearly a quarter-century legacy in the Senate, none of us can blame MIKE for choosing to spend more time with his even greater legacy: the wonderful family he and his lovely wife Diana have built together.

MIKE and Diana are now the proud grandparents of four, and among everything their bright future holds, I know MIKE will be excited for more chances to pass along his fly fishing wisdom and his love of good books.

Before he hangs up the "gone fishing" sign for good, I know my col-

leagues share my relief that we still have a year and a half to continue drawing on Senator ENZI's leadership and focused expertise. So today I will offer just the first of many sincere thanks for his years of distinguished service.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is no secret that our economy has broken some pretty amazing records lately. Last week's job report surpassed all estimates and expectations, with a whopping 263,000 jobs created in April alone. The first quarter saw 3.2 percent growth, which is the best in 4 years.

I still recall, back during the previous administration, when we were told that 2 percent growth was the new normal and that we could never grow our economy the way we have seen in recent months. Obviously, 2 percent growth is not the new normal for the American economy. We all ought to be relieved and comforted by that fact.

The unemployment rate has dropped to 3.6 percent—the lowest level in nearly half a century. Everybody who is able-bodied and willing to work and willing to be trained for jobs that pay well I believe has an opportunity to do so these days. There is no doubt that this is an incredible time for our economy, and I am confident that the pro-growth policies that we have brought to the table during this administration and during a Republican majority in the House and the Senate will continue to bring real benefits to families across the country. But we have also broken another record, one that has a much more negative impact, and that is especially in my State of Texas.

S. 1303

In March, Customs and Border Protection encountered more than 103,000 migrants along the southwestern border—the highest number since 2007. Unlike previous times when we saw numbers on that scale, these are people who simply show up at the border and turn themselves in to the Border Patrol and claim asylum—mainly families and unaccompanied children, if you could believe that. To put this figure into perspective, it is more than double that of the same period last year and more than six times that in 2017. So something is clearly afoot.

Our country is simply not equipped to manage this sort of massive influx, and folks in my State are bearing the brunt of the humanitarian crisis.

Again, I would remind those listening that the first person who called this a humanitarian crisis, in 2014, was President Barack Obama. He called it a humanitarian and security crisis. It has