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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 Lord, our God, You soar on the wings of the wind. May our lives delight You. As our lawmakers seek to fulfill Your purposes, impart to them Your wisdom. Lord, pursue and overtake their enemies so that Your will may be accomplished on Earth. Show our Senators Your loving kindness, enabling them to serve You faithfully. Sustain us all with Your love, for we find our joy in You. Show mercy to the merciful, purity to the pure, and justice to the upright.

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, the leadership time is reserved.

The Senator from Iowa.

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

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

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, with the record rainfalls and the negotiations of Chinese tariffs going on, our

farmers are hurting, but we can give them some certainty by passing the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement on trade.

In my home State, 86,500 Iowans in farming depend upon agricultural exports to Canada and Mexico, adding \$10.3 billion to our State's economy. Manufacturing and services are also going to have a big boom out of this agreement being agreed to. Every third row of Iowa soybeans are exported, and this trade deal will ensure that these farmers continue to have duty-free access to our North American neighbors.

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement also provides new export opportunities for American dairy farmers, poultry, and egg producers.

Let's give a boost to our farmers and all the jobs related to farming and in cities and also give a boost to the entire country, by passing the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement and do it very soon.

I yield the floor.

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. McCONNELL. 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MCCREARY COUNTY AND DEPUTY SHERIFF DUSTIN WATKINS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, first, this morning I would like to join Kentuckians in McCreary County in breathing a sigh of relief. Deputy Sheriff Dustin Watkins was responding to a routine call on Tuesday evening when

he was shot and needed to be airlifted to a hospital. Fortunately, we heard yesterday afternoon that Deputy Watkins is in stable condition. I understand that last night he was able to sit up for the first time—all good news.

With Sheriff Randy Waters, I wish to extend sincere thanks to the doctors, nurses, and hospital staff who are caring for this brave Kentuckian and will support his recovery. My best wishes go out to Deputy Watkins, his family, and his colleagues. We thank them for their service to our Commonwealth as we are reminded once again of the sacrifices they make every day to keep us safe.

TREATIES AND HOUSE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, this week the Senate has attended to one of this body's unique responsibilities relating to foreign affairs—the ratification of treaties. We have ratified bilateral tax agreements with four trading partners: Spain, Switzerland, Japan, and Luxembourg. Measures like these bring clarity, certainty, and fairness to international commerce. They ensure U.S. citizens and businesses have a level playing field without duplicative tax burdens, and they make the United States a more inviting destination for foreign investment.

These newly ratified treaties will provide immediate and much needed relief to employers in every corner of our country. They will reinforce support for hundreds of thousands of jobs including many in my home State of Kentucky. This is a significant bipartisan accomplishment.

Now, standing in stark contrast to the Senate's productive, bipartisan week is what the Democratic House of Representatives has chosen to prioritize. We have seen plenty of partisan theatrics and high drama for the television cameras. We have seen the

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



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majority spend plenty of time attacking the President and members of the administration, but virtually nothing in the way of bipartisan legislation to actually make progress for the American people.

The problem seems to be that so many Democrats have moved so far to the extreme left that they literally could not pass commonsense legislation even if they wanted to.

A case in point is the chronic difficulties and consternation that we have seen over in the House when it comes to the seemingly straightforward task of condemning anti-Semitism and efforts to delegitimize the Jewish State of Israel.

Back in March, remember, House Democrats had their hands full dealing with one of their freshman members who had trotted out age-old anti-Semitic tropes—dual loyalties, support for Israel being driven by money, the kind of language you would think the House could have condemned pretty easily.

But instead, after days of internal Democratic strife, all the House leadership could drum up was a watered-down resolution that sort of—gestured vaguely at the problem. All the while, Senate-passed legislation that would actually do something about anti-Semitism has been languishing over in the House without a vote.

For more than 5 months and counting, the House has refused to act on S. 1, the foreign policy legislation that we here in the Senate passed back in February. This bipartisan bill included a provision to take on the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, an economic form of anti-Semitism that targets Israel.

Here in the Senate, taking action against BDS was a bipartisan goal. I am a passionate opponent of the BDS movement. I know my friend the Democratic leader opposes BDS as well, and S. 1 earned 77 votes here in the Senate back then.

But apparently it is a bridge too far for this Democratic House. Even a milder resolution simply condemning BDS—not doing anything about it, but condemning it—has become a lightning rod for the far left this very week.

Reports indicate that “senior progressive Democrats are urging House leaders” to walk away from the resolution condemning BDS—a resolution, not the thing that we passed, which is much stronger. So the House will not take action against it, and now it seems they can’t even merely condemn it. They can’t even condemn it. In fact, the far left wants to defend BDS. Let me say that again. The far left in the House wants to defend BDS.

I guess this is where we are. Elected members of the Democratic Party are openly urging their leadership not to make them vote on condemning anti-Semitism. Let me say that again. Elected members of the Democratic Party are openly urging their leadership not to make them vote on con-

demning anti-Semitism—a watered-down version of what we sent them back in February—because, for some reason, it is just too tough a vote. What a sad and bizarre situation we find in the House.

I urge the Speaker of the House to do the right thing. Don’t let these far-left voices run the show. At long last, bring S. 1 up for a vote—the comprehensive legislation that sailed through the Senate with 77 votes. Bring it up for a vote, Madam Speaker. Let them vote. I bet we would see a pretty good outcome and show anti-Semitism the door.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. MRCONNELL. Madam President, earlier this week, I spoke about the economic pain that many Americans felt under the last administration’s leftwing policies and all the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress have done to turn the page.

Today we see the lowest unemployment in nearly 50 years, way more job openings than job seekers, and an all-American recovery that isn’t limited to just a select few places and industries.

My home State of Kentucky has hit and sustained our lowest unemployment rate ever recorded—ever recorded. Two thirds of Americans now say they feel optimistic about where their finances will be a year from now.

But we know the effects of bad policy are hard to erase. So my colleagues and I are continuing to fight for the places that are still struggling to pick up the pieces.

Unfortunately, my home State of Kentucky offers a particular case study, because nothing shows the difference between the last administration and this one more clearly than in the case of affordable energy and the coal industry.

For more than a century, coal has been a reliable and low-cost energy source that has helped fuel America. Coalfields in both Eastern and Western Kentucky have provided good jobs and served as critical drivers of our economy.

Back in 2009, the industry directly employed more than 23,000 Kentuckians. It provided more than 90 percent of our electricity. It brought billions of dollars in revenue into our State. So we were especially vulnerable when a Democratic administration came to Washington that didn’t even try to hide its hostility toward Kentucky coal.

Speaking in San Francisco, then-Senator Obama pledged to bankrupt any new coal-fired plants and declared that under his plan “electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket.” His Democratic leader of the Senate said, “Coal makes us sick.”

So clearly, the elite disdain for fossil fuel in places like New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco was going to become the law of the land. Sure enough, the Obama administration de-

clared a War on Coal. It hurt Kentucky badly. Plants closed. More than 10,000 miners were let go—10,000 unemployed miners. And then these mass layoffs strained local social services. Entire communities went into a tailspin. Unsurprisingly, many of these places experiencing economic distress subsequently became ground zero in the opioid and substance abuse crisis as well.

I, and Republicans generally, did all we could to fight. But when we passed bills repealing the worst regulations, President Obama vetoed them. When I urged his EPA Administrator to hear from Kentucky families, she turned me down.

The policies had been dreamt up in places like New York City and San Francisco for places like New York City and San Francisco. Places like Kentucky? We were just the collateral damage. So it is no surprise that all kinds of Americans elected President Trump and Republican majorities in 2016. And we hit the ground running.

One of the first bills we sent the President was a bill I introduced to repeal the stream buffer rule, a burdensome part of a series of regulations designed to make coal prohibitively expensive to mine or to use. We halted some of the worst regulations, like the waters of the United States, eliminated the so-called Clean Power Plan, and replaced them with policies to support American energy dominance.

For former miners and for the industry, the damage can’t be unwound overnight. This very month, we have seen two more major coal producers in Kentucky move toward bankruptcy. Clearly, even now, all is not well. That is why my colleagues and I are focused on lending a helping hand. When healthcare benefits for thousands of retired coal miners and their families were at risk, I led the effort to secure a permanent extension and protect coal communities in States like Kentucky.

Congressman HAL ROGERS and I established the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Economic Development Pilot Program, which aims to revive old mine sites into economic drivers again. That program includes everything from helping dislocated miners develop the skills they need to transition to a new career, to delivering resources to strengthen our water infrastructure, to improving the infrastructure and tourist attractions to draw new visitors and money into Appalachia.

With each program and many others, we are working to revitalize communities and repair the damage. But many of our Democratic colleagues are itching to take us right back to the bad old days. The most prominent voices in the Democratic Party are openly calling to restart a Big Government assault on fossil fuels and on so many Americans’ livelihoods.

We all remember several months ago when many Democrats embraced an unabashedly socialist proposal called