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Senate

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.

Holy God, who loves all and forgets none, thank You for the guidance of Your sacred words, a light for dark times.

Lord, we are grateful You provide wisdom for those who revere You. Send help and strength to our lawmakers, that they may strive to honor You in every endeavor. Inspire them to mount up on wings like eagles, running without weariness and walking without fainting. Lord, give them the wisdom to have a conscience void of offense toward You and humanity.

Eternal God, hear our intercessions, answer them according to Your will, and make us all channels of Your mercy and love.

We pray in Your Holy 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). The Senator from Iowa.

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

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

IOWA V. IOWA STATE FOOTBALL GAME

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, this weekend I attended what some call Iowa's own Super Bowl, the Iowa v. Iowa State football game. I talked with

Iowans while tailgating, and tailgating most of the time goes on before the game for me. We talked about issues such as ethanol, biodiesel, and trade.

This year, the game was in Ames, and Iowa State hosted ESPN's football "College GameDay," and this was the first time ever for Iowans to do that. It was an opportunity to show off Iowa State's campus and to celebrate the tradition of the annual Cy-Hawk game.

Congratulations to the Iowa Hawkeyes for winning this year's match-up, but both teams put up a strong fight, as you can tell from the final score of Iowa's winning 18 to 17.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, 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.

SAUDI ARABIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this weekend saw a brazen attack by Iran

on a critical oil facility in Saudi Arabia. This is not just an isolated drone strike with the prospect of regional escalation but an attack with significant repercussions for the entire global energy market.

We are fortunate that advances in U.S. oil and gas production have made the United States more energy independent and have added capacity to global markets, but the impact of this attack could still be substantial. For this reason, I welcome the administration's preparations to potentially release oil from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve, if needed, to stabilize global markets. I hope our international partners will join us in imposing consequences on Tehran for this reckless, destabilizing attack.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on another matter, when the Senate returned last week, we anticipated our top priority would be conducting the appropriations process and avoiding a lapse in government funding. We had a clear roadmap, a bipartisan, bicameral agreement negotiated by the President's team and the Speaker of the House. It set top-line funding targets for both defense and nondefense, and it laid out ground rules to protect the process from partisan politics.

There has actually been reason for optimism. This week, we hope to move to the House-passed bills for Defense, Energy and Water, Labor-HHS, and State and Foreign Ops. This would be our first procedural step to getting the process moving for all of our priorities on both sides.

There is nothing controversial about this particular grouping of bills. In fact, it was Speaker PELOSI who combined this grouping of bills to move first. Furthermore, if any of the funding measures were going to be handled earnestly across party lines, surely it

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



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ought to be the bill funding the Department of Defense. Our fundamental obligation is to provide for the common defense of our country, and all Members feel our responsibility to keep the Nation safe.

Fortunately, the caps agreement specifically allows us to increase defense funding to meet the growing threats our Nation faces. Yet here is where we are: One week in, our Democratic colleagues tried to stonewall the defense funding bill in committee and are now indicating they may even filibuster a motion to begin considering the House-passed defense funding bill later this week.

There is only one way to read this. Some of our Democratic colleagues have determined they would rather stage a political fight with President Trump than secure the resources that our uniformed commanders urgently need to do their jobs. National security is taking a back seat to partisan politics.

Let's be absolutely clear about the concerns and the priorities that our Democratic friends are de-prioritizing. The defense spending measure would bolster efforts to modernize our forces and build the U.S. military of the future. Russia is actively modernizing its own forces, just as we have seen the Putin regime step up its brazen steps to exert its destabilizing influence well beyond its borders. In China, the last decade has seen military spending nearly double. Our regional partners continue to feel the tightening grip of the Chinese Communist Party on trade and strategic activity throughout the Indo-Pacific region while the technological ripples of Chinese cyber meddling are felt right here at home.

In the face of surging great-power adversaries, simple upkeep is not enough to keep America and our allies safe from aggression. Comprehensive funding for research, development, and readiness programs is what is needed. In Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, and beyond, we continue to face sustained threats from terrorist organizations. In the Middle East, we have seen how Iran's bid for regional hegemony and its investment in terror, missiles, and cyber activities threaten the United States, our allies and partners, key shipping lanes, and global energy markets.

This bipartisan Defense bill would help us to adapt to meet these new threats while ensuring our commanders can prosecute existing operations without being consumed by the instability of short-term continuing resolutions. Yet our Democratic colleagues would rather provoke a partisan feud with the President. They would rather have a fight with the President than stick to the agreement we all made. At least that is where we are as of the moment.

I remain hopeful that my friends on the Democratic side will join us in honoring the terms of the agreement that has been struck by the President and

the Speaker and help us to reboot a bipartisan funding process. The readiness and modernization of America's military and the safety of the American people should not play second fiddle to our Democratic colleagues' political strategy.

BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on a completely different matter, for anybody who has been reading the news over the past few days, it has probably felt a little like Groundhog Day because over the last couple of days, leading Democrats have tried to grab on to yet another poorly sourced, thinly reported, unsubstantiated allegation against Justice Brett Kavanaugh. There they go again. Call it a 1-year anniversary reenactment with Senate Democrats reopening the sad and embarrassing chapter they wrote last September.

The latest allegation was blasted out by a major newspaper despite the apparent lack of any corroborating evidence whatsoever. The reporting was so thin that the story ran not in the news section but on the opinion page. In fact, they have already had to issue an enormous correction. The writers conveniently failed to note that the supposed victim herself declined to be interviewed, and several of her friends say she has no memory of any such thing happening.

We all remember this pattern from the last time around: Shoot first, and correct the facts later. Here is another familiar pattern: Just like last September, little things like facts and evidence didn't stop the Democrats from rushing to exploit this. Even as the media was trying to backpedal, a number of the Democratic Presidential candidates were hysterically calling for Justice Kavanaugh to be impeached on the basis of this flimsy, uncorroborated story. They were calling for Justice Kavanaugh to be impeached. That includes several of our own Senate colleagues. Even after the massive correction, no one in that group has backed off his ridiculous threat.

This laughable suggestion is already earning scorn throughout the country and across the political spectrum. A majority of Senators and the American people rightly rejected the politics of unsubstantiated personal destruction just last year. It is just as transparent and self-serving today, 1 year later.

Yet it would be a mistake to dismiss this as a bad case of sour grapes. This is not just a leftwing obsession with one man; it is part of a deliberate effort to attack judicial independence. Six of the Democratic Presidential candidates—plus one who has now quit to run for the Senate—have publicly flirted with packing the Supreme Court—Court packing. Today's bold, new Democratic idea is a failed power grab from back in the 1930s.

Just a few weeks ago, some Senate Democrats nakedly threatened the Su-

preme Court Justices in writing. Our colleagues sent the Court an outlandish brief, gravely intoning that the "Supreme Court is not well," they said. "The Supreme Court is not well." Here was the punch line: Either issue rulings we like or we will pack the Court.

This is not normal political behavior. These are the actions of a political party whose agenda is so alien to the Constitution that it feels threatened by fair and faithful judges.

This is what I would say: When the simple notion that judges should be faithful to the Constitution looks like an attack on your agenda, maybe it is your agenda that needs a makeover, not our independent judiciary. When you are this willing to launch unhinged personal attacks, you reveal a whole lot more about your own radicalism than about the men and women you target.

This is my commitment and the commitment of all of my Republican colleagues: As long as we remain in the Senate, we will fight to preserve our fair and independent judiciary.

LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION, DEFENSE, STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2020—Motion to Proceed

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 140, H.R. 2740.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 140, H.R. 2740, making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2740, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Richard C. Shelby, John Barasso, Johnny Isakson, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Jerry Moran, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, John Boozman, Roy Blunt, John Thune, David Perdue, John Hoeven.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.