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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PATRICK J. TOOMEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Giani Sukhvinder Singh, of Gurdwara Philadelphia Sikh Society, Upper Darby, PA.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

"One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru."

Almighty God, we call You by many names, but You are one. Keep Your Divine Hand over the Members of this Senate as they help steer the future of our great Nation. Keep truth on our tongues, love in our hearts, and sound judgment in our minds. Remind us of our purpose: to love and serve one another and create a more peaceful world.

We ask for blessings unto all leaders as they work for the common good. Give all who govern this land humility and courage, integrity, and compassion. Release each one of us from ego so that we may serve selflessly. Help us remember that we belong to one family.

"Recognize the entire human race as one."

We ask of the Almighty to also keep watch over our Nation's protectors who work tirelessly, day and night, to ensure our safety and our freedom.

You are everywhere; all are Yours. Whatever is seen, O God, is Your form. My Lord, You are but one. We ask You to bless this great Nation and its people.

"In the name of Nanak, find everlasting optimism. With Your will, Almighty God, may there be welfare of all of humanity."

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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 16, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable PATRICK J. TOOMEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TOOMEY thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

550TH BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise to mark a very special day for the Sikh religion and the Sikh community across America and especially in Pennsylvania—specifically, the birthday of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak was born into a Hindu household in 1469 in what is now modern-day Pakistan. Guru Nanak showed a keen interest in religion from very early on in his life. He had a real aptitude in his youth for philosophizing and writing poetry. He married, had children, and became an accountant like his father. Yet he always believed in the importance of living a spiritual life. Eventually, he underwent a pro-

found personal transformation to become the religious figure and leader for which he is recognized today.

Guru Nanak's most famous teachings include that there is only one God, that people need not go through an intermediary, such as a priest, to access the one God, and that all people are created equal. He preached that his followers should meditate and remember God, that they should earn an honest living, and that they should share with those who are less fortunate than themselves.

Guru Nanak began teaching the Sikh faith around the year 1500, and with around 30 million adherents, the Sikh faith is the sixth largest religion in the world. Approximately 700,000 Sikhs have chosen to make their homes in the United States. There are several Sikh places of worship, known as gurdwaras, in and around the Philadelphia area, Pittsburgh, Allentown, Erie, and across America.

Next month, on November 12, there will be celebrations at gurdwaras across the globe to mark the 550th birthday of Guru Nanak. In addition, Sikh leaders have come to the Capitol today to commemorate the birthday of Guru Nanak.

A few minutes ago, a giani, or a Sikh religious official, gave a prayer as the Senate opened for business. I am proud that he hails from my State of Pennsylvania. This evening, leaders from the Sikh community will convene an interfaith event to promote the peaceful values that all of the world's major religions share.

This morning, I just wanted to add my voice to wish the Sikh community great luck and great joy with this event and to wish Guru Nanak a happy 550th birthday this year.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

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



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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 Barbara McConnell Barrett, of Arizona, to be Secretary of the Air Force.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I mentioned yesterday the contrast between our work in the Senate and what is transpiring over in the House.

On this side of the Capitol, we are focused on working for the American people. We are overcoming the Democrats' historic delay tactics and obstruction to confirm more of the President's impressive nominees for the executive branch as well as for the judiciary. Later today, we will confirm a new Secretary of the Air Force and will then turn to several impressive nominees to district court vacancies in order to continue our renewal of the Federal judiciary.

We will also keep working on the appropriations process and on providing the funding our Armed Forces certainly need, and we are discussing ways to discourage the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Middle East and ensure the United States continues to provide the essential global leadership that has cornered ISIS and other radical Islamic terrorists and has kept our Nation safe.

So what is going on over in the House?

Those in the House are doubling down on their 3-year-old obsession of finding ways to nullify the decision the American people made back in 2016. Speaker PELOSI's Democrats are blocking the USMCA, which is the landmark trade deal that would create 176,000 new jobs for American workers. They are dragging their heels on funding the government, which is keeping our military commanders in limbo. All of their energy is going into this all-consuming impeachment parade that has been rolling on for 3 years now—ever searching for a rationale.

Remember, it was literally on Inauguration Day of January 2017 when the Washington Post ran this headline: "The campaign to impeach President Trump has begun." Well, the Post got it right. Before President Trump even took office, one prominent House Democrat had already declared he would not be a legitimate President. Just a few months later, another was already

promising she would not rest until she impeached him.

From the very beginning of this Presidency, Washington Democrats have lived in a state of denial. They have seemed positive that some inside-the-Beltway maneuver would save them from the consequences of Secretary Clinton's defeat. They had hoped Special Counsel Mueller's report would have validated their theories about the conspiracy between the Trump campaign and the Russians. They used their minority powers in the Senate to effectively try to nullify his Presidency by obstructing even completely uncontroversial nominees to all kinds of government posts simply because this President was the one who nominated them.

There have been 3 years of this. Now, finally, Speaker PELOSI's efforts to hold back her leftwing caucus have officially crumbled, and the House has thrown itself into impeachment.

Given the lip service the House Democrats pay in defending the norms and institutions of American Government, you might think they would at least run this so-called impeachment inquiry by the book. You might think the people who are trying to overrule the American voters and, from Washington, cancel out an election would conduct their process by the very highest standards of fairness and due process.

If you thought that, you would be wrong. Our Democratic colleagues have had their minds made up since long before this inquiry began. Remember, the chairwoman of one of the committees Speaker PELOSI put in charge of the process said in April of 2017: "I'm going to fight every day until he's impeached." That was back in 2017. So this is not about seriously discharging constitutional responsibilities. It is about the end result they have had in mind since day one.

Remember when the campaign to block Justice Kavanaugh began with protest signs with a big, empty blank for the name? It was a fill-in-the-blank protest before they even knew who the nominee was. Now we have the sequel with this fill-in-the-blank quest for impeachment. The Democrats' process already speaks for itself.

For the first time ever, Speaker PELOSI has simply ordered the House to conduct an inquiry into impeaching a President without a full vote of the House. Just yesterday, the Speaker doubled down on this unprecedented and undemocratic process by once again refusing to hold a vote on an impeachment inquiry.

Democrats have refused to give Republicans the same rights and fair treatment that Republicans afforded Democrats during the Clinton impeachment—things like equal subpoena power for the ranking members. Likewise, Democrats have refused to give President Trump's counsel the same opportunities that Republicans gave to President Clinton—rights such as at-

tending all hearings, depositions, offering evidence, and cross-examining witnesses.

We have already seen Chairman SCHIFF say in public that his committee had not been in touch with the whistleblower when they actually had been. We have seen Chairman SCHIFF bizarrely and brazenly fabricate what the President actually said to the President of Ukraine during an official hearing that he was chairing, only to claim that his fabrications were a parody—a parody—when Republicans called him out for it.

The same Democrats who are running this circus turn around and claim with a straight face that they are solemnly following the facts and the Constitution wherever it leads.

Give me a break. Give me a break. The entire country can see that that is not what is happening here.

And here is what else the American people can see: The Democrats would rather fight with the White House than work with the Republicans and the administration to pass legislation.

We need real solutions, like full-year funding for our Armed Forces so our men and women in uniform can receive their pay raise and our commanders can engage in long-term planning; real solutions like the USMCA, the major victory for American workers and American businesses that the Trump administration negotiated with Canada and Mexico but which Speaker PELOSI has blocked for months, with 176,000 new American jobs hanging in the balance.

Opportunities are right before us. Senate Republicans have been ready and waiting for weeks and months to do our part and actually make law on these subjects for the benefit of American families. We just need our counterparts across the Capitol to get serious about this.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, just when you think things couldn't get any stranger here in Washington, DC, a few weeks ago, Speaker PELOSI announced that the House was officially beginning proceedings to impeach the President of the United States. While the left has been dreaming of impeachment ever since the President was first elected in 2016, the timing of this was quite a surprise. In fact, last January the Speaker led the effort to table an impeachment resolution, and she and Chairman NADLER and Chairman SCHIFF and other House leaders had said that they recognized that this would never be successful unless it is bipartisan, and I think they were right then and they are wrong now.