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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.

Eternal God, hear us when we cry to You. You have been our help in ages past and our hope for the years to come.

You don't keep a record of our transgressions but shower us daily with mercy and forgiveness. Great is Your faithfulness.

As our Senators wait for the unfolding of Your powerful providence, give them Your peace. Lord, may they cling to Your promises knowing that You will lead them to a desired destination. Give them the wisdom to trust Your unconditional love and Your willingness to save those who call on Your Name.

We pray in Your mighty 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. CRAMER). 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 ADOPTION MONTH

MR. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, November is National Adoption Month. This year, we have very good news.

In 2018, over 63,000 young people were adopted from foster care. That is an in-

crease of 4,000 from the previous year. However, the number of children waiting for adoption also increased. That number rose to 125,000. Unfortunately, teenagers, sibling groups, and those with medical challenges often wait much longer to be adopted. Every child deserves a safe, permanent, loving home, so I want to commend all those who have chosen to adopt children in foster care.

If you wonder where I get the opinion that it is unfortunate that people want a permanent, safe, and loving home, all you have to do is listen to the kids in the foster care system, and you always get this response: What I would like to have is a mom and dad, and I would like to have a home. In other words, they get tired of being shuffled around from one foster home to another foster home, to another foster home. That is where I come from in recognizing November as National Adoption Month.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF STEVEN J. MENASHI

MR. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, after we confirm Chad Wolf to serve in a senior position at the Department of Homeland Security, the Senate will turn to President Trump's nominee to serve on the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Steven Menashi's nomination continues an already distinguished career studying, teaching, and practicing law. After earning degrees from Dartmouth and Stanford, he clerked for Judge Douglas Ginsburg on the DC Court of Appeals and Justice Alito on the Supreme Court. Mr. Menashi has held a research fellowship at the New York University School of Law and taught

at George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School.

Even the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary, which has lately—lately made headlines for treating President Trump's nominees in a less-than-even-handed way, has rated this nominee “well-qualified.”

Obviously, a majority of our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee concurred, and now the entire Senate will have the opportunity to confirm yet another outstanding jurist to the Federal bench.

I urge each of my colleagues to join me in supporting Steven Menashi's nomination this week.

TURKEY AND SYRIA

MR. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on another matter, today President Trump will host the leader of Turkey at the White House. Although I have expressed concerns about granting President Erdogan such an honor in light of his recent actions, I hope the meeting produces better behavior from this important NATO ally.

We recognize Turkey's legitimate national security concerns about the destabilizing conflict in Syria. Indeed, no NATO ally has suffered more terrorist attacks or hosts more refugees than Turkey. Nevertheless, we have legitimate national security concerns of our own, and I know the vast majority of my colleagues share my concerns about Turkey's recent behavior.

It is important for the region and the fight against ISIS that Turkey's incursion into Syria not further jeopardize the anti-terrorism campaign of the Syrian Democratic Forces. It is important for Turkey's 80 million people that Turkey's Government moves to restore its democratic traditions—freedom of the press, religious freedom, respect for secularism and ethnic minorities, and a robust space for civil society. Despite the optimism from the

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Obama administration and others that Turkey, under President Erdogan, would be a model democracy, in practice, these important values have suffered under his tenure.

As the Turkish people's concern continues growing, it is troubling that the political space for them to express those concerns has seemed to shrink further. At the same time, the United States must recognize that the path to addressing our concerns involves working with this important NATO ally and aligning its interests with ours.

Turning a cold shoulder altogether would be a major strategic misstep and would jeopardize our national security and our interests. We do not need Turkey to fall further into Moscow's orbit. I know my colleagues are looking to see whether a deal can be reached on the S-400 air defense system.

I share my colleagues' uneasiness at seeing President Erdogan honored down at the White House, but I urge this body to remain clear-eyed about our Nation's vital interests in the Middle East and the fact that advancing them will mean strengthening our relationship with this NATO ally, not weakening it further.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, today, almost 3 years in the House Democrats' quest to impeach the President and 7 weeks into the inquiry that Speaker PELOSI proclaimed in a press conference, House Democrats will hold their first public hearing on impeachment.

This hearing was mandated by the strange resolution House Democrats passed a couple of weeks ago. That resolution did not provide President Trump with important rights, which the House afforded to Presidents of both parties during past impeachment inquiries. It didn't even afford their own House Republican colleagues the same rights that House Republicans gave Democrats during the Clinton inquiry. No; House Democrats' resolution just codified their unfair approach: no due process now, maybe some later, but only if we feel like it. That is what it establishes.

The American people know that many Washington Democrats have had their minds made up on impeachment for years. It was clear on election day 2016, and it became undeniable by Inauguration Day. That is when the Washington Post, before he was sworn in, ran this headline: "The Campaign to Impeach President Trump has Begun."

The whole country saw a prominent House Democrat state publicly in April of 2017: "I'm going to fight every day until he's impeached." That is the chairwoman of one of the committees the Speaker has given responsibility for this inquiry, promising impeachment 3 months into his Presidency.

It is hardly surprising that this partisan journey is not yielding a neutral process. Unfortunately, it is also

crowding out important legislation for the American people. In the House, Speaker PELOSI is more interested in taking away President Trump's job than in creating 176,000 new jobs for American workers by passing the USMCA. She is blocking this landmark trade agreement.

In the Senate, our Democratic colleagues have filibustered the funding of our Armed Forces. Despite promising to forgo the poison pills a few months back, Democratic leadership has run the appropriations process aground so they can fight over immigration policy with the White House.

Speaking of our Armed Forces, House Democrats are also slow-walking the National Defense Authorization Act. That is an essential bill that Congress has passed every year—every year since 1961 like clockwork—every year, on a bipartisan basis, for almost six decades, but this year House Democrats broke with precedent and passed their own partisan version and are now stalling the conference committee. These are the priorities that are languishing as impeachment marches on.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2840

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2840) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2020 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Chad F. Wolf, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Strategy, Policy, and Plans, Department of Homeland Security. (New Position)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if members of the American public came to the Senate Chamber this week to witness legislative activity, such as a piece of legislation on the floor, amendments, debate, votes, deliberation, or compromise, they are out of luck. We don't do that in the Senate anymore. We are not going to do it this week; we didn't do it last week; and we didn't do it the week before.

Now, the Republican leader just said the problem is impeachment. The problem is not impeachment. The problem is the Senate is not a Senate anymore. All we do in the Senate—all we do in the Senate is this serial list of judicial nominations, one after the other, after the other, after the other. That is it. We don't take up legislation.

Yesterday there was a—right across the street from this Capitol Building, in front of the Supreme Court, hundreds of people were there because of a hearing in the Supreme Court on the issue of DACA, which was created by President Obama, where 780,000 undocumented young people had a chance to stay in this country and was abolished by President Trump. Hundreds came out yesterday. They wanted to hear—at least try to hear the Supreme Court deliberations on their future and what would happen to them.

It is quite possible that the Court will rule in the President's favor. I hope not, but it is possible, and the future of these young people will be deportation. You can imagine how they feel about this issue. They look back over here at the Capitol and they wonder: What are they doing in the U.S. Capitol building to deal with an issue of such grave importance for such a large group of people in the United States? Here's what we are doing: Nothing—nothing.

The House of Representatives passed the American Dream and Promise Act in the month of June, and the U.S. Senate and Senator MCCONNELL will not let us bring it to the floor. Is he going to blame the impeachment proceedings for the fact that we have waited 5 months now with this critical bill, having passed the House, not even being considered in the U.S. Senate? Is that the reason we haven't been able to take up serious legislation for weeks in the U.S. Senate? Of course not. It is not about impeachment; it is about a strategy designed by the Senate Republican leader not to entertain substantive legislation—just to take up the issues of nominations.

The nominations, of course, are an issue themselves. I mentioned the judicial nominations. Well, last week in the Senate Judiciary Committee, we had the ninth Trump nominee for the