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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, our Father, through these days of Lent, give us a continuous awareness of Your presence.

May each lawmaker remember Your promise to never leave or forsake us. Finding power in Your presence, give our Senators the ability to discover solutions to the problems that confront our Nation and world. May they strive to make a positive difference for all Americans, permitting Your light to illumine the way. Lord, provide our legislators with a new vision of faith and a fresh venture of hope as they seek creative ways to help a troubled world.

We pray in Your powerful 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 (Mrs. LOEFFLER). The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

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

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

IOWA HISTORY MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, this month is Iowa History Month. For Iowa History Month, I will probably give a few 1-minute speeches about the history of Iowa, but today I want to

recognize the role Iowa's veterans have played in our history.

For instance, in the Civil War, Iowa sent over 75,000 soldiers to fight for the Union—the most per capita of any State. I have been saying “the most per capita of any State” because I thought that was the history, but I have heard other States also say the same thing for their States, so I want to be intellectually honest. But I am still proud of those 75,000 Iowans who fought for the Union.

Iowa has kept that tradition of service, and I often have the pleasure of meeting our veterans. Yesterday, I met an Iowa delegation for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I participate in the Library of Congress project called the Veterans History Project. Accordingly, I have had the honor of helping preserve 31 interviews with Iowa veterans as part of the Veterans History Project. That has taken place over just the last 2 years, preserving the oral history of these Iowa veterans. So the Iowa Veterans History Project will have their stories for future generations to ensure that the service and the sacrifices of these Iowans are never forgotten.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, last week I described how Congress could quickly secure supplemental funding to combat the coronavirus. The way to secure these urgently needed resources with speed and certainty was to forgo partisan posturing, forgo micromanagement at the leadership level, and let the bipartisan appropriators do their work.

Since then, Senator SHELBY, Senator LEAHY, and their counterparts in the House have worked on bipartisan, bicameral discussions. Thanks to their good work, we are close. The funding legislation appears to be about at the 5-yard line. I hope to complete the legislation and deliver this funding this week. We are close.

In order to finish up, both sides will need to continue doing what has worked thus far and resist the temptation to impose any last-minute ideological demands. In particular, I have heard that the Democratic leadership may be contemplating a last-minute demand that this funding legislation also test drive some untried, untested, and controversial parts of their Medicare for All proposal that relate to the pricing of new drugs and innovations.

So, look, everyone agrees that the potential diagnostics, therapeutics, or vaccines that might come out of this new funding cannot only be available to the ultrawealthy. We all agree on that. Everyone agrees. We already have longstanding, tried-and-true procedures so the government can buy and distribute new medicines in scenarios like this to ensure accessibility. These mechanisms are already in place. There is no need and this is no time to begin experimenting with ideological proposals that could jeopardize research, development, and innovation. Like I said, the accessibility of treatments or vaccines is a priority for everybody, but before new technologies can be accessible, they obviously have to be available.

This is a moment to empower innovators, to incentivize innovators. It is a time to remove hurdles to innovation, not build new hurdles and create new uncertainty through ideological experimentation.

So I hope these rumors do not prove true. I am optimistic we will be able to close out the remaining questions and process this legislation in short order. This moment calls for collaboration

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



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and for unity. Our bicameral, bipartisan talks have made great headway. It is time to give our public health experts and healthcare professionals the surge of resources they need at this challenging time.

S. 2657

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, in the meantime, the Senate will continue considering an important package of comprehensive energy legislation. For the first time in more than a decade, we are looking at a thorough update to the laws governing innovation, security, and workforce development all across the American energy sector.

As Chairman MURKOWSKI has noted, 12 years is a long time. The demands we face in researching, producing, refining, storing, and protecting our abundant domestic energy have evolved a great deal since 2007, so it is high time for relevant Federal policy to evolve as well. I am grateful the chairman was willing to take on this important task, and I am glad she and Senator MANCHIN led their colleagues on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee through an overwhelmingly bipartisan process to produce this bill.

As I mentioned yesterday, the legislation aggregates 50 individual bills. It contains input from more than 60 Senators. It covers an exhaustive range of energy-related challenges, from power storage and renewable technologies to carbon capture and electrical grid cyber security.

It has earned the support of a similarly broad range of industry, advocacy, and research organizations. In one joint letter, the Bipartisan Policy Center, the American Nuclear Society, the Nature Conservancy, and 36 other signatories endorsed it as “the culmination of extensive efforts to develop practical legislative solutions.” That is the American Nuclear Society and the Nature Conservancy—that ought to tell you what you need to know about this bill. This is a bipartisan piece of legislation done right. This is how you take practical steps to build consensus on issues that affect every American in every State.

Around this time last year, you will recall we saw a high-profile example of exactly what not to do. The far-left edge of the House Democratic caucus rolled out a massive scheme to forcibly remake much of our economy and our society according to their radical top-down designs.

We all remember the Green New Deal—categorical bans on the most affordable forms of American energy, a dim future for millions of energy jobs, unprecedented Washington mandates on every subject from building codes to personal transportation. We all remember what happened next: This socialist fantasy did not stay confined to ideological fringe; it quickly grew into a broader rallying cry. When the Senate had the opportunity to vote on this

wish list of central planning, only four—just four—of our Democratic colleagues could bring themselves to vote against it. That is quite a remarkable commentary on the state of our politics.

Experts estimated the Green New Deal could have cost our government more than the GDP of the entire world. The Green New Deal could have cost our government more than the GDP of the entire world. Instead, this bipartisan legislation will let us direct responsible and targeted investment in a smart way toward key energy priorities.

The Green New Deal sought to have Washington micromanage everyday life in this country to a degree that the 20th-century Socialists would have drooled over. Instead, this bipartisan legislation will create better policy and regulatory conditions for American workers, American innovators, and American job creators to actually thrive.

Speaking as the senior Senator from Kentucky, I know firsthand that many Americans in the middle of the country suffered badly during the Obama era because Washington bureaucrats decided American energy had to fit their ideological designs. The very last thing we want is to move backward and expand those errors exponentially with radical leftwing experiments that would make the last administration's War on Coal look like child's play.

What Kentuckians and all Americans deserve is for the Federal Government to make prosperity and domestic energy dominance easier—easier—not harder. They deserve investment and support to help the communities that have fueled this country for generations to prosper once again, and that is what this bipartisan bill will actually deliver.

I am proud to support this smart legislation. Clearly, I am not alone, since only three Senators voted against advancing the bill this week. So I would urge all of my colleagues to keep up their support, and let's see this package through to the finish line.

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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

ADVANCED GEOTHERMAL INNOVATION LEADERSHIP ACT OF 2019—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will re-

sume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2657, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to S. 2657, a bill to support innovation in advanced geothermal research and development, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, today we vote to begin the consideration of S. 2657, which will serve as the vehicle for the American Energy Innovation Act. This is truly bipartisan energy policy. This innovative package will be the first comprehensive policy update in 13 years. It brings together the strong bipartisan work of the Energy Committee over the last year.

I would like to thank my friend and chairman of the committee, LISA MURKOWSKI, Republican from Alaska, for her leadership and partnership with me over the last 14 months to process these bills and form the basis of the energy package we will be turning to today.

Thanks to the members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee for their contributions to the development of this legislation.

The American Energy Innovation Act draws from 53 bills from Members from both sides of the aisle, and 39 of those were truly a bipartisan effort. And 63 Members of the Senate have either sponsored or cosponsored a piece of this package.

It truly is a bipartisan product and one that I believe will benefit this country greatly. So far, we have had over 150 amendments filed, several of which are bipartisan, and there is no controversial issue that I know of. I am hoping that we can work together to incorporate some of those amendments from both sides of the aisle.

As it stands, the American Energy Innovation Act will advance the abilities of Department of Energy and the National Laboratories to deliver the much needed technology that American workers can then produce and export across the global marketplace. Not only will it further our ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy, transportation, industry, and buildings, but it will also enhance our cyber and grid security and maintain our competitive edge and role as a global leader.

We talk a lot—all of us do—about global climate, and when you think about global climate, then you think about our responsibility and what we emit into the air. For some reason, most people have been led to believe that power generation—whether it be coal-fired powerplants, natural gas-fired powerplants, or anything that has to do with fossil—is contributing all of the greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. That is just not true.

Let me give you the breakdown. Power generation contributes 27.5 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions.