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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 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 King, ruler of all nature, thank you for the opportunity to serve You and country. Help us to give government what belongs to government as we render to You our faithful stewardship.

Lord, guide our lawmakers to make right choices in challenging times. Enable them to feel Your presence and become lights to a dark world. Open their eyes to see Your daily gifts and blessings, infusing them with a spirit of gratitude.

Protect our Nation from sea to shining sea, as You empower us to live for Your glory.

We pray in Your wonderful 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. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for 1 minute in morning business.

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

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today is a very important day that we recognize once a year—National Religious Freedom Day. It is a day when

we celebrate America's longstanding commitment to religious freedom.

The First Amendment to the Constitution protects that right for Americans. Unfortunately, this fundamental right we have great respect for in the United States is under attack internationally in many autocratic countries.

Around the world, people are being persecuted for their faith by authoritarian dictatorships and terrorist groups. Countries like China, North Korea, and Russia restrict their citizens' rights to practice their own religion.

China, for example, plans to enforce additional restrictions on religious groups starting February 1. That is already on top of a very bad record they have for religious freedom. That is in regard to China, but it would apply to all countries.

I have legislation to require the United States to work to block World Bank projects in wealthy countries like China and Russia that abuse religious freedoms.

I yield the floor.

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. 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.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, it took 4 weeks—4 weeks, but the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives is finally ready—fi-

nally ready—to defend their impeachment of the President of the United States.

After weeks of delay, the Speaker of the House decided yesterday that a trial could finally go forward. She signed the impeachment papers. That took place at a table with a political slogan stuck onto it. And they posed—they posed—afterward for smiling photos. And the Speaker distributed souvenir pens—souvenir pens—to her own colleagues, emblazoned with her golden signature that literally came in on silver platters. The pens literally came in on silver platters. There were golden pens on silver platters, a souvenir to celebrate the moment.

I seem to remember Democrats falling over themselves to say they did not see impeachment as a long-sought political win. House Democrats said over and over that they recognized the gravity and the seriousness of this action, and, of course, they had only come to it reluctantly. Well, nothing says seriousness and sobriety like handing out souvenirs, as though this were a happy bill-signing instead of the gravest process in our Constitution.

This final display neatly distilled the House's partisan process into one perfect visual. It was a transparently partisan performance from beginning to end.

That is why they sped through a slapdash inquiry in 12 weeks, when previous Presidential impeachments came after months, if not years, of investigations and hearings. That is why the House cut short their own inquiry, declined to pursue their own subpoenas, and denied the President due process, but now—now they want the Senate to redo their homework and rerun the investigation.

That is why our colleague the Democratic leader told the press that whatever happens next, as long as he can weaponize the trial to hurt the Republicans in the 2020 election, "it's a win-win." That is what the Democratic leader of the Senate said.

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



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That is why the Speaker of the House apparently saw nothing strange about celebrating the third Presidential impeachment in American history with souvenirs and posed for photographs—souvenirs and posed photographs.

That pretty well sums it up. That is what the process has been thus far, but it is not what this process will be going forward.

The Founding Fathers who crafted and ratified our Constitution knew that our Nation might sometimes fall prey to the kind of dangerous factualism and partisanship that has consumed—literally consumed the House of Representatives.

The Framers set up the Senate specifically to act as a check against the short-termism and the runaway passions to which the House of Representatives might fall victim.

Alexander Hamilton worried that “the demon of faction” would “extend his scepter” over the House majorities “at certain seasons.” That is what Alexander Hamilton said. He feared for the viability of the government established by the Constitution if, blinded by factualism, the House of Representatives would abuse the power of impeachment to serve nakedly partisan goals rather than long-term interests of the American people and their Republic, but, fortunately, they did something about it.

They did not give both the power to impeach and the power to remove to the House. They divided the power and placed the final decision on removal over here in the Senate.

This body, this Chamber, exists precisely—precisely so we can look past the daily dramas and understand how our actions will reverberate for generations; so we can put aside animal reflexes and animosity and coolly consider how to best serve our country in the long run; so we can break factional fevers before they jeopardize the core institutions of our government.

As Hamilton put it, only the Senate, with “confidence enough in its own situation,” can “preserve, unawed and uninfluenced, the necessary impartiality between an individual accused, and the representatives of the people, his accusers.”

The House’s hour is over. The Senate’s time is at hand. It is time for this proud body to honor our founding purpose.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on an entirely different matter, before we turn to the trial in earnest, the Senate has one more major accomplishment to deliver to the American people.

Yesterday we began floor consideration of the most significant update to the North American trade policy in

nearly 30 years. In just a couple of hours, we are going to pass the USMCA and send it to President Trump for his signature.

It was back in 2018 when the Trump administration finalized its talks with the Governments of Mexico and Canada. This has been a major priority for the President and for many of us in both Houses of Congress.

That is because American livelihoods in every corner of every State depend on these critical trading relationships. Farmers, growers, cattlemen, manufacturers, small businesses, big businesses—this is a major step for our whole country.

In the 26 years since the ratification of NAFTA, trade with Mexico and Canada has come to directly support 12 million American jobs—12 million workers and their families who depend on robust trade with our North American neighbors. Our neighbors to the north and south purchase half a trillion dollars in American goods and services every single year. That includes more than a quarter of all the food and agricultural products we export. Take my home State of Kentucky as an example. Mexico and Canada buy \$300 million of agricultural exports from Kentucky growers and producers every year. They buy \$9.9 billion of our State’s manufacturing exports—and on and on. Commerce with our neighbors is essential across the board.

No wonder experts estimate that USMCA would create 176,000 new American jobs. No wonder they predict it will yield tens of billions of dollars in economic growth. No wonder farmers, ranchers, steelworkers, and manufacturers across our country have been so eager to see the USMCA signed, sealed, and delivered. In one recent letter, Kentucky farmers told me: “We need the agreement ratified, and we need it to happen now.”

I know my colleagues have been hearing the same thing from their home States. Republicans, Democrats, Senators, Representatives—our incoming has been the same: Get this deal passed. Failure is not an option.

Of course, for far too long, our counterparts in the House kept all these Americans waiting. It took more than a year and a lot of pressure from Senate Republicans to get the Speaker of the House to stop blocking the trade deal and finally let the House vote on it. Late last year, she finally relented. It passed by a big bipartisan margin, of course, and I now expect that kind of vote will repeat itself here in the Senate.

I am especially grateful to our colleagues and counterparts who got this across the finish line: to the U.S. Trade Representative, Bob Lighthizer, and his hard-working team, led by his chief of staff, Jamieson Greer; to Chairman GRASSLEY for leading the bipartisan effort in the Senate Finance Committee and his trade team, led by Nasim Fussell; to Ranking Member WYDEN and his trade counsel, Jayme White,

and all of our Finance Committee colleagues and staff; and to the chairmen of our other committees of jurisdiction who worked nimbly to get this done.

I want to thank the exceptional Cloakroom staff—in particular, Christopher Tuck.

I would like to thank members of my own team whose efforts were invaluable, most especially my chief economic policy council, Jay Khosla, whose role in securing this agreement has been absolutely essential; Ali Nepola in my personal office; Erica Suares and my leadership policy advisers; and, of course, their fearless leaders, Sharon Soderstrom, my chief of staff, and my deputy chief of staff for policy, Scott Raab.

Of course, I am most grateful to President Trump for prioritizing, negotiating, and delivering on this major promise. Today the Senate will send this landmark agreement to the President’s desk—a big bipartisan win. It comes the very same week as President Trump also signed phase one of his administration’s trade agreement with China—quite a week of substantive accomplishments for the Nation, for the President, and for our international trade. Both of these measures will only add to all the other Republican policies of the past 3 years that have helped generate this historically strong economic moment for working Americans and for their families.

I would urge every one of our colleagues to join me in voting to pass the USMCA.

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.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 5430, which the clerk will report by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5430) to implement the Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada attached as an Annex to the Protocol Replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement.

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