

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael Pack, of Maryland, to be Chief Executive Officer of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for the term of three years. (New Position)

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## RECOGNITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

## MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, a short time ago, in conjunction with the memorial service being held today in Minnesota for George Floyd, I joined the rest of the Democratic caucus in Emancipation Hall to recognize a moment of silence in honor of his memory as well as the memory of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Aubrey, and the unimaginable number of Black Americans who have had their lives ended in police custody.

Standing before the statue of Frederick Douglass, a Black American who fought his whole life for a measure of racial equality, the moment of silence lasted 8 minutes and 46 seconds, the length of time that the White police officer in Minneapolis pressed his knee on George Floyd's neck. Standing there in silence, you feel the horrifying length of George Floyd's final 9 minutes. You cannot help but imagine his horror and fear, knowing that his trauma and the trauma of his family and his friends has been felt by so many Black families and Black communities across the country and across the centuries.

Of course, a moment of silence, a moment of solidarity, is no substitute for real action. That is why Senate Democrats are working with our House colleagues on policing reform legislation.

That is why we are demanding that the Republican majority leader commit to addressing this issue on the floor of the Senate.

Leader MCCONNELL, why don't you admit that we have to do something here and not just say: Well, maybe we will take a look at it, as you did on gun control after the violent shootings and then did nothing? Make a commitment

here and now to the American people that we will put on the floor—that you will put on the floor police reform and racial justice legislation this month.

Will our Republican colleagues ever join us in this effort? I know these issues aren't easy, but we can't begin to make progress if the Republican leader and the Republican majority will not even let us try or address these issues in a legislative manner.

The Republican leader has said:

The coin of the realm in the Senate is floor time. What are you going to devote time to?

Well, it has been 5 weeks since Leader MCCONNELL called the Senate back into session during the height of a pandemic. The Republican majority has yet to put a single bill on the floor of the Senate related to COVID-19.

We passed a much needed extension of PPP reform last night, a very popular and bipartisan program, only after Democrats forced action here on the floor. I don't believe our Republican majority would have done anything.

We announced we would UC the bill, and we did, and it was blocked. Then, of course, faced with the public pressure of moving, Leader MCCONNELL came on the floor late last evening and moved the bill.

Make no mistake about it, without the pressure that we Democrats placed on the Republican majority to make these changes, it would certainly have been further delayed and might never have happened.

Now, Leader MCCONNELL has said that another emergency relief bill was likely before July 4, but then on Tuesday, when listing his priorities for the June session, Leader MCCONNELL did not mention COVID legislation.

Republican Senators are starting to say that another relief bill might—might—come in late July—shocking. This past week—just today it was announced—nearly 2 million more Americans filed for unemployment, bringing the total since the start of the pandemic to over 42 million.

The monthly jobs report tomorrow is expected to report over 20 percent unemployment, and we should wait? As people are losing their jobs, as parents are not sure they can feed their kids or stay in their homes, as small businesses, where people put their blood, sweat, and tears over the years and even decades to build them are collapsing—and we should wait? Why? Because maybe some rightwing ideologues or some of the very big leaders of the Republican Party and benefactors don't like spending money on anything?

I don't know if that is the reason. I hope it isn't. But we can't wait. We can't wait.

The economic disaster, as with so many issues in society, will disproportionately affect Black Americans. So far, 109,000 fellow Americans have died. More are dying every day, every single day, but Senate Republicans want to wait until late July to maybe—maybe do another relief bill.

The coin of the realm in the Senate is floor time. Leader MCCONNELL, every Senate Republican, what are you going to devote time to?

Today, toward the end of one of the more tumultuous and painful weeks in recent memory, marked by emotional protests about racial justice and police violence, Senate Republicans are holding sessions in the Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees related to President Trump's favorite conspiracy theories about the 2016 election.

I am not making this up. That is what they are doing, American people—not talking about COVID, not talking about racial justice but focusing on some Russian-originated theory that has been discredited by our intelligence agencies. That is what the Republican Senate is doing. No wonder they are in trouble.

The American people are looking for some kind of real help, some kind of real discussion, and the Republicans are talking about conspiracy theories.

Then the Senate Judiciary Committee is about to approve another rightwing judge, a McConnell protege, Justin Walker—seriously. At least, if you look at the record and history of Justin Walker, the chances of him being for strengthening voting rights and antidiscrimination legislation is very, very tiny. Yet they move forward on him.

By the end of the day, the two Republican-led committees will have approved up to 100 subpoenas—unprecedented in modern history. In the midst of national crises, Senate Republicans are trying to use the Senate to do opposition research for the President's reelection campaign. Seriously?

The Republican majority will approve up to 100 subpoenas to chase the President's wild conspiracy theories but has not put one bill on jobs, one bill on testing, one bill on employment on the floor of the Senate since Leader MCCONNELL called us back. They will not even commit to a debate on law enforcement reform.

You might think that an economic crisis, a public health emergency, on top of the searing reminder of racial injustice, might have put the conspiracy caucus on pause, but no—no such luck.

The American people should call their Republican Senators. They should demand action. The Republican Senate is failing to meet this important moment, and the Republican President isn't doing any better.

In a week marred by unacceptable violence and rioting in some places, the President advocates more violence, more chaos, more disorder, including appalling attacks on the constitutional rights of protesters on his front porch.

I am heartbroken by stories of peaceful protesters being injured when the protests turn ugly. I am heartbroken by reports of police officers who are doing their job the right way, striving to keep the peace, who have been gravely injured.

Three of New York's finest were injured yesterday while assigned to prevent looting. A New York State trooper in Buffalo was run over the other night. I wish New York State Trooper Ron Ensminger and the Buffalo police officers injured in these disturbing incidents a speedy and full recovery and thank them for their service and commitment to public safety.

Let me state, once again, unequivocally, that the cause of justice and change sought by protesters in and beyond is undermined by lawlessness and violence. President Trump, however, seems to be incapable of acknowledging the fact that the overwhelming number of peace protesters are peaceful and are simply advocating change. He seems incapable of turning the temperature down to prevent more violence. Quite the opposite. The President wants Americans to falsely believe that all the people who are protesting for a good cause—equality and racial justice—are violent. Nothing could be further from the truth. The overwhelming majority are doing what our Founding Fathers did: protesting to make this Nation a better nation. They should be praised, not vilified.

In a week marred by unacceptable violence and rioting in some places, the President advocates chaos and disorder, including appalling attacks on constitutional rights on his front porch. My goodness. My goodness.

Earlier this week, Americans watched Federal officers, under the direction of the President and the Attorney General, use gas and rubber bullets to disperse a crowd of peaceful protesters in the park. The Lincoln Memorial was blocked off by rows of camouflaged officers.

There are reports right now that troops from Fort Drum and Fort Bragg are camped outside Washington, DC. I would ask the leaders of our military, if these reports are true, what are they doing there, and what are their orders?

The leader, a few minutes ago, mentioned Tiananmen Square. Of course, no one believes that we are China or like China—of course not. We are a democracy, and we are proud of it. Most of us love and praise the right for peaceful protests. But I would remind the Republican leader, when any President, particularly an overreaching one like this, steps over the line, if good people don't raise their voices, that is the way to erode democracy, which China does not have.

Where is Leader MCCONNELL's voice? Instead of spinning these crazy theories, why doesn't he just speak out against what the President did Monday night? Why did he block our resolution, our simple resolution, which called for only three things: one, praise the protesters; two, condemn violence; and, three, condemn the President for what he did?

Our Nation's Capital is being patrolled by Federal officers commanded by President Trump and Attorney General Barr, who refuse to identify who they are and where they come from.

What is President Trump doing to this democracy, to the rule of law, to the primacy of the Constitution? And where are the Republican Senate voices—Leader MCCONNELL and everyone else here—condemning what he did?

Again, democracy will be eroded if we don't stand up for it, if we are afraid to speak out, afraid to tell President Trump he is overreaching and has done bad, bad things when he does them.

I am not the only one who feels this way. We have had statement after statement from Americans of all political stripes. I read George Will, for instance, the other day. He is a conservative, but he cares about America, and he has got some principle.

Then, the most remarkable of all, issued by President Trump's former Secretary of Defense. I want to read some of what former Secretary Mattis said:

When I joined the military, some 50 years ago, I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution. Never did I dream that troops taking that same oath would be ordered under any circumstance to violate the constitutional rights of their fellow citizens—much less to provide a bizarre photo op for the elected commander-in-chief, with military leadership standing alongside. We know that we are better than the abuse of executive authority that we witnessed in Lafayette Square.

Mattis continues:

Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people—does not even pretend to try. Instead he tries to divide us. We are witnessing the consequences of three years of this deliberate effort. We are witnessing the consequences of three years without mature leadership. We can unite without him, drawing on the strengths inherent in our civil society. This will not be easy, as the past few days have shown, but we owe it to our fellow citizens; to past generations that bled to defend our promise; and to our children.

That was President Trump's former Secretary of Defense, James Mattis. Like all former members of the military, I know that Secretary Mattis strives to avoid political statements. He has assiduously avoided them so far. But it was a searing indictment of President Trump's failures that impromptu Secretary Mattis to speak out so strongly about the President's divisiveness, immaturity, and abuse of power.

Make no mistake about it, General Mattis's comments were a shot across the bow to our military leaders: Don't let the President push you into doing things you know that are wrong, that should not be done, and that could very well violate the Constitution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The Senator from South Dakota.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, responding to the coronavirus continues to be one of our top priorities here in Congress, I think, as evidenced that yesterday the Senate moved a bill across the floor of the Senate that will be on its way now to the President's desk for his

signature, previously passed by the House, that makes some modifications to the PPP program—things that were sought by both sides, improvements, I think, that enable that program to be used with greater flexibility, extending the amount of time in which those dollars that have been received can be used, and allowing some greater flexibility in how they are used.

So I think that is evidence, again, that this body, and both Democrats and Republicans working together, can get things done for the American people that address the very direct needs and challenges they face right now as a result of the coronavirus.

I credit the authors of that—Senators COLLINS and RUBIO on our side, along with their Democratic counterparts—for working together to structure a program that has not only helped many businesses stay in business—millions of businesses stay in business—but has kept tens of millions of people in this country employed at a time when we desperately need to keep those jobs.

So, again, I think it is evidence of this body's and our Senate majority's focus on the coronavirus and things we can do to help assist those who have been most harmed economically by that, as well as addressing the very real health emergency that we need to continue to focus on in terms of finding those therapeutics and vaccines that will enable the American people to have confidence, once again, that they can go out.

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. President, what I want to speak to today is the evidence that we are seeing that the economy around the country is starting to reopen. There is still a lot of work, obviously, that has to be done to defeat the virus and help our economy and the American people recover.

As I mentioned, we have spent the past few weeks focused on monitoring the implementation of the \$2.4 trillion in aid that Congress has provided. Our committees are hard at work conducting coronavirus oversight and looking ahead to what else Congress may need to do to combat the virus and to get our economy going again.

We are looking at what more funding Congress may need to provide and what Congress can do that doesn't involve a lot of new spending.

As I said, Congress has already provided \$2.5 trillion to fight the coronavirus, and we will absolutely provide more if needed, but we need to remember that every dollar we have provided is borrowed money that our children and grandchildren will have to repay.

Our debt was already very large compared to the size of our economy, even before—before this year's coronavirus-related borrowing, and that is a very concerning reality. The truth is, we can't just keep borrowing and borrowing ever greater sums without suffering real economic consequences.