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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

We acknowledge today, O Lord, Your power, mercy, and grace. We need Your power, for the challenges we face require more than human wisdom. We need Your mercy, for we transgress Your love and fall short of Your glory. We need Your grace, for we cannot offer anything to merit Your favor or gain Your love.

Lord, empower our Senators for today's journeys. Give them confidence to draw near to You that they may find grace to help them in this time of need. May they pass their days in the companionship of Your everlasting presence. Lord, enable them to learn the stewardship of time, energy, and abundance. Guide their gifts with Your wisdom as You help them with their decisions.

We pray in Your great 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. TILLIS). The Senator from Iowa.

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

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

WELLES DECLARATION ANNIVERSARY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on this very day in 1940, Acting Secretary

of State Sumner Welles issued a statement outlining U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic States. It began: "During these past few days the devious processes whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic Republics—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors, have been rapidly drawing to their conclusion."

It expressed the sympathy of the people of the United States for democratic self-government and, at the same time, articulated the policy of the United States to oppose predatory activities using force or the threat of force or any intervention in the affairs of another sovereign state. The United States continued to recognize the sovereignty of the Baltic States throughout about 50 years of Soviet occupation.

Things that go around come around. Now we have a historical footnote. Vladimir Putin has been trying to rewrite this history for his own devious purposes—reverting to the absurd Soviet claim that the Baltics in 1940 joined the Soviet Union voluntarily.

There are also clear parallels we ought to take notice of to this current Russian occupation of parts of the Republic of Georgia and the Ukraine. The principles in Secretary of State Welles' Declaration are as relevant today as they were 80 years ago.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on another issue—and more current—earlier this year, after the longest economic expansion in U.S. history, the government told the American people to stay home and businesses to close—the first time in 240 years of our country. Countless lives have been saved because Americans heeded their government's call. And at the same time, whether they wanted to or not, they

were sacrificing for their fellow Americans.

There is no doubt that containing this virus has caused economic pain not seen since the Great Depression. Hopefully, we are racing toward a vaccine answer to this pandemic. In the meantime, Americans must continue to sacrifice, just as previous generations did for the sake of their neighbors, families, friends, and loved ones.

Make no mistake, we will beat this virus, and the United States of America will emerge stronger and even more prosperous than before.

Today, Senate Republicans, hopefully, will unveil an unprecedented expansion of previous assistance to help our country get through this crisis. As Finance Committee chairman, I look forward to introducing further assistance to individuals, relief for workers and employers, support for patients, providers, and foster youth, and additional flexibilities for State and local governments to fight this disease and the economic pain that has come before it.

I call on my colleagues to, once again, work together and not let partisan politics or gamesmanship get in the way of delivering for the American people.

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. SCHUMER. Mr. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

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



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CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, faced with the greatest economic challenge in 75 years and the greatest public health threat in a century, we Senate Democrats have been waiting for months for our Republican colleagues in the Senate to get serious about another round of emergency relief for the American people.

Now that Senate Republicans have finally woken up to the calamity in our country, they have given up wishing it would go away, following the President's wishing everything would go away, to the detriment of this country. Our Republican colleagues have been so divided, so disorganized, and so unprepared that they have to struggle to draft even a partisan proposal within their own conference. This is before they talk to a single Democrat. This is before they even consider what the House has done.

It does seem that sometime soon, Republicans may finally unveil a legislative proposal, but because they are so disorganized and divided, they can't agree on a series of smaller bills that don't even amount to one coherent proposal. Even after all this time, it appears the Republican legislative response to COVID is ununified, unserious, unsatisfactory. Let me repeat that. Despite hitting the "pause" button on the Senate for 3 months, despite waiting more than 60 days after the House Democrats passed their plan to start work on their own, the Senate Republican response to COVID is ununified, unsatisfactory, and, fundamentally, unserious.

From what we know, their proposal or series of proposals will not include food assistance for hungry kids. Families where the parent has lost a job through no fault of her or his own can't feed their kids in this proposal, as we hear about it.

From what we know, it will not include rental assistance or extend the moratorium on evictions that is keeping tens of millions of Americans with a roof over their heads. Millions of Americans have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. They can't pay the rent or the mortgage, and our Republican friends say: Evict them.

It will not provide hazard pay to our essential workers, who have been risking their lives and their families' lives ever since this crisis began. It will not make the necessary investments in communities of color that have been ravaged by this virus disproportionately so. It will not provide the new funding that State and local governments need to keep the busdrivers and sanitation workers, teachers, and so many others on the job. From what we know, it will not even include funding to ensure that our elections are safe this fall during this COVID crisis.

Remarkably, the likely centerpiece of the Republican legislative response to COVID is not an aid package for the 20 to 30 million unemployed Americans or a massive influx of resources to test

and trace and finally stop the spread of this evil disease. The centerpiece of the Republican proposal is a liability shield to protect big corporations from lawsuits if they put their workers at risk—seriously. As COVID continues to surge throughout our country and unemployment numbers rose again for the first time in weeks, Leader McConnell has made corporate immunity the centerpiece of this Republican response. Once again, the Republican Senate is far more comfortable providing relief to big corporations than relief to American workers and American families.

How about instead of shielding corporations from liability, we shield renters from eviction? How about instead of shielding corporations from liability, we shield the unemployed from poverty?

Even in those areas where the Senate Republicans seem to be moving a bit in our direction, it looks like they are coming up way short. Republicans aren't talking about providing enough resources for our schools to reopen safely. According to reports, the White House and Senate Republicans want to extend the enhanced unemployment benefits the Democrats secured in the CARES Act but only provide a percentage of a worker's former wage.

That is right, America. If you have lost your job through no fault of your own and can't go back to work because this administration has mismanaged the crisis, Republicans want you to take a 30-percent pay cut in the middle of this crisis.

Worse still, because Republicans dithered and delayed for so long, there will be an interruption in unemployment benefits. Eviction protections will expire no matter what we do because they waited until the last minute and, even at this last minute, can't seem to get their act together.

Leader McConnell and Senate Republicans dismissed the House-passed Heroes Act because it included a few items that Republicans didn't think were absolutely necessary.

Senate Republicans can't even get their act together to provide the basics—food for kids, keeping Americans in their homes, preventing the unemployed from going into poverty, and giving the economy the needed help so we can overcome this recession.

You can't say you support essential workers and then refuse to give them hazard pay. You can't say you want to fix racial issues and then throw millions of Americans of color out of housing and off unemployment benefits during a pandemic. You can't say you want to honor John Lewis and then refuse to provide funding for safe elections.

Congress needs to act quickly, but the developing Republican proposals are not going to get the job done. We need to immediately enter bipartisan, bicameral negotiations to develop a proposal that actually meets the moment and matches the scale of the crisis.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 4049, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4049) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Inhofe amendment No. 2301, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Portman) amendment No. 2080 (to amendment No. 2301), to require an element in annual reports on cyber science and technology activities on work with academic consortia on high priority cybersecurity research activities in Department of Defense capabilities.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2080

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2080.

The amendment (No. 2080) was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2301, AS AMENDED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2301, as amended.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.