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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.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, continue to help us, for the kingdom, the power, and the glory belong to You.

Permit our lawmakers to feel Your power and trust Your sovereignty. May this trust impel them to dare boldly, to venture on wider seas where storms will show Your mastery.

Remind them that You will honor Your promise to never leave or forsake them. Help them also to remember that evil can triumph when good people refuse to act.

Lord, inspire our Senators to strive always to please You.

We pray in Your merciful 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. HAWLEY). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask for 1 minute in morning business.

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

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to thank the Library of Congress and to talk about something that honors our veterans.

Iowa has a rich history of veterans serving on behalf of our country. Their service ensures that all Americans will live in peace and prosperity for genera-

tions to come. Over the past 2 years, I have delivered 31 personal accounts to be stored at the Library of Congress as part of their program called the Veterans History Project. I thank the Library of Congress for preserving the individual stories as reported in the veteran's own words.

Today, I will submit six more interviews to this collection that we recorded at the Waverly Area Veterans Post last month. I am proud to be a part of the Veterans History Project, preserving the stories of Iowa veterans for future generations.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this past weekend, we saw that the historic nationwide effort to bring this pandemic to heel has begun a critical final chapter. After months of development, the first U.S. doses of COVID-19 vaccine rolled off the assembly line, bound for treatment facilities all across our country.

I am particularly proud that an important waypoint on that journey is my hometown of Louisville, KY. Yesterday alone, Pfizer shipped 2.5 million vaccine doses, and less than an hour after their airlift began, shipments bound for the eastern United States were passing through the UPS Worldport logistics hub at Muhammad Ali International Airport in Louisville. In the days and weeks ahead, the hard work of Kentuckians at UPS's new healthcare command center in Louisville will play a critical role in finishing this fight.

Already they have helped direct tens of thousands of doses to Kentucky hospitals, where they are being adminis-

tered to the Commonwealth's healthcare workers and most at-risk residents.

There is a historic success story being written today along the vaccine supply chain, from Missouri to Massachusetts, to Michigan, to Kentucky, to frontlines all across our country, and it is emblematic of an approach that has been helping our country since the earliest days of the crisis. From the personal precautions that helped save our health system to the bravery of the doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers who spent sleepless nights tending to victims of the virus, to the ingenuity of entrepreneurs who have spun out masks and sanitizer or kept serving their customers safely, to the patience of parents and school kids who have had to adapt in extraordinary ways, to our economic efforts to blunt the pain of a self-inflicted slowdown without precedent, all along the way, it has been a heroic, resilient American people fighting and winning this battle, with the government providing smart, targeted, and essential support to sustain them.

It is the American people who have brought the light at the end of the tunnel within sight, but Washington has played a key role in creating the conditions for them to do it. That joint effort is how the unanimous, bipartisan CARES Act programs helped to sustain struggling families, prevented millions more layoffs, and gave Main Street a fighting chance. It is how Operation Warp Speed has helped to unleash private enterprise and the genius of researchers on a breakneck campaign for a cure that, just a few months ago, the mainstream media was lecturing President Trump would be impossible.

At every step, the story of this year has been American workers and families digging deep, muscling through, and lending one another a helping hand, with an assist from those of us here in Congress. But there is a problem. The American people's work is not

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



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finished. The struggle continues every day. Cases and deaths are mounting. The commerce that sustains small businesses is still depressed. Working families are still trying to grind through, but recently Washington has not held up its end of the bargain.

For months—literally months—both sides in Congress have known roughly what the shape of a compromise rescue package could look like. We know all the areas where we do not even disagree and should be able to make significant law. But, alas, partisan dynamics and political posturing have prevented us from getting more relief out the door, even in areas where nobody even claims to disagree.

I don't want to relitigate the last weeks and months this afternoon. Anyone who wants to dole out blame has a clear record they can analyze.

It is time for this body to collectively recognize that finger-pointing doesn't put food on the table for struggling families. Finger-pointing doesn't help people avoid having to choose between Christmas gifts and making rent. And finger-pointing does not do a darn thing to fund vaccine distribution so we can slam the door on this virus as fast as possible and maximize the number of lives we can save.

That last point is a concern that State health officials across the country have raised repeatedly. Even with vaccines on the way, many are reporting that they don't have the funds to hire enough trained workers or purchase enough PPE to safely administer them as fast as possible. As one health observer put it, "It would be a shame if all the effort on Warp Speed for development isn't warp speed for distribution." That is what we risk if Congress can't get our act together and supply the funds to deliver this literal shot in the arm to our people. This is the support that State and local governments need most urgently—not unfettered slush funds for non-COVID-related needs that predate the pandemic but incredibly urgent, targeted money to get citizens vaccinated right now and finish the fight.

That isn't the only urgent priority that Congress must not leave behind. The same business owners and working families who relied on the Paycheck Protection Program to get them through the bleakest points of the spring and summer are, once again, facing tough choices. Renewed health restrictions and decreased demand mean that some American jobs that have been sustained all this period may not survive the last home stretch.

So we can help. We can provide a second round of job-saving PPP tailored to those who need it most.

And what about Americans who have already lost their jobs in the pandemic through no fault of their own? Several key unemployment programs are set to expire at the end of the month. This is not an outcome that struggling people deserve, least of all during the holiday. So we should act. We should act.

The next several days are going to bring about one of two outcomes. Either 100 Senators will be here shaking our heads, slinging blame, and offering excuses about why we still have not been able to make a law, or we will break for the holidays having sent another huge dose of relief out the door for the people who need it.

So, look, it is up to us. It is up to us. We decide. This is entirely within our control. I can speak for the Republican side: We want to make a law to agree where we can and help people who need it. I hope and believe that my Democratic colleagues will feel the same way. It is about time to get this done.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 933.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph Dawson III, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Joseph Dawson III, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Cory Gardner, Lindsey Graham, Todd Young, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, John Barrasso.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 934.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Charles Edward Atchley, Jr., of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Charles Edward Atchley, Jr., of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Cory Gardner, Lindsey Graham, Todd Young, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, John Barrasso.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 935.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Zachary N. Somers, of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Zachary N. Somers, of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr,