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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, the ruler of Heaven, You alone are unutterable. Teach our lawmakers to obey You, to embrace the truth, to treat others fairly, and to avoid speaking harshly.

Lord, give them such respect for one another that they will assume the best motives for the actions of their colleagues. Help our Senators to remember that You are the judge of the universe who sees everything, whether good or bad.

Lord, You can even see the motivations of our hearts. Inspire us all to permit our thoughts, words, and actions to be acceptable to You.

And, Lord, we respect the conclusions of the electoral college and ask You to bless President-Elect Joseph Biden and Vice President-Elect KAMALA HARRIS.

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 (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 minute in morning business, please.

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

### U.S. SERVICEMEMBERS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, we are probably all guilty of not re-

membering the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, but particularly during this time of year, it is especially difficult for them to be away from friends and family.

Right now, there are almost 1,500 Iowans deployed overseas with the Iowa National Guard, just as one example of a group we should be thinking about. And I think about this group because that 1,500 includes 1 member of my own staff.

We rely on our brave men and women in uniform to protect our way of life, our democracy, and the liberties we cherish. The sacrifices they make are not taken for granted and won't be forgotten by future generations. All of our Nation's servicemembers and their families will be in my prayers and, I hope, the prayers of all of my colleagues during this holiday season.

I yield the floor.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, over the last 4 years, our country has benefited from a Presidential term filled with major accomplishments. President Donald Trump has repeatedly surprised the skeptics, confounded his critics, and delivered significant policy victories that have strengthened our country.

Case in point, back in May, when the President set the goal of finding a pandemic-ending vaccine by the end of this year, his timeline was literally dismissed by people who assumed they knew better.

Here is one quote: "Trump promises coronavirus vaccine by the end of year," scoffed one headline, "but his own experts temper expectations."

"Fact check" complained another headline, "Coronavirus vaccine could

come this year, Trump says. Experts say he needs a 'miracle' to be right."

Well, with the genius of science, support from Congress, and the bold leadership of the Trump administration, that medical miracle arrived right on schedule. Americans on the frontlines are receiving vaccinations as we speak.

This episode offers a kind of microcosm of the last 4 years. On so many subjects—from economic prosperity to foreign policy, to protecting American families—the skeptics doubted him. The critics derided him. But President Trump has delivered.

When President Trump ran for office, he promised to help open a new chapter for working families. After 8 years of failed policies that concentrated wealth and optimism among the lucky few, prosperity was going to flow to all kinds of workers in all kinds of communities, he said. And that is exactly what happened.

Before this pandemic spread from China and the world had to slam on the brakes, the American people had the best job market in living memory. With help from the policies of President Trump and Republicans in Congress, American workers dynamited the stagnation that experts had said was "the new normal." Unemployment hit a 50-year low. Capital markets hit record highs.

And this time, all kinds of Americans got to share in the gains. We saw earnings grow faster for workers than for managers, faster for the bottom 25 than for the top 25. This success was fueled in part by the policy leadership of President Trump.

This administration pursued bold regulatory changes. Once-in-a-generation tax reform had eluded prior leaders. This President signed it into law in his first year.

And together we repealed the worst part of ObamaCare. The unfair individual mandate was zeroed out.

President Trump also took historic steps to strengthen the future of our

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



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trade with the world. He secured the historic United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement and the bilateral tax treaties with partners in Europe and in Asia.

A nation this productive needs plenty of energy to keep it going. Fortunately, President Trump and his administration ended the ideological war on fossil fuels and hit the accelerator on “all of the above” American energy dominance. In the last 4 years, we surpassed Saudi Arabia in oil production. We saw energy exports exceed energy imports for the first year in almost 70 years. Meanwhile, we saw CO<sub>2</sub> emissions fall, along with other harmful pollutants. That energy independence has dramatically strengthened our hand with respect to the rest of the world, particularly the Middle East.

So speaking of the Middle East, President Trump wasted little time pulling back from the prior administration’s disastrous “Iran deal.” His team eliminated daylight between us and Israel and repaired our relationships with Arab partners. And he aligned these relationships around our common shared interests—countering threats like radical Islamic terrorists and Iranian aggression.

Under President Trump’s command, our forces took terrorist leaders like al-Baghdadi and Soleimani off the battlefield. The physical caliphate that ISIS established on the previous President’s watch was destroyed.

All of this paved the way for the Abraham accords, the historic normalization of relationships between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and, most recently, Morocco. And the potential is there for more on the horizon.

Now, the Middle East isn’t the only place where the Trump administration has shored up our footing on the world stage. Our 45th Commander in Chief sought out to rebuild and modernize our military and to move our foreign policy from a chapter of weakness and apology into a renewed posture of strength.

Four years later, we have a new national defense strategy to compete with and deter adversaries like Russia and China. We have rebuilt the military and invested in new technologies to ensure America keeps our edge in everything from cyber to space, to advanced weapons system.

The President’s leadership does not stop with those who are currently serving. He also signed into law the historic VA MISSION Act to ensure our dedication to the men and women in uniform does not end when their tours conclude.

So, clearly, the list of American accomplishments since 2016 is nearly endless. There are the many miles of new protections on our southern border. At one point, apprehensions at the border hit their lowest level since the 1970s.

Essential causes, like religious liberty and the most vulnerable, the unborn, have had a champion in this administration instead of an adversary.

There have been historic new steps to conserve our national treasures, like the Great American Outdoors Act.

And perhaps most important of all, President Trump nominated—and this Senate confirmed—three outstanding Supreme Court Justices, along with more than 220 more article III Federal judges. These are brilliant, young, constitutionalist men and women in lifetime appointments who will renew the judiciary for a new generation—all because President Trump knows we need judges who respect the essential but limited job description the Framers wrote for our third branch of government.

So as you can see, it would take far more than one speech to catalogue all the major wins the Trump administration has helped deliver for the American people. The outsider who swore he would shake up Washington and lead our country to new accomplishments both at home and abroad proceeded to do exactly that.

President Trump and Vice President MIKE PENCE deserve our thanks and our gratitude for their tireless work and their essential roles in all of these victories and in many more.

## 2020 ELECTIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, 6 weeks ago, Americans voted in this year’s general election. The legal and constitutional processes have continued to play out since then.

Yesterday, electors met in all 50 States. So, as of this morning, our country has officially a President-elect and a Vice President-elect.

Many millions of us had hoped the Presidential election would yield a different result. But our system of government has processes to determine who will be sworn in on January 20.

The electoral college has spoken.

So, today, I want to congratulate President-Elect Joe Biden. The President-elect is no stranger to the Senate. He has devoted himself to public service for many years.

I also want to congratulate the Vice President-elect, our colleague from California, Senator HARRIS. Beyond our differences, all Americans can take pride that our nation has a female Vice President-elect for the very first time.

I look toward to finishing out the next 36 days strong with President Trump. Our Nation needs us to add another bipartisan chapter to this record of achievement.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

## EXECUTIVE CALENDER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume the consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Thomas L. Kirsch II, of Indiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

## PRESIDENT-ELECT BIDEN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, if you follow the U.S. Senate, which, of course, many of us do, there was a noteworthy moment this morning. It was actually a prayer by our Chaplain, Barry Black. In that prayer, he acknowledged and called for the blessings of God on the President-Elect Joe Biden and Vice President-Elect KAMALA HARRIS.

The reason that was noteworthy is that has been a contested issue among politicians on Capitol Hill for weeks as to whether or not Joe Biden could be described as President-elect. Many have stepped forward and said yes, but many resisted. The acknowledgement by the Chaplain caught me a little by surprise this morning. And I came to the floor to hear the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, go through an accounting of the Trump Presidency and all of his achievements and then concluded by acknowledging as well that we have a President-elect in Joe Biden. I believe that that reflected the reality of the November 3 election and the finality of the electoral college decisions being made across the Nation in so many States.

I thank those who have stepped forward to acknowledge the reality of a new President and hope that they will join me in an effort to do our best to make certain that his tenure is a success, not just for him personally and the Vice President but for our Nation. We deserve nothing less.

It is a long story, these last few weeks since November 3 and what has happened across America. I don’t think anyone could have predicted that we would see the divisive reaction that we have seen, nor could anyone have predicted what happened yesterday. Some States had to take extraordinary measures to protect electoral college electors—what used to be a routine, somewhat tedious and boring mission. It resulted in the closing of legislative