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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 11 a.m.

Senate

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who laid the foundations of the Earth, we worship You.

Lord, walk with our lawmakers throughout this day, inspiring them to submit to Your will. May they treasure Your instructions. May these instructions enable them to tune their ears to Your wisdom and concentrate on understanding Your precepts.

Give our Senators a hunger and thirst for Your knowledge as they strive to keep America strong. Lord, help them to remember that You give the treasure of good sense to the godly.

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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on Thursday, the Biden administration officials had their first person-to-person meeting with representatives from the People's Republic of China. By diplomatic standards, the opening public exchange was tense. The belligerent grandstanding by PRC diplomats was, unfortunately, no surprise. It is what we have come to expect.

As China's military and economic might have grown, Beijing has found that the bullying tactics that people call their "wolf warrior" diplomatic strategy have often worked out for them. So I was glad the U.S. team used the opportunity to cut through the CCP's spin and tell some plain truths about China's regional bullying and disrespect for the rule of law, whether in Hong Kong or Tibet.

I am also glad the administration has sent U.S. personnel to join other diplomats in Beijing to protest the secret trial of Canadian citizen Michael Kovrig.

But like I said last week, calling out China rhetorically is just the first step. An effective U.S. strategy will require more than just tough talk and symbolism.

The PRC poses all matter of threats to the United States and to the free world. They want to control crucial sea lanes in the South China Sea. They

want to expand their capabilities to menace other countries' forces, including ours, with increasingly accurate long-range weapons. They want to rewrite the rules of the international system to suit their interests instead of ours and our friends.

These are hard and real challenges. Facing them down will require strength and resolve from the United States and from our partners. So like I said last week, if the administration is serious about staying tough on China and strengthening our hand, they will have support among Senate Republicans.

But any such serious strategy will need to start with maintaining and building up the backbone of our hard power—the competitive edge of the U.S. military. To defend America, defend America's interests, and deter adversaries, we need to sustain our military edge. And to sustain our edge, we need to modernize our forces and maintain our capability to project power.

Defense spending is the single most important policy lever available to us in our competition with China. The President's budget submission will tell Beijing a lot about whether the Biden administration intends to back up tough talk with actual strength.

Finally, whatever Congress may do to step up our game on China, it will be essential that it be bipartisan. The legislative components of national security should not swing wildly every time the gavels change hands.

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



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It is a perfect demonstration of why scrapping the 60-vote threshold for legislation would be catastrophic. For important bills to have a stable and lasting impact, they need broad bipartisan buy-in.

NOMINATION OF MARTIN JOSEPH WALSH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now, on a completely different matter, this afternoon the Senate will vote on the President's nominee to head the Department of Labor.

I will be voting against confirming Mr. Walsh. The Biden administration has already signaled they will ask him to implement a variety of policies that do not serve the long-term interests of American workers.

Unfortunately, it appears that won't just be the case at the Department of Labor but throughout the Democratic agenda.

One of the President's first acts in office was to kill thousands of American jobs, including union jobs, by canceling the Keystone XL Pipeline. Both, working Americans and domestic energy security, took a back seat to a leftwing signaling.

We are hearing that the next few months might bring a so-called "infrastructure" proposal that may actually be a Trojan horse for massive tax hikes and other job-killing, leftwing policies.

Remember, the House Democrats tipped their hand last year. They published a sprawling proposal that pretended to be a highway bill but was really just a multithousand-page cousin of the Green New Deal. It would have plowed unbelievable sums of money not into the kinds of big, practical projects that Americans even think of as "infrastructure" but also into their obsessive focus on climate policies to the exclusion of everything else.

Look, we know what kinds of policies are actually pro-job and pro-worker. We know what kind of agenda helps American workers build all-American prosperity up and down the income scale.

We know that because, just over a year ago, before the pandemic, 4 years of Republican policies had built one of the most inclusive and optimistic economies in modern history. Wages were growing faster at the bottom than at the top. Unemployment was at historic lows. American workers were a hot commodity and were getting compensated accordingly.

Pro-worker prosperity does not entail having Big Government politicians or Big Labor bosses micromanage every aspect of the economy to suit liberal fads. It means remembering what kind of pro-worker, pro-growth, pro-opportunity policies built the best job market in recent history right before this pandemic.

Those are the ideas and the solutions that were unlocking more money and more opportunities for American work-

ers before COVID-19 took the world by storm. And those are the ideas and solutions the American people elected 50 Republican Senators to fight for.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The majority leader.

ELECTING KAREN H. GIBSON AS SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 127, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 127) electing Karen H. Gibson as Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 127) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NOTIFYING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ELECTION OF A SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to S. Res. 128, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 128) notifying the House of Representatives of the election of a Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 128) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NOTIFYING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF THE ELECTION OF A SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 129, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 129), notifying the President of the United States of the election of a Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 129) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The majority leader is recognized.

WELCOMING KAREN H. GIBSON, SERGEANT AT ARMS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, this is a great and historic day. A few weeks ago, I announced that LTG Karen Gibson would assume the responsibility as Senate Sergeant at Arms, becoming only the 42nd Sergeant at Arms in Senate history. I am very pleased this afternoon to make her appointment official, with her family watching on—her father David, her mother Rebecca, her sister Kathleen, her brother-in-law Daniel, her nephew Bennett, and her cousin Aaron.

Lieutenant General Gibson is taking on a really big job, and I know that her family could not be more proud of her.

The Senate Sergeant at Arms was established more than two centuries ago, when the U.S. Senate was still in its infancy. Back then, the primary duty of the Sergeant at Arms was essentially senatorial babysitting; recalcitrant Senators made finding a quorum a routine challenge. Today, the Sergeant at Arms is the Senate's chief administrative officer and chief law enforcement officer. They have enormous responsibility of keeping the trains running on time while, at the same time, keeping everyone, everyone in the Capitol safe.