



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 167

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2021

No. 86

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, do not permit negativity to triumph over us. Use our Senators to remind us with their faith and works that the best is yet to be. As they remember that Your mighty power is at work in our Nation and world, may their optimism create a contagion of hope.

Lord, continue to accomplish in our lives infinitely more than we request or imagine. We exalt You, for You continue to rescue us. We trust You to save us though the storms may rage.

We pray in Your glorious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 18, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, a landmark report from the International Energy Agency says countries need to move faster and more aggressively to cut planet-warming pollution.

That is from the New York Times this morning. The International Energy Agency, for the first time, is recommending specific steps to accomplish the drastic cuts in carbon emissions that nearly every developed country has pledged to achieve. One of the principal recommendations is “the rapid phase-out of gasoline-powered vehicles.”

It just so happens that this report lands on the same day that President Biden is in Michigan to celebrate the release of a new line of electric pickup trucks. As one of the best-selling cars in America, replacing gasoline pickups with electric pickups could save us huge amounts of carbon.

But we shouldn't stop there. Transportation still accounts for roughly one-third of America's carbon output. There is no way the United States can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions without looking out how Americans drive.

So I have put forward an ambitious, comprehensive proposal to accelerate our country's transition to zero-emis-

sion vehicles. We call it Clean Cars for America. The goal of that plan is that by 2040, all vehicles on the road should be clean. The International Energy Agency, by the way, recommends the world reach that target by 2050. So we beat them by 10 years, if this proposal goes into effect.

My plan would help us get there 10 years ahead of time. It is one of the many reasons that President Biden put Clean Cars for America at the heart of his American Jobs Plan, something I hope and expect he will discuss today in Michigan.

I want to thank the Biden administration. They have been open to many new ideas: the American Competitive Innovation Act that we will be debating today and Clean Cars for America, which they have more or less adopted in whole and put into their Build Back Better plan.

The benefits would be far-reaching, far beyond the subject of climate change. For a long time, critics have been saying you can't help the environment without hurting the economy or costing jobs. Not so, it is actually the reverse.

We negotiated the Clean Cars for America proposal with the unions, with the environmental groups, and with the auto companies, and all three are onboard. The good news is that Clean Cars for America would create tens of thousands of good-paying union jobs in battery manufacturing, construction, and auto making. Through targeted investments, it would put Americans to work all across the country building charging stations for a new fleet of electric cars. Right now, China leads the world in the electric vehicle market, overtaking us in 2015. We need to take back the initiative and create thousands upon thousands of good-paying jobs as we do.

I am very glad that the Biden administration has taken this proposal and adopted it. We worked, as I said, long and hard, for the first time on a major

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



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environmental proposal to bring our friends in the union movement onboard so that workers saw that their future—a bright future, a prosperous future—was with clean energy, that we weren't excluding them but including them.

That is why, unlike many proposals in the past, my Clean Cars for America proposal unites the environmental community, the labor movement, and major automakers. The Sierra Club, UAW, Ford, and GM are all supportive. Isn't that amazing? Isn't that great?

When you want to get something done in Washington, you need to build a broad and powerful coalition for support. That is what we did with Clean Cars for America. The Senate and the country should prioritize it this year.

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, on the Endless Frontier Act, last night the Senate voted to move forward with the Endless Frontier Act with a vote of 86 to 11. It is likely that today the Senate will take another step to begin debate on the bill. It is my intention to have an open, bipartisan amendment process.

The Endless Frontier Act already includes more than 20 bipartisan amendments from the Commerce Committee, under the leadership of Senator CANTWELL and Ranking Member WICKER. I will expect we will consider several more here on the floor of the Senate.

Later today, I will file a substitute amendment that pulls together more bipartisan legislation from across Senate committees into our comprehensive bill that we are now calling the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act.

In addition to Chairwoman CANTWELL and Ranking Member WICKER, I want to thank Chairman MENENDEZ and Ranking Member RISCH of Foreign Relations; Chairman BROWN and Ranking Member TOOMEY of Banking; Chairman PETERS and Ranking Member PORTMAN of HSGAC; Chairwoman MURRAY and Ranking Member BURR of HELP; and Chairman DURBIN, Ranking Member GRASSLEY, and Senator KLOBUCHAR of Judiciary.

Finally, I want to thank the bipartisan group of Senators working on the CHIPS and 5G proposals throughout the process—not only Senators CANTWELL and WICKER but Senators WARNER, KELLY, CORNYN, COTTON, LEAHY, and STABENOW.

Restoring America's competitive edge should unite Senators from both sides of the aisle. The foundation of the past century of American prosperity has been our leadership in science, technology, and innovation. If we are going to win the next century, the United States needs to be the one discovering the next groundbreaking technology.

We had that opportunity, for instance, with tech, and we lead the world because of early investments by NSF and DARPA. We have the opportunity now to set our country on a

path to outinnovate, outproduce, and outcompete the world in emerging industries of the 21st century, with profound consequences for our economic and national security. If we don't lead in science and innovation, we will fall way behind. If we don't lead in science and innovation, millions of good-paying jobs that will be available to this generation and the next one will go poof—gone. We have no choice. We have no choice.

We have always led, and now we have fallen behind. Other countries are investing more than we are. They are not as good at it as we are. They are not as innovative as we are. But if they put in the dollars and we don't, woe is us. Woe is us.

So when you ask Americans why they are upset and they say: We are not sure about our future. We are not sure if our children will have better jobs than we will. We are not sure that our jobs will grow. This is the way to do it. This is the key. This unlocks our future to a bright, sunny America, the way we have always had, but we may have lost in the last few years, at least to some extent.

I am so glad that this legislation, which we worked so hard on, has bipartisan support. It is a place where we can unite America and say we will stay No. 1, and we are giving our country, our universities, our businesses, our workers tools to do it.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Next is the EEOC CRA. Today, the Senate will vote to overturn yet another terrible regulation approved during the final days of the Trump administration, a rule that actually makes it harder for victims of employment discrimination to get justice.

For decades, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or EEOC, has protected employees against workplace discrimination. If a worker believes they were targeted by their employer because of their age, their sex, their religion, their disability, or any other unlawful basis—their race—the EEOC can conduct an investigation and begin a conciliation process.

Rather than force employees to sue in court, where well-heeled corporations can afford high-priced lawyers and the plaintiff almost has no chance of winning, conciliation gives the EEOC the power to fight on workers' behalf against discriminatory behavior and win some speedy and effective results.

So, of course, the Trump administration, in another example of their callousness, another example where they talk about working people but don't care about them and do things to help them, sort of nastily—almost viciously—changed the rules on conciliation at the EEOC to put a large thumb down on the scale in favor of corporations and against individuals who were

discriminated against or at least who allege discrimination, making it easier for corporations to slow down investigations and even retaliate against workers.

Today's vote will use the Congressional Review Act process to immediately repeal this rule change.

At every opportunity, the Trump administration seemingly relished in making life harder for working Americans, while stacking the deck in favor of unscrupulous corporations. Now that Donald Trump is President no more—thank God, I say—we have a chance to undo this terrible rule and give workers the confidence that the Federal Government is in their corner.

COVID-19 HATE CRIMES ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, on Asian hate crimes, I am delighted the House will pass the Anti-Asian hate crimes bill today, which passed the Senate last month with overwhelming bipartisan support. Once the legislation is approved by the House, it will go directly to the President's desk. I expect it will be signed into law later this week.

Discrimination against Asian Americans is, sadly, not a new phenomenon in our Nation's history, but the pandemic brought old biases and prejudices back to the foreground.

This legislation will strengthen law enforcement's ability to detect, deter, and prosecute hate crimes of all varieties, especially hate crimes involving Asian Americans. It sends a powerful message of solidarity to all our friends in the Asian American community. It is so important, so vital, so strong, and an important piece of the puzzle of how we build a better future in America.

I thank my colleagues from both Chambers, from Senators HIRONO and DUCKWORTH in the Senate to Representative MENG in the House and all those who improved the legislation through the amendment process here in the Senate.

Today, we are another step closer to making progress in the fight against racial discrimination and violence aimed at Asian Americans in recent months. The Senate can be proud it took the lead.

I yield the floor.

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. MCCONNELL. Mr. 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 MINORITY LEADER

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