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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, You watch over those who seek to serve Your purposes. You surround them with Your favor, providing for all their needs and empowering them to become more than conquerors in fulfilling Your will.

May the reverential gratitude of our Senators fill them with hope for all the days to come. Teach them to live lives of complete honesty as they seek to stay on the pathway You have provided for their lives.

Lord, as You teach our lawmakers to live according to Your truth, rescue them from the forces that seek to bring pain and disgrace.

We pray in Your powerful 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 25, 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, before I begin on the prepared remarks I have, I note that, this morning, MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE, a Republican Congresswoman from Georgia, once again, compared preparations taken against COVID to the Holocaust. These are sickening, reprehensible comments, and she should stop this vile language immediately.

NOMINATION OF KRISTEN M. CLARKE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, a year ago today, on another front equally important, George Floyd was murdered in broad daylight by a police officer sworn to protect and serve. Our country was forever changed by the stomach-churning video of Derek Chauvin killing Mr. Floyd.

It sparked a summer of protest unlike any we have seen in American history. Around the world, the name of George Floyd was chanted in Rome, Paris, and London, Amsterdam, Berlin, and Mexico City. As recently as this weekend, professional soccer players in the British Premier League knelt before the game in support of the global movement against racism touched off by George Floyd.

This was not only a fight for justice for one man and his family, whom I

have had the privilege to meet with, but a fight against the discrimination that Black men and women suffer at the hands of state power not just here in America but around the globe. It is a fight that continues today.

Here in the Senate, we will continue that fight when we vote to confirm the first woman—the first Black woman—to ever lead the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, which was created in 1957 as the civil rights movement began to uphold the constitutional rights of all Americans but particularly the most vulnerable. When it comes to justice in policing, the criminal justice system, and at the ballot box, the Civil Rights Division is often the tip of the spear: conducting investigations of police departments with patterns or practices of constitutional violations and defending the fundamental voting rights of every American citizen.

So, in a way, as we continue to pursue strong policing reform legislation, it is appropriate that we confirm Kristen Clarke—a proven civil rights leader—to the position of Assistant Attorney General, where she can continue the fight against bigotry in many ways. It is appropriate we do it today.

Though my Republican colleagues have tried to twist her words to make her sound like some radical, Ms. Clarke is, in reality, a hugely accomplished civil rights attorney who has earned the respect of all sides. Much like her future colleague at the Justice Department, Vanita Gupta, Kristen Clarke has been endorsed by a wide range of law enforcement groups. The truth is, Ms. Clarke will make an exceptional leader of the Civil Rights Division.

So, again, in a very significant way, as we continue to pursue strong policing reform legislation, the fight for racial justice by confirming Kristen Clarke on the anniversary of George Floyd's murder is particularly poignant and appropriate.

Of course, Congress must also pursue strong legislation to end racial bias in

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



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law enforcement. Senators BOOKER and SCOTT, as well as Representative BASS and others, have been working diligently behind the scenes to fashion such a bill on a bipartisan basis. That important work must continue as we strive to ensure George Floyd's tragic death will not be in vain.

U.S. INNOVATION AND COMPETITION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on another matter, the Senate continues to work on the U.S. Innovation and Competition legislation that will lay the foundation for the next century of American economic leadership.

I have spoken a lot about the substance of this bill. So, this morning, I want to reinforce how bipartisan and inclusive this bill is. It is the product of at least a half a dozen Senate committees, meaning that nearly every single Member of the Senate has had fingerprints on this bill in one way or another.

The two pieces of legislation that form the core of the bill—the Endless Frontier Act and the Strategic Competition Act—passed out of committee on overwhelmingly bipartisan votes: 24 to 4 in the Commerce Committee and 21 to 1 in the Foreign Relations Committee. That kind of bipartisanship—almost unanimous support in multiple Senate committees—is rare when it comes to major legislation. It goes to show just how bipartisan this issue is and this legislation is as, literally, dozens of bipartisan amendments were added to the bill before it ever reached the floor.

Here on the floor, we are going to continue working through a series of amendments from both sides. With such a depth of cooperation and consensus between our two parties, there will be no reason we can't wrap up this bill this week and achieve a strong result for our country. Leader MCCONNELL should be welcoming this bipartisanship as we move forward on the bill.

WASHINGTON, D.C. ADMISSION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on a final matter, later today, a group of Senators will come to the floor to highlight an important issue: DC statehood.

The District of Columbia has more residents than in Vermont and Wyoming and has nearly the same number as Delaware, Alaska, and several other States. They have the same obligations of citizenship. DC residents pay Federal taxes. They can be summoned for juries. They have served in every war since the Revolution, but they are all denied real representation here in Congress.

DC statehood is an idea whose time has come. So I want to thank Senator CARPER for organizing a group of Senators to shine a spotlight on this issue today.

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.

ISRAEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the world is relieved that Hamas has stopped firing rockets at Israel's cities and, for the moment, the fighting has stopped.

Israel's response to Hamas's terrorism was entirely justified. It was targeted, restrained, and extraordinarily precise. So it was disappointing to see disproportionate blame heaped upon Israel, the victim, and disproportionate pressure put on Israel's democratic, coalition government to spearhead the cease-fire with the aggressors.

Israel's actions appear to have helped restore some measure of deterrence and damaged Hamas's ability to wage terror, but we have every reason to expect the terrorist commanders will seek to rebuild their arsenal with assistance from their sponsors in Tehran.

The Biden administration must not pursue Iran policies that make this process even easier. We should not lift terrorism and missile sanctions just to leap back into discussions over the flawed Obama-era nuclear deal. Already, this administration removed terrorism sanctions on Iran's Houthi proxies in Yemen, hoping to encourage negotiations. Instead, the Houthis have escalated their offensive, rejected diplomacy, and actually fired into Saudi Arabia. Likewise, giving Iran relief from sanctions will just yield more support for terrorists like Hezbollah and Hamas.

Now, I am encouraged that the President has committed to refilling Israel's Iron Dome stockpiles. I hope his budget proposal coming this Friday will make room for increased military assistance to Israel and reflect the fact that America's interests are not served by cutting our own defense budget.

Sadly, here in Congress, more and more Democrats are falling under the anti-Israel influence of the farthest left branch. From the junior Senator from Vermont, we have a resolution to block a routine sale of precision-guided munitions that would make it harder for Israel to avoid civilian casualties as it defends itself; from a Congresswoman from New York, the accusation that Israel is an "apartheid state."

Historically, support for Israel has been bipartisan. During the last major

flare-up with Hamas back in 2014, when hundreds of rockets were fired at Israel, the Senate passed a resolution reaffirming our support for Israel and making clear Hamas's responsibility for the violence, and we did it by unanimous consent.

Back in 2019, after another rocket attack, the Democratic leader insisted, "No government can allow its civilians to be subject to rocket attack." He said he stood "shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Israel . . . and doing what they must do to defend their homeland."

That was true in 2019. Well, this month's attacks involved not hundreds but literally thousands of rockets. Yet, instead of vocal support for Israel, 29 Senate Democrats pressured Israel's coalition government to stop defending itself. One of our colleagues who ran for President said the United States helping our ally means "supplying weapons to kill children." Their base is energized. An open letter from hundreds of former Democratic Party and campaign staffers has urged President Biden to be harder on Israel. Apparently, a lot can change in just 2 years.

Helping Israel defend itself against terrorists shouldn't be a divisive issue. The Senate should vote on Senator SANDERS' resolution and reject it overwhelmingly.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on a related matter, the despicable, age-old specter of anti-Semitism continues to rear its head, even here in our country.

Last week, authorities from New York to Los Angeles were investigating assaults on Jewish people. According to press reports, in New York City, one Jewish man was kicked, punched, and sprayed with chemicals by five or six men yelling anti-Semitic things. That happened, by the way, right in Times Square. A synagogue in Arizona was vandalized. So was another in Illinois. A Jewish family visiting South Florida had a car pull up next to them and multiple occupants begin screaming: "Free Palestine . . . die, Jew." That is what he got for wearing his yarmulke in public.

The head of the Anti-Defamation League said:

We are tracking acts of harassment, vandalism, and violence as well as a torrent of online abuse . . . it's happening all around the world.

This garbage—this garbage didn't begin a few weeks ago. It isn't a response to geopolitics. This hatred long predates the recent fighting between Israel and Hamas, and it hasn't gone anywhere since the cease-fire.

This spring, in the shadow of this Capitol Building, a U.S. Capitol Police officer was killed in broad daylight by an unbalanced follower of the Nation of Islam, the extremist group led by the anti-Semite Louis Farrakhan.