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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable GARY PETERS, a Senator from the State of Michigan.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we thank You for the throb of eternity within us, reminding us that life is not measured by mere heartbeats. Lord, we are grateful also that You continue to guide our Nation and world. As You guide the migration of birds, so Your hand guides us. Help us on our journey to be warned from our past mistakes, as we continue to believe that the price for freedom remains eternal vigilance. Lead us away from the illusion that we are standing strong and cannot repeat past failures.

Lord, keep our lawmakers faithful to You and this land we love. May they strive to have a clear conscience before You and the people.

And, Lord, we continue to pray for Ukraine.

We pray in Your strong 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 7, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable GARY PETERS, a Senator from the State of Michigan, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PETERS 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.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 4022

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the title of the bill for a second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4022) to codify in statute the CDC title 42 expulsion order, which suspends the right for certain aliens to enter the United States land borders, until February 1, 2025.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, the Senate gavel in this morning for a joyous, momentous, groundbreaking day. This morning, we will vote to end debate on the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to be a Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, and, later this afternoon, the Senate will fulfill its constitutional duty to finally confirm this remarkable and groundbreaking jurist.

The cloture vote is scheduled to take place at approximately 11 a.m., and we will aim to vote on final confirmation in the afternoon, the time depending on how many Members wish to speak.

Today is a culmination—a culmination for more than 6 weeks where this Chamber has examined and debated and questioned Judge Jackson on her record and her qualifications. Every step of the way the judge has proved herself exceptionally qualified, thoughtful, and prepared to serve on the Court. As I said, she encapsulates the three b's: brilliant, beloved, and belongs. She belongs on the Supreme Court. It is now up to us to finish the work that the President entrusted us to do.

So today is also a joyous celebration in another way. In the 233-year history of the Supreme Court, never, never has a Black woman held the title of Justice. Ketanji Brown Jackson will be the first, and I believe the first of more to come.

This milestone should have happened generations ago—generations ago—but we are always trodding on a path toward a more perfect Union. Nevertheless, America today is taking a giant step toward making our Union more perfect.

People sometimes talk about standing on the shoulder of giants. Well, Judge Jackson will go down in history as an American giant upon whose shoulders others will stand tall, and our democracy will be better off for it.

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



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I will have more to say later this afternoon, prior to the final vote on the confirmation, but for now I want to thank Chairman DURBIN of the Senate Judiciary Committee for beautifully executing the nomination, all the members of the Judiciary Committee for their thoughtful and respectful—all my Democratic colleagues on the Judiciary Committee for their thoughtful and insightful examination of the judge's record, and I want to thank those Republican Senators who chose to take this process seriously.

So it is truly a joyous day; joyous for the Senate, joyous for the Court, joyous for America.

Let us finish the work today of confirming Judge Jackson, finally, to the Supreme Court of the United States.

PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, on the final day of the work period, the Senate is going to pass a much sought after piece of legislation: revoking Russia of permanent normal trade relations with the United States.

The legislation will go a long way to landing a painful, severe blow on Putin's economy. It will hinder his ability to keep funding his war machine, and adds Russia, as well as Belarus, to a list of nations, including North Korea, that are ineligible for free trade with the United States.

I want to thank my colleague from Idaho Senator CRAPO for working so closely with me on into the night last night to make sure that this got done.

We will also vote separately on legislation regarding an oil ban, and I thank my colleagues who worked together to reach a compromise on this measure. We are moving forward today.

Putin must absolutely be held accountable for the detestable and despicable war crimes he is committing against Ukraine.

The images we have seen coming out of that country, most recently out of the town of Bucha, are pure, pure evil—hundreds of civilians murdered in cold blood; dozens of bodies of men, women, children, the elderly, the defenseless; people with hands tied behind their backs and left dead in the streets. Some of the bodies showed signs of torture.

According to a new report by Der Spiegel, German intelligence now believes that some of these murders were discussed by Russian troops over radio intercepts. And why were these people killed? Simply because they were Ukrainians. So many were children, civilians, young people, women. No nation whose military is committing war crimes deserves free-trade status with the United States.

Let me say that again. No nation whose military is committing war crimes deserves free-trade status with the United States.

No vile thug like Putin deserves to stand as an equal with the leaders of

the free world. He is a menace and a pariah who has ensured that his place in history will be one of everlasting shame.

So today's votes approving PNTR revocation are significant. It is very important that the Senate pass this bill, and I want to thank Senator CRAPO as well as Senators MANCHIN and CARDIN and WYDEN and MURKOWSKI and MENENDEZ and all others who worked in good faith with us together on these measures. We wouldn't have reached this outcome without their diligence and good faith.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, I want to close with a few thoughts on what the Senate has accomplished over the past 6 weeks.

There are two words that I believe perfectly summarize the work period we are about to conclude: productive and bipartisan.

In this work period alone, we passed a major postal reform bill over a decade in the making; we passed a bold and robust government funding package, which will help millions of Americans in thousands of different ways; we passed critical emergency aid for the people of Ukraine; we passed the Emmett Till anti-lynching bill after a century of waiting; and topping it all off, we will confirm the 116th Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, before I yield, I also want to applaud the administration's action in extending the pause on payments and interest of Federal student loans. The pandemic continues to impact families economically, and that is why extension is critical for so many borrowers.

And while the extension provides relief, I continue to urge the President to use his existing authority and cancel up to \$50,000 in debt in order to provide immediate relief to millions of borrowers, boost our economic recovery, and help narrow the racial wealth gap in our country.

So it has been a very busy April; it has been a very busy March work period, and when we come back in May, it is going to be very busy again. We have a whole lot to do.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the follow nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Ketanji Brown Jackson, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am going to be very brief, and I want to echo what the majority leader said, particularly with respect to revoking permanent normal trade relations with Russia.

The Senate, and those who are following this, should understand that in just a few minutes, the Senate is going to take another crucial step in bringing every tool of economic pressure to bear on Vladimir Putin and his oligarch allies. Ending normal trade relations hammers home that Putin has made Russia into a full-fledged pariah state.

As the leader noted, Americans have been watching these atrocities—these brutal acts perpetrated by Vladimir Putin—day after day—on TV, phones, and the like—and now the Senate is saying “there is going to be clear, clear, clear evidence that what he has done has forfeited the right to normal trade relations.”

And I will just wrap up by way of saying that when we get done, on the Senate Finance Committee, we are going to continue to work in a bipartisan way to send Putin additional messages that are going to rein in his economic power.

In particular, I think it is high time to take away the subsidies he gets from American taxpayers for his war machine. That happens when you have American companies doing business in Russia. They pay taxes to the Russian Government, and they get foreign tax credits. I don't believe the people of Michigan or Oregon or anywhere else believe that their tax dollars—their hard-earned tax dollars—should be used to subsidize Putin's war machine.

So this is a very important step today towards making sure, as I indicated, we are putting in place every single economic tool to hammer Putin and his oligarchs.

I urge my colleagues, as Senator SCHUMER has just done, to vote yes, and I also want to thank the ranking member of the Finance Committee. I talked to him a few minutes ago. He continues to do everything he can, every step of the way, to make this a bipartisan effort.

That is the message we ought to send. I urge colleagues to vote yes when we take away normal trade relations from Russia here in a few minutes.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL (Ms. ROSEN). Madam President, I ask unanimous