



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 168

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022

No. 78

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.

Savior, lead us today as a shepherd guides sheep. Direct our lives. Inspire our hearts. May the talents here on Capitol Hill help bring unity and healing to our Nation and world.

Lord, strengthen our lawmakers as they deal with unsolved problems and urgent global needs. Prepare them for the challenges yet to come. Make our Senators eager to lift burdens and ready to respond in service to humanity.

Help us all to feel a bit of the responsibility for the challenges that hang heavy over our Nation and world.

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 10, 2022.

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.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 4164

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4164) to prohibit the expenditure of Federal funds for the establishment or operation of the Disinformation Governance Board in the Department of Homeland Security.

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

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

ABORTION

Mr. SCHUMER. So, Mr. President, tomorrow, the U.S. Senate will vote to protect one of the most fundamental freedoms that women have in this

country: the freedom to choose whether or not to have an abortion. Few decisions are more personal and few decisions are more private than decisions women make regarding their own pregnancies. Few should be more out of bounds to elected politicians and to the whims of government. But, sadly, few rights are in as much peril right now as the fundamental right to choose.

If this abominable decision becomes law, women will lose their freedom in so many ways—a giant step backward in the United States, where expanding freedom has always been our goal and our aspiration.

Tomorrow's vote will be one of the most important votes we take in this Chamber in decades because, for the first time in 50 years, a conservative majority—an extreme conservative majority—on the Supreme Court is on the brink of declaring that women do not have a right to an abortion, they do not have the right to control their own bodies, and they do not have the right to healthcare in the ways that they believe they need.

If that happens, tens of millions of women will see their freedoms contract in the blink of an eye. Our children will grow up in a world where they have fewer rights than their parents and grandparents had. America will take a painful and damaging step backward.

The American people will be watching the Senate closely tomorrow, and they will not forget how their elected Senators voted. I ask my colleagues to think carefully about their vote, to grapple with the impact of a world without Roe because all of us will have to answer for this vote for the rest of our time in public office.

Now, it is worth saying over and over again: Last week's draft decision didn't come out of nowhere; it didn't materialize in a vacuum. On the contrary, it is precisely the outcome that extreme Republicans have been working toward for years. Leader MCCONNELL himself has admitted that this was their plan

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



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all along. They have worked for years to confirm radical judges, plucked right out of the Federalist Society playbook, with the express goal to “pick away at *Roe v. Wade*.” That is their quote.

The radicals on the hard right have passed wave after wave of draconian restrictions at the State level, making abortion nearly impossible to access. One of those laws is about to be upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States.

These radicals have taken what were once outlandish ideas, like prison time for women and doctors and abortion bans without exception for rape and incest, and brought them to the forefront. Ideas that were radical and out of hand they are now talking about freely. Should *Roe* ultimately be overturned, many of us fear it would be just the start.

Over the weekend, Leader McCONNELL acknowledged where this is ultimately going. Without *Roe*, proposals for a nationwide ban on abortions are now possible if Republicans retake the Senate. That is what Leader McCONNELL said this weekend. That is right—a national ban on abortion. Not very long ago, the idea seemed to belong on the extreme of the extremes. Now the Republican leader himself acknowledges this is on the table—just a glaring indication of how radicalized the Republican Party has become in recent decades as the MAGA wing has all but completed its cancerous takeover.

All the times that Republicans disguised their hostility to *Roe* as a matter of “States’ rights” have been exposed for what they are: hypocrisy, a smokescreen hiding the real objective. It is one of the oldest, most sinister arguments Republicans have used for decades. For MAGA Republicans, this has never been about States’ rights; it has always been about getting rid of abortion altogether.

The hypocrisies run deeper still. It is worth noting that the very same party that spent years opposing healthcare by saying that “the American people want healthcare decisions left up to families and doctors”—that is what they said as they opposed ACA year after year. They said, again, the American people want healthcare decisions left up to their families and doctors when it came to ACA. They are now the very same radicals who are telling Americans: No, it is not up to your family and your doctor; it is your body, our choice—the radical right’s choice, the choice of five men on the Supreme Court who are extreme.

Now, many on the other side can’t even bring themselves to own the horrors they have unleashed. They are trying to convince people they are not extreme, but the truth is that the MAGA wing of the Republican Party is running the show, and their actions prove how extreme they are.

Senate Republicans have spent a full week trying to change the subject to anything but *Roe* because they know

how toxic this issue has become for them. The Republican leader tried to say, in vain, that the real story of the draft decision was not the end of *Roe* but the source of the leaked draft? Tell that to 100 million Americans who will lose their most personal of rights. I am sure they don’t care as much about the leaked draft as about how they can control their own bodies.

The chair of the Republican campaign arm, Senator SCOTT, released laughable talking points saying Republicans, of course, don’t want to imprison doctors, even though his allies, his fellow MAGA Republicans, are pushing for exactly that at the State level. It would all be farcical if it wasn’t so bone-chilling and the consequences were not so serious.

Senate Republicans can try to run from their role in securing *Roe*’s extinction, but sooner or later, the truth wins out. Without the actions they have taken for years, reproductive rights wouldn’t be staring straight into a doomsday scenario.

So, tomorrow, the vote to protect abortion rights will shine like a floodlight on every Member of this Chamber. Republicans who pretended disingenuously as if this moment couldn’t possibly happen will have to answer to the women of America whose rights are about to be turned back by decades.

Tomorrow, there will be no more hiding; there will be no more distracting, no more obfuscating where every Member in this Chamber stands. Senate Republicans will face a choice: Either vote to protect the rights of women to exercise freedom over their own bodies or stand with the Supreme Court as 50 years of women’s rights are reduced to rubble before our very eyes. The vote tomorrow will tell.

UKRAINE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on Ukraine, later today, the House is set to vote on nearly \$40 billion in emergency aid to help Ukraine as the Ukrainians continue to fight back quite successfully against Russian aggression. This is a large package, but the need is great, and time is of the essence. After the House passes the legislation, it is my intention for the Senate to act on it as soon as we can. The President has called on both Chambers of Congress to act quickly on the Ukrainian aid package, so act quickly we must.

The Ukrainian Ambassador will be visiting us at our caucus lunch this afternoon to discuss the upcoming package, and she will let us know how important it is to quickly approve it. Quickly approving this emergency funding is essential to helping the people of Ukraine in their fight against the vicious Putin. It will mean more funding to provide Javelins, Stingers, Howitzers, Switchblade unmanned aerial munitions, and other critical equipment. And it will mean more food, supplies, and shelter for the millions of

Ukrainian refugees who are in the midst of the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War.

We have a moral obligation to stand with our friends in Ukraine. The fight they are in is a struggle between democracy and authoritarianism itself, and we dare not relent or delay swift action to help our friends in need.

And make no mistake, the Senate will move swiftly to get an emergency funding package passed and sent to the President’s desk.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

INFLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this all-Democratic government has managed a unique kind of economic turnaround. They took an economy that was ready to soar, turned it around, and drove it into the ground. American families are being crushed by 8.5 percent inflation. Democrats’ policies have unleashed the worst inflation in more than 40 years.

Last March, the Senate Democratic leader said:

I do not think the dangers of inflation . . . are very real.

At that time, the most recent inflation figure was 1.7 percent. Inflation has more than quadrupled since Leader SCHUMER said he wasn’t worried.

Now, remember, the same Democrats predicted the Republicans’ 2017 tax reform bill would harm the economy and hurt working people. Instead, what it produced is the best economic moment for American workers in modern history. Falling unemployment, low inflation, and wages grew faster for the bottom 25 percent of earners than for the top.

So Democrats’ worldview has been proven absolutely wrong. But, of course, last year, they put it into action anyway. Democrats dumped \$2 trillion on a recovering economy and paid people a bonus to stay home from work, even after vaccines were available, and the American people are hurting as a result.

American workers’ real average weekly earnings declined 3.6 percent over the last year. Inflation has more than wiped out the average worker’s wage gains. President Biden has handed the average American a big pay cut—a pay cut.

The cost of the essentials that families need have been skyrocketing. Gas prices are now the highest they have ever been in American history—ever. Americans are now paying roughly \$4.40 per gallon. That is up about 2 whole dollars from when President Biden put his hand on the Bible. Grocery prices have shot up 10 percent