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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.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, we love You, for You are our strength and fortress. Lord, You are worthy of our praise. We thank You for showing yourself faithful to all who put their trust in You. Continue to sustain our lawmakers with Your strong right hand.

Lord, equip and empower them by Your Heavenly grace that they may be adequate for these momentous times. Use them as Your instruments to bring decency, justice, and mercy to our Nation and world.

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.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Kaine). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night was a reminder of a difficult but important reality of our great democracy: The march to freedom, through thick and thin, is never over—and we have to keep marching.

While last night's vote was disappointing, it will not deter Senate Democrats from continuing our fight against voter suppression, dark money, and partisan gerrymandering. Democrats are proud of the fight we held last night. The strength, eloquence, enthusiasm, and overwhelming participation of my Democratic colleagues during debate was exhilarating and shows the passion we feel about this issue.

Facing an uphill battle from the start, we lost the vote. But to have not voted would have been a far greater loss, a loss for our Democratic Party, which for generations has stood for voting rights; a loss for the civil rights advocates who have sacrificed so much on this issue; and a loss for the American people and what this country stands for. On an issue this important, not doing everything we could would have been unacceptable.

Now, the bromides of the beltway class hold we should not have held a vote on voting rights if the outcome was not certain. They are wrong. Imagine telling Dr. King not to march from Selma to Montgomery because he could not be sure what obstacles awaited him and his fellow freedom fighters.

Imagine telling John Lewis he should never have crossed the Pettus Bridge because it was unclear what perils awaited him on the other side.

Every Member of this body who has ever invoked these great titans of freedom has an obligation—an obligation—to uphold their legacies not just with words but with actions. Senators were elected to vote. The examples of Dr. King, of John Lewis inspire us, give us strength, and show us that sometimes the only right option is to move forward.

And we need to remember what this is about. With the advent of Donald Trump and his many Big Lies, with the January 6 insurrection, with the vicious acts of voter suppression throughout the States, and with the greedy dark money interests that fuel the Republican Party these days, this is a fight for the soul of America—nothing less. So Democrats will not shy away from an uphill fight; we will continue to face them.

And I believe that the lessons of history are clear: When Representatives have to take a stand, when they have to show to the American people where they are on the issues, the right side of history ultimately prevails. We know history is on the side of voting rights, and we know that forcing leaders to take stands will ultimately move the ball forward.

Now, finally, I want to thank all my colleagues who came to the floor yesterday to speak valiantly in defense of voting rights and for working assiduously for months on this vital issue: Senators KLOBUCHAR and MERKLEY, BOOKER, SCHATZ, Senator Kaine—you, Mr. President—Senators KING, TESTER, WARNOCK, OSSOFF, DURBIN, PADILLA, LEAHY—and so many, so many more. Their leadership, their expertise, and their dedication to protecting our democracy is inspiring. It gives our caucus strength, and it made such a difference. Last night was unusual and exhilarating because we fought the good fight.

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



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S357

As former Majority Leader Alben Barkley of Kentucky said 80 years ago this November, facing a filibuster, which successfully blocked anti-poll tax legislation—the majority leader, Alben Barkley, from Kentucky, said:

I am glad I have made this fight. I have made it in behalf of what I believe to be the broad and true foundations of a true democracy.

Senate Democrats fighting for voting rights is not over. We will keep fighting until voting rights are protected for every single American. And one day—hopefully, sooner rather than later—we will succeed.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, tomorrow, our Nation's Capital will once again host many thousands of Americans gathering peacefully to support the most basic human right—the right to life. For 49 years, the March for Life has united people from diverse backgrounds, different faiths, and all 50 States to celebrate the dignity of human life and confront the ways our society fails to protect it.

This year, the marchers will arrive in a Washington controlled by a Democratic Party that has grown increasingly radical on this issue. Today's Democrats work overtime to keep our country one of just seven nations on the planet that have abortion on demand even after the unborn children can feel pain. Our shameful company includes China and North Korea. Fewer than 30 percent of Americans endorse this view, but Democrats have made it party dogma.

On President Biden's watch, Washington Democrats have even turned against the longstanding bipartisan Hyde Amendment. Both parties used to agree that at least Federal taxpayers should not be forced to fund abortions. Now Democrats on both sides of Pennsylvania Avenue declared war on even this.

So I warmly welcome the marchers from Kentucky and across the country. This radical version of the Democratic Party needs to hear your voices now more than ever.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Today marks exactly 1 year since President Biden be-

came our forty-sixth President. This all-Democratic government has had 365 days to start delivering on some of their core promises.

So what were those promises, in their own words? "Crushing the virus," "strengthen[ing] our alliances," and, above all else, "lower[ing] the temperature" and reuniting a divided country.

Remember, upon taking office, this administration had historic tailwinds at its back. President Biden inherited lifesaving vaccines and a distribution system that was already up and running. He inherited a string of bipartisan rescue packages, including one that was only just a few days old. He inherited an economy that was prime for a roaring comeback. Those were the promises. That was the inheritance.

So let's take a look at the progress report. Last spring, against expert advice, the Biden administration dumped another mountain of borrowed cash on an already white-hot economy. As a result, we are now being hammered by the worst inflation in 40 years. Practically everything families need and want have gotten much, much more expensive. Constant shortages disrupt family shopping. Households are being hit with soaring heating costs if they stay home and soaring gas prices if they go out. Our economic trajectory looks shakier today than it did when Democrats were sworn in.

Of course, we have continued adding back jobs from COVID lockdowns. That was certainly going to happen. But job creation has massively underperformed Democrats' own projections for job creation with their super costly springtime stimulus package.

When 2021 was said and done, the country had added roughly the same number of jobs that we were on track to create before Democrats implemented one policy or spent one dime. They managed to literally blow \$1.9 trillion but only barely beat the starting trajectory they inherited.

They call that spending a COVID package, but less than 10 percent of the money went to the actual medical fight, and that certainly shows.

Americans are entering their third year of this pandemic with too few tests, too few treatments, too many new cases, and too many school closures; muddled guidance on boosters that caused FDA experts to resign in protest, and needless divisive vaccine mandates that were not even constitutional.

One year in, the coronavirus is decidedly uncrushed.

And COVID wasn't the only epidemic sweeping American streets. Take violent crime. Far-left rhetoric and anti-law-enforcement local policies have led major cities to set all-time records for homicide in 2021.

Or take fentanyl. This deadly imported poison was the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45, last year. The No. 1 killer of Americans in their prime—fentanyl.

So why aren't Democrats treating this like an emergency? When was the

last time President Biden even talked about this?

And drug deaths are not the only consequence of our weak borders.

Candidate Biden's rhetoric incentivized a historic flood of illegal immigration, and then President Biden's weak policies lit the fuse. The result? The biggest surge in illegal border crossings in 60 years—60 years.

All these issues are priorities for American families, but the Biden administration spent most of 2021 focused on none of those. Washington Democrats spent months chasing a reckless taxing-and-spending spree packed with far-left policies that citizens never wanted. We spent half of 2021 trying and failing to blow \$5 trillion on windmills and welfare.

When that effort faded, Democrats abruptly pivoted and started shouting that American democracy was on death's door. They propagandized that some evil anti-voting conspiracy was sweeping America, and the only solution to this grand crisis was a gigantic partisan election takeover bill that Democrats had conveniently written years before the events which they say now prompted it.

The American people didn't buy the fake hysteria. One-half of one percent of the country thinks election laws are our top issue. In fact, more Americans believe voting laws are too loose than too tight.

Oh, but Democrats went all in on this obsession. A few days ago, the sitting President of the United States called millions of Americans his domestic enemies and analogized—analagized—U.S. Senators to Jefferson Davis.

Well, last night, the fake panic drove 48 Senate Democrats to walk the plank on a failed effort to shatter the Senate itself for short-term power. And now Washington Democrats appear to be launching an absurd and reckless campaign to delegitimize the next election in advance, in case they lose it. Sound familiar?

Yesterday, the President told reporters that he might not accept the 2022 election results as legitimate if his election takeover bills do not pass Congress first. It all sounds eerily familiar.

This morning, the House majority whip followed suit. He was asked if the legitimacy of our elections is contingent on Washington Democrats passing these bills, and he replied: "I am absolutely concerned about that."

The Democrats who preached countless sermons about accepting voter decisions are now saying the midterms may be illegitimate, unless they win.

So America, after all of this, do you feel unified? Do you feel healed? Do you feel like our core institutions are being protected?

Now, Senate Republicans have met this administration more than halfway. In 2021, the Senate built and passed a major infrastructure bill. We passed bipartisan legislation on competing with China.

But beyond that, this administration deliberately chose to build their whole