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## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Beautiful Savior, You have been our dwelling place in all generations, and we are sustained by Your steadfast love. Today, surround our Senators with the shield of Your blessings as they work to keep our Nation strong.

Lord, teach them to be obedient to Your commands, doing Your good will as Your presence fills them with peace. May they be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Manifest Your power through their labors so that this Nation will be exalted by righteousness. May Your angels guard us in all Your ways.

We pray in Your mighty 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, September 6, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, a Senator from the State of Connecticut, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. MURPHY 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.

### 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 following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of John Z. Lee, of Illinois, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

### SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I would like to welcome you and all of my colleagues back from the August work period. I hope everyone had the chance to travel across their States, meet with their constituents, listen to their concerns, and share all the major accomplishments the Senate secured over the last few months.

Indeed, the Senate gavels back into session after a season of immense productivity. When Democrats assumed

the majority in 2021, I promised we would leave no stone unturned in tackling the biggest challenges facing our country. Twenty months later, Democrats have delivered on our promises.

We promised to lower costs for the American people in the wake of crippling inflation; so we passed the Inflation Reduction Act to reduce energy costs, reduce healthcare costs, and expand tax breaks for working and middle Americans.

We also promised to take on Big Pharma and lower prescription drug costs, so we passed historic legislation to lower insulin costs for seniors on Medicare, cap out-of-pocket expenses, and empowered Medicare to finally be able to negotiate drug prices—this for the first time ever; long sought after by many Congresses; accomplished by this one.

We promised to take on entrenched oil interests and get tough on climate change, and so we passed the largest clean energy package ever—by a long margin, by the way.

Thanks to our work, Americans will see their energy bills go down, their savings go up, all while we create millions of new, good-paying jobs and finally dealt with climate change in a very significant and real way.

We also promised to bring manufacturing jobs back to America and get tough on adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party, so we passed the CHIPS and Science Act, the largest investment in manufacturing jobs and science research since the aftermath of World War II.

Of course, we promised to take on the NRA, as the Presiding Officer well knows, and protect our kids from gun violence, so we passed the first gun safety bill since the Brady law 30 years ago, which I was proud to author when I was a Member of Congress.

Now, none of these accomplishments were easy. They demanded immense patience and persistence above all. But for anyone who thought Washington

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



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was broken and couldn't do big things, this Democratic majority has shown that real change is possible. The results speak for themselves. Jobs across the country remain up. Americans are going back to work. Our supply chains are healing. In fact, freight rates on ocean trade channels have dropped by 60 percent since January. As gas prices continue their 2-month drop, we are seeing evidence that inflation might be starting to ease up.

Of course, the work isn't done. As we begin this short work period, we have several high-priority items that demand our immediate attention. Before this work period concludes, the Senate must come together to pass a continuing resolution to extend government funding beyond the September 30 deadline.

Last week, the administration sent us a request for a number of funding items they would like us to work on—aid to Ukraine, pandemic relief, and other items.

This process, of course, needs to be bipartisan. Democrats are going to work in good faith to avoid even a hint of a shutdown, and it is my expectation that our Republican colleagues will do the same.

We will also work this month to confirm even more of President Biden's judicial nominees. Later today, the Senate is scheduled to vote to advance the nomination of Judge John Lee to serve as a circuit court judge for the Seventh Circuit. If confirmed, Judge Lee would make history as the first Asian-American judge to sit on the Seventh Circuit, joining the proud company of other Biden nominees who are making our courts fairer and more representative of our great country.

A graduate of Harvard and Harvard Law School, Judge Lee was unanimously confirmed by this Chamber a decade ago to serve as a district judge. In his time on the bench, he has proven himself to be impartial, fairminded, and committed to the rule of law.

Judge Lee will be the first of many judicial nominees whom we will advance this month and beyond because now more than ever, the Senate must make judicial confirmations a top priority.

We have a lot of work to do in the Senate to keep improving the lives of the American people, so in the coming weeks, let us continue with the same vigor, the same determination, the same persistence that has made this one of the most productive Senate sessions the Senate has seen in a long, long time.

#### STUDENT LOAN DEBT RELIEF PLAN

Finally, I want to say a few words on another monumental development that happened over the August recess: student debt cancelation.

For the past 2 years, I have repeatedly stated that with the simple flick of a pen, President Biden could lower costs for millions of Americans by canceling their student debt. Everywhere I go, student debt is always front of

mind for many of my fellow New Yorkers, as it is for millions across the country.

There are many who don't have student debt—many—but for those who do, it is deep. This is not just 1 of 10 issues; this is the issue that really, really bothers them and motivates them, to have to wake up in the middle of the night, saying: How am I going to make that \$400 payment next month when my salary doesn't stretch that far? What am I going to cut out of my life?

Well, with that long-awaited flick of the pen, President Biden gave tens of millions of Americans a new lease on life by canceling significant amounts of student debt.

To President Biden, I say thank you. Thank you for listening to our cause. Thank you for taking action.

The President's decision will make it easier for millions of Americans to finally pursue their own American dream, whether that means making that downpayment on a house or buying that new car or opening a business or saving for retirement. It will help close the racial wealth gap that still holds far too many Americans back, and most of all, it is going to make our economy strong.

Now, over the past few weeks, we have heard a lot of fake outrage from Republicans, saying that canceling student debt is nothing more than a give-away to wealthy Americans. The same Republicans who made tax cuts for the ultrarich their No. 1 priority are suddenly apoplectic at the thought of helping working— and middle-class Americans with student debt relief.

Well, here is the truth, I say to my Republican colleagues: Among borrowers who are no longer in school, 90 percent of the debt canceled will go to those earning less than \$75,000 a year—the opposite of the tax cuts that Republicans pushed for where the vast majority of the money went to the top 1 percent and the top 10 percent.

Let me repeat that. Among borrowers who are no longer in school, nearly 90 percent of the debt being canceled will go to those earning less than \$75,000 a year.

Let's not forget that a majority of student loans are held by people whose families have zero net worth—zero. A majority of student loans are to families who have zero net worth. That is why the greatest help will go to those with the greatest need. Pell grant recipients, who for the most part come from families making under \$60,000 a year, will have up to \$20,000 of their debt canceled.

So rather than helping the privileged few, canceling student debt is going to lift up Americans from all walks of life—students of color, poor Americans, children of immigrants, working- and middle-class families struggling to either get to the middle class or stay there.

So, again, I thank President Biden for taking action. I also want to thank

champions like Senator WARREN, who has been such a great partner in this activity, Senator WARNOCK, and Representative PRESSLEY, who joined with me in calling for the President to take this step. They have all been great partners in the effort, and I am glad our efforts finally began to pay off.

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. 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 Republican leader is recognized.

#### EASTERN KENTUCKY FLOODING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been over a month since relentless rains and major flooding devastated Eastern Kentucky. This disaster took homes, businesses, and at least 39 lives. Only a few months after tornadoes had caused widespread damage in the western part of our State, catastrophe struck our Commonwealth one more time.

I traveled back to Eastern Kentucky multiple times during the August State work period to survey damage, meet with survivors, and lend any help I could. What I saw were scenes of absolute destruction: water-logged houses, swollen creeks, washed-out roads. I heard directly from survivors who have shouldered impossible burdens over the past month, struggling to salvage belongings and to literally try to rebuild their lives. Agencies report that thousands of homes were destroyed and damaged in the flooding. Many of those affected lack flood insurance.

I will say that as devastating as the flooding was, stories of heroism and generosity still shine through. The local officials I met with reserved special praise for Kentucky's National Guard. Our guardsmen mobilized at the outset of this crisis to perform daring rescues and to distribute critical supplies to stranded residents. Regular citizens also came to the aid of their neighbors and friends in any way they could, sometimes in trucks and sometimes on horseback or jet skis.

Help has poured in from around our State and beyond, both from private charities and trained emergency responders, but, of course, there is still a tremendous need for help. Eastern Kentucky has notoriously rugged terrain. It also had preexisting communications issues before the floods. These factors have made rescue and rebuilding uniquely challenging already, and this is only the beginning.

Although FEMA is playing a critical role in Eastern Kentucky's recovery, Kentuckians have grave concerns about shortcomings in the Federal response. The Agency's convoluted application processes have left far too many