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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father, You are our mighty fortress. Continue to be for us a bulwark that never fails.

Lord, inspire our lawmakers to do Your will. Direct them in their work. Empower them to meet each challenge and shield them from discouragement. May they not depart from Your purposes for their lives in their thoughts, words or deeds.

Lord, give our Senators the discipline to relinquish any spirit of self-importance for the spirit of self-sacrifice. Give them also the certainty that You are guiding their lives.

We pray in Your merciful 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, September 21, 2022.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LUJÁN 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

AMENDMENT TO MONTREAL PROTOCOL ("KIGALI AMENDMENT")

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Treaty document No. 117-1, Amendment to Montreal Protocol ("Kigali Amendment").

Pending:

Schumer amendment No. 5503, to add an effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 117-1

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 35 years ago this month, every nation on Earth came together for the first time in human history to sign onto a global accord to save the planet's dying ozone layer. It was a convergence unlike any before, uniting not just every member

of the United Nations but, in time, also the European Union and even the Holy See.

That accord, of course, was the Montreal Protocol, hailed by then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan as "perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date."

Today, the Senate will finish the work of ratifying the Kigali Amendment to the protocol when we vote later today here on the floor.

Ratifying the Kigali Amendment will require two-thirds of the Senate, and I want to thank every single Member, Democratic and Republican alike, who voted yesterday to move forward on this measure. Our country, our businesses, and our planet will benefit because of it. I hope we can see that same level of support today.

In a year where we have already seen plenty of major bipartisan bills become law, the Kigali Amendment might just be one of the most important bipartisan achievements to date—less heralded, but maybe more important—because this measure will go a long way to lowering global temperatures while also creating tens of thousands of American jobs and deal with the fact that China rarely participates in global cooperation when it comes to putting their own economy and jobs ahead of ours.

As I have explained, the Kigali Amendment will signal the commitment of the United States to phase down the use of dangerous industrial chemicals known as HFCs by 80 percent over the next 15 years. HFCs are found practically in every home in America and around the world, inside the vast majority of refrigerators, air-conditioner units, aerosols, insulating foams, and more.

Experts say that if we can meet the goals set forth by the Kigali Amendment, we can reduce global temperatures by about half a degree Celsius by the end of the century. That is huge. We struggle to get that reduction

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



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down, to get that increase down. And this is a big, big step forward for that. Half a degree might sound like a rounding error to some, but in truth, it is very, very, very significant.

But equally significant, however, are the tens of billions in new investments that will be up for grabs if we ratify this amendment.

Every year, millions and millions of refrigerators and AC units are sold around the world, and the United States ranks near the top of refrigerator exports. All of these products will need viable HFC refrigerant alternatives moving forward, and we need to take every step available to make sure those alternatives are provided by American companies and American workers, driven by American ingenuity.

By one measure, ratifying the Kigali Amendment will generate nearly \$39 billion in investments here in America in the next 5 years when combined with other steps we have taken to transition away from HFCs. It will create tens of thousands of new American jobs and increase U.S. heating, ventilation, and refrigeration exports by 25 percent in a few short years, by 2027.

Let me say that all again. Tens of thousands in new American jobs, nearly 39 billion in new investments, a surge in U.S. exports—all of that is on the table if we finish our work to ratify this amendment today. There is every reason in the world to say yes.

There is really no down side to ratification. The Kigali Amendment will not overrule or change any current U.S. law. It will require no one to replace their appliances at home. The United States will be able to lead the international process of implementing Kigali, ensuring U.S. businesses will set the terms of implementation that benefit them. And Congress will be perfectly free to change domestic policy to adapt to new technologies without having to worry about this agreement.

Even without the Kigali Amendment, the United States has already taken steps to transition away from HFCs, and U.S. businesses have been the ones leading the way. So it is no surprise that groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Chemistry Council, the Air-Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration Institute, and even companies like Walmart and Honeywell all support the Kigali Amendment.

So in many ways, this is sort of a legislative layup. It is low-hanging fruit to secure billions in growth and tens of thousands of good-paying jobs. Again, there is every reason in the world to say yes and practically no reason to say no.

So for the sake of U.S. businesses, for the sake of U.S. workers, for the sake of U.S. exporters and U.S. investment, and for the sake of leadership in safeguarding our planet, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on ratifying Kigali later today.

DISCLOSE ACT

Mr. President, now on DISCLOSE. In the 12 years since conservatives on the

Supreme Court ruled in *Citizens United*, our elections have been become rank—rank—with the stench of dark money.

Soon, the Senate will vote to erase this foulness when we hold the first procedural vote to take up the DISCLOSE Act. This has been a long time coming, and credit goes to Senator WHITEHOUSE, perhaps the Senate's most valiant enemy of dark money. I commend him; I thank him; and I stand with him in his efforts to shine a light on the corrosive power of dark money in our elections. No one has done more to shine the light on this evil, evil thing.

In free and fair elections—one person, one vote—American voters alone should have the power to determine the Nation's leaders without fear that their voices will be drowned out by powerful elites or special interests.

Sadly, unfortunately, dark money has rendered this ideal a fantasy. The idea of one person, one vote has been washed away by cascades of dark, undisclosed money pouring into our electoral system. Today, the average American—someone who might chip in \$30 or \$50 every now and then to support a candidate—is left practically powerless against billionaires and special interests who can cut million-dollar checks to promote candidates of their choice. Who here thinks that is a healthy democracy?

Because of today's broken campaign finance laws, many of these donations happen entirely in secret. It is a veil cast over our democracy that leaves vast majorities of voters behind.

And the problem is not just limited to our elections. Oh, no. Dark money has also corroded the judicial nomination process, as special interest groups spend tens of millions to push extremist judges onto the Federal Bench.

I believe that the awful decision in *Dobbs* was greatly affected by the fact that dark money is undisclosed.

The DISCLOSE Act operates off a simple premise: A healthy democracy is a transparent democracy, one where billionaires and mega-corporations don't get a free pass to exploit loopholes in campaign finance law in order to spend billions in anonymous contributions. That is the antithesis of democracy.

This shouldn't be a Democratic or a Republican view. After all, when was the last time any of us heard voters celebrate the spread of dark money? When was the last time any of us heard voters say it is better for billionaires and special interests to buy elections in secret rather than be held accountable to the public?

Of course the public doesn't think that, unless they themselves—a few, few—are cutting million-dollar checks in secret.

Even the Republican leader, who has dedicated much of his career to killing many campaign reforms, used to say in the distant past that disclosure and transparency are good things for elec-

tions. Unfortunately, that was a long time ago, and now all we hear from the other side are the absurd—and these are truly absurd—arguments that transparency somehow equates to suppressing freedom of elections. Tying logic and fairness into a pretzel knot to say that transparency is like suppressing freedom of expression is absurd. Imagine. Imagine this. Imagine being on the side of millionaires and billionaires who would no longer have the luxury of influencing our elections by cutting million-dollar checks in total anonymity. What a tragedy. Isn't that a shame? These poor billionaires and millionaires might have to disclose what they are doing.

Of course, of course, imagining being on the side of those millionaires and billionaires is ridiculous. If a multi-billionaire wants to spend colossal sums on candidates who are deeply anti-choice or who support insurrectionists—which some of these dark money, special interest, MAGA Republicans do—shouldn't the public have a right at least to know, simply to know it?

If someone wants to come here on the floor and argue otherwise, God help our democracy.

Louis Brandeis said over a century ago that sunlight is the best of disinfectants. The DISCLOSE Act would put that into practice.

So if you agree that the American people have a right to know who is trying to influence their elections, support the DISCLOSE Act. If you agree that America's representatives should only have one boss, the people, and not special interests, then support the DISCLOSE Act.

Democracy cannot prosper without transparency. Dark money, hidden secrets are the hallmark of dictatorships, left and right. We, in democracy, need transparency.

I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for all he has done. I strongly support passing this legislation to keep the dream of our Founders alive—alive—in this century.

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 Republican leader is recognized.

INFLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on Sunday's edition of "60 Minutes," President Biden made a bizarre attempt to deny the American people's pain from Democrats' runaway inflation. After the latest nationwide data reported that consumer prices are rising at 8.3 percent year-on-year, the President suggested the country should