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Senate

(Legislative day of Thursday, February 3, 2022)

The Senate met at 3 p.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, enthroned in holiness, we lift our praise to You. We praise You for Your might, mercy, and majesty. Great is Your faithfulness. Because of Your mercies, we are not consumed.

Lord, give our lawmakers the wisdom to place their trust in You, for You have been their help in ages past and continue to be their hope for tomorrow.

Today, may they claim Your promise to guide them through time into eternity. When their strength is gone, renew them anew.

We pray in Your magnificent 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, February 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 MAZIE K. HIRONO, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. HIRONO 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.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on Friday, our country received another extraordinary bit of news about the state of our economic recovery. Last month, the economy created 467,000 new jobs, far exceeding all expectations. This comes on the heels of news that our economy grew at its fastest rate in decades last year.

With last week's jobs numbers, the U.S. economy now has added a total of 6.6 million jobs in President Biden's

first year in office. Let me say that again. In 1 year alone, the economy has added a whopping 6.6 million jobs back to the economy—the most ever recorded for a President's first year. This includes the creation of 367,000 manufacturing jobs—the most in 30 years.

For all the difficulties of the past 2 years and for the real challenges our economy faces today, this jobs number is a remarkable milestone. It is a reminder that who gets elected to office makes a big difference.

A year ago, Democrats promised to fix the mess our country was in after President Trump botched our pandemic response. We promised to lift our economy out of the abyss, to get people back to work, back to the classroom, and to do it safely by following the science. It is why Democrats worked furiously last year to pass the American Rescue Plan. It is why the Senate came together to pass USICA, which we will work to enact into law in the near future. It is why we came together to pass a historic, bipartisan infrastructure package that is now putting people back to work fixing our roads, bridges, internet, lead piping, and so much more.

With 6.6 million jobs gained and record economic growth in our first year, Democrats are delivering on our promise. And it is not just that job creation exceeded expectations; wages for American workers grew in 2021, and indications from top forecasters are that wages will continue to grow in 2022.

A year into executing our Democratic agenda, the American economy is in the midst of a historic turnaround, but the job is not over. Even as wages are up, Democrats are taking action to lower costs. We need to help everyday families afford the daily essentials, just as we need to relieve our supply chains and rebuild American manufacturing, including by focusing on critical technologies like semiconductors.

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



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We took an important step in the right direction last week after the House passed the companion legislation to USICA. I applaud the House for passing this legislation, and I join my Senate colleagues from both sides of the aisle in saying we were pleased to have gotten the ball rolling when we passed the USICA bill—formally known as Endless Frontiers—last summer.

There is a lot of work to do to enact USICA into law, so I look forward to moving quickly to a conference so the House and Senate can bridge the differences between our proposals.

Once again, I want to thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle for leadership on this very important legislation.

This will continue to be Democrats' focus: lowering costs, increasing wages, and bringing jobs back from overseas, while creating more jobs right here at home. It is what Democrats have worked on for the past 12 months as we have helped Americans get back to normal, and it is what we will continue to focus on as we enter year 2 of the Biden administration.

FORCED ARBITRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now on forced arbitration.

On a different matter, later today, the House is expected to pass bipartisan legislation to end forced arbitration for sexual assault and sexual harassment. Once this important bill passes the House, the Senate will move as soon as this week to quickly take up this bill and send it to President Biden's desk. Congress can finally act to empower victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment to speak openly by nullifying forced arbitration clauses that push survivors into an often secret and biased process. We will not waste this historic opportunity.

There are numerous good proposals that we can address here in the Senate on a bipartisan basis, and this is one good example. We hope to do more. The Senate's forced arbitration proposal, the Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Act of 2021, passed unanimously out of the Judiciary Committee. Every Democrat and every Republican voted for it. I expect there will be strong, bipartisan support for it on the Senate floor. I want to thank my colleagues Senator KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND and Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM for their leadership on this important legislation.

BOMB THREATS AT HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, next, bomb threats at HCBUs.

All of us in the Senate are disturbed, sickened, and outraged, frankly, at the wave of anonymous bomb threats that have recently arisen across dozens of historically Black colleges and universities. Since the start of this year, at least 26 HBCUs in a dozen States and the District of Columbia have received

such threats, including a dozen schools last week. These bomb threats are clearly racially motivated, and I join my colleagues in condemning these acts of hatred in the strongest possible terms.

Bomb threats against HBCUs have an especially malevolent place in our country's history. Black Americans don't need to think that far back to when bombs were set off in the middle of the campus at Florida A&M University in 1999. To see these threats today is a reminder of the hatred we have yet to overcome.

Nothing can be more sickening than efforts to use fear, violence, and White supremacy in hopes of stealing the promise of a good education for millions of Black Americans. HBCUs are a vital part of our economy and education system, educating some of our Nation's greatest leaders, innovators, and activists.

I want to commend all the presidents, faculty, and staff across the country's HBCUs for responding to these acts of hatred with resolve and strength. And to all the students who attend HBCUs, this should never happen. Those responsible must—must—be prosecuted to the fullest extent of law.

My colleagues and I have been in communication with the FBI, Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Education on steps the Agencies and the Senate can take to address these violent threats. We are confident those responsible will be held accountable.

JANUARY 6

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on an entirely different matter, normally I don't make a point of remarking upon actions and statements of the Republican National Committee, which by now has completely fallen under the control of former President Donald Trump and his inner circle, but last week, they crossed a line, issuing a statement that censured two Republicans who stood up to the Big Lie, while also describing the insurrection of January 6 as "legitimate political discourse." Their statement didn't even make mention of the violence that day.

There is no debate to be had here. January 6 was an armed insurrection. It was an attempt to reverse through violent means the outcome of a free and fair election, and it was fundamentally rooted in Donald Trump's Big Lie that the election of 2020 was illegitimate, which now the RNC seems to be giving its blessing officially.

For the national committee of one of America's two major political parties to officially sign on to the Big Lie—and more than that, to excuse the attack itself by attributing even a shred of legitimacy to it—is chilling and plainly dangerous. It puts us on a road where our democracy is at risk.

It is a sad commentary on how far the political arm of the GOP has gone that the RNC will go out of its way to punish its own Members who spoke out

against the former President's lies, while defending the rioters who tried to undo an election with mob rule. Theirs will be nothing less than everlasting shame.

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

CHINA

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, this year's Winter Olympics are officially underway on the home turf of the Chinese Communist Party. Of course, Americans are rooting hard for our outstanding Team USA athletes, but this year's setting has also trained spotlights worldwide on the abuse and repression the CCP inflicts on its own people and aspires to inflict on much of the world. Unfortunately, this has also occasioned some instances of jaw-dropping tone-deafness and gullibility from American voices.

I noted on this floor several years ago that as China has modernized its economy, too many wealthy and powerful American actors have seemed willing to help whitewash the CCP's many abuses or at least turn a blind eye. Hollywood self-censoring our own American films to satisfy President Xi and his cronies is just one example.

Well, last week, one American broadcaster seemed to uncritically amplify the CCP's propaganda goal when they included a member of the oppressed Uighur minority in the opening ceremonies.

This broadcaster called the CCP's obvious propaganda stunt "an in-your-face response to those Western nations, including the U.S., who have called this Chinese treatment of that group 'genocide.'" President Xi couldn't have scripted it better.

Also, last week, a faculty member at a Big Ten university went on TV and compared China's secret police to American police officers and China's tyranny to America's voting laws. Here was the quote:

Who are we to criticize China's human rights record when we have ongoing attacks by the agents of the State against unarmed citizens, and we've got assaults on the voting rights of people of color in various States in this country?

Really? Beyond absurd.

The truth is, the CCP has turned Xinjiang Province into a giant oppression factory, where they enslave, sterilize, and commit genocide against the Muslim minority.