



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 168

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2022

No. 184

Senate

(Legislative day of Tuesday, November 29, 2022)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, 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.

Lord most holy, who sustains us each day, thank You for the opportunity to serve You and country.

Empower our lawmakers to serve You with strength and courage, refusing to deviate from the path of integrity. Lord, remind them of the importance of seeking Your wisdom. As You give them an awareness of Your abiding presence, supply their needs according to Your celestial riches. Use them to transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows.

Lord, make each of us instruments of Your peace. Use us to carve tunnels of hope through mountains of despair.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 30, 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Camille L. Velez-Rive, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning, the House Democratic caucus, of which we were once both Members, will make a momentous and potentially historic decision: selecting the next generation of leaders that will propel House Democrats forward in the 118th Congress.

Every time the caucus comes together to choose its leaders, it is a big

deal, but today's gathering is unlike any we have seen before. For one, it signals the end of a magnificent era, as my dear friend Speaker NANCY PELOSI has chosen to step down from leadership. We will never see someone like Speaker PELOSI ever again in our lifetime.

But her potential successor will be history-making in its own right. After today's vote, it is largely expected that the new House Democratic leader will be my friend and fellow Brooklynite HAKEEM JEFFRIES. HAKEEM JEFFRIES' elevation as House Democratic leader is a turning point in the history of the U.S. Congress. Never before has an African-American leader, or any leader of color, held the top position for either party in either Chamber.

With yesterday's vote on Respect for Marriage and today's vote for House Democratic leader, our representative democracy continues to march forward toward its promise of equality and full representation for all Americans.

Now, I have known HAKEEM JEFFRIES for a long time, since before the days he was first elected to the New York State Assembly in 2006. When I first met him, I thought the same thing I thought when I first met Speaker PELOSI: Here is someone who has it all.

We have taken similar roles in our lifetimes. We both grew up in Brooklyn, where I was the son of an exterminator and he was the son of a social worker. We both went to New York City public schools and both served in the New York State Assembly before coming to Congress.

It is not surprising that House Democrats are turning to someone from Brooklyn to lead the way next year because, when you are from Brooklyn, you learn quickly traits like persistence and serious mettle. It is a crowded place and a diverse place. You learn how to work with all kinds of different people. You learn how to stand your

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



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ground. You learn to not take things personally.

HAKEEM JEFFRIES exemplifies all of these traits. He is someone whom I know will both hold the line on our Democratic values while being ready to listen and keep an open mind. I know he can work with the other side whenever it is necessary. Most importantly, he is dedicated to making our country a better, more prosperous place for all people from all walks of life.

So today is a very good day for the House of Representatives, for our party, and for our country. I congratulate my friend HAKEEM on his historic election as House Democratic leader, and I can't wait to talk to my neighbor from Brooklyn four or six times a day like I did with Speaker PELOSI.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, now on Respect for Marriage, yesterday, our work of making America a more perfect place took a momentous step forward as the Senate passed the bipartisan Respect for Marriage Act. When the vote closed, the feeling on the floor was jubilation and relief, not just for ourselves and our families but for the millions of Americans across the country whose rights will be better protected under this bill.

The Respect for Marriage Act now goes to the House of Representatives for what I hope is a quick vote, and then it is on to the President's desk. And, let's remember, Joe Biden was one of the early proponents of marriage equality, even when it got some others not so happy with him.

Passing the Respect for Marriage Act would not have happened without the leadership in this Senate of so many of my colleagues: Senators BALDWIN and SINEMA—and FEINSTEIN, who originally authored this landmark bill—and my Republican colleagues Senators COLLINS, PORTMAN, and TILLIS. I thank them all.

The entire process was also a vindication of a central premise Senate Democrats and I have embraced this Congress. I have always said I have a hierarchy: First, try to get things done in a bipartisan way whenever possible. It is far better to find a way to pass legislation that will help Americans than to hold show votes that have no hope of becoming law, and that proved true on marriage equality. My No. 1 priority in the end is to find ways to get bills passed in the Senate.

So I hope that yesterday's vote is a signal that both parties can keep working together on difficult issues in the next Congress. If our Republican colleagues can shake off the MAGA wing of their party that is holding Republicans down, we can get a lot done. And it is obvious to everyone that there are many Republican Senators who don't embrace MAGA, and we say to them: We want to keep working with you. It is necessary in order to keep tackling the big problems that face our country. And if Republicans don't follow the MAGA path in the next Congress, it

will go a long way to restoring people's faith that Congress can work together and even disagree without being disagreeable.

And we don't need to wait for the new year to continue working together. In about 16 days or so, government funding is going to run out unless Congress acts to prevent a shutdown. Yesterday, I sat down with the President, with Speaker PELOSI, with Leader MCCONNELL, and with Leader MCCARTHY to discuss how we can ensure that a shutdown is avoided and that government is properly funded. For the most part, I was heartened and encouraged by the conversation.

Speaking with Leader MCCONNELL, we both believe that we must do everything possible to pass a yearlong funding package, and we both prefer an omnibus, though we have different views of what should be in it and we do need to come together on those. But both Leader MCCONNELL and I have said that an omnibus is the best way for supporting our troops, supporting our allies in Ukraine, and keeping Americans safe at home and abroad.

A CR, meanwhile, is horrible news for our troops in uniform because it will throw their families into great uncertainty and severely hinder their ability to keep America safe. It will also allow some of the countries that are not our allies, but adversaries in many ways, to gain a leg up.

With so many different new technologies, do we really want to give the Chinese Communist Party the chance to outcompete and outmaneuver us in the Indo-Pacific? Do we want our troops to protect us with one hand tied behind their backs, while our adversaries are operating at full capacity? Of course not, but that is the danger we face if we don't pass an omnibus.

Everyone is going to have to give something if we want to successfully fund the government for a full year, and while I am encouraged by the good will so far, we have a lot of difficult work to do before both parties reach a final agreement.

So just as both parties cooperated to pass the Respect for Marriage Act yesterday here in the Senate and just as we have cooperated on chips, gun safety, veterans' benefits, and so much more over the last 6 months, let's finish this session by passing an omnibus on a bipartisan basis.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Finally, Mr. President, on judges, later today, the Senate will vote to confirm two highly qualified and talented public servants to serve as lifetime appointments to the Federal bench: Camille Velez-Rive, to serve as district judge for Puerto Rico, and Anne Nardacci, to serve as district judge for the Northern District of New York.

An Albany native and one of the first women who would sit on the bench, Anne Nardacci represents Upstate New York perfectly. She is the kind of bread-and-butter candidate that Up-

state New Yorkers like, and she has built a career taking on special interests. So people in the Northern District of New York will not have to worry that she won't represent them when others come before the court who are special and powerful but don't have the right arguments.

For the last 2 years, one of my top priorities has been making sure we restore a sense of balance, impartiality, and experience to the Federal bench, and now that Democrats will keep our majority in the next Congress, that will continue unabated.

We have made historic progress so far. In the last 2 years, we have confirmed 85 judges to the Federal bench—the best pace since the Clinton administration. Those 85 judges comprise perhaps the most diverse collection of new jurists we have ever seen. Seventy-five percent of these new judges are women. I am so proud of that. Two-thirds are people of color. I am so proud of that. Many of them come from professional backgrounds we rarely see in judicial nominees. I am proud of that as well. But we are not yet done. We are going to hit the ground running when the new year begins, and our democracy will unquestionably be better off for it.

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.

CRIME

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, a few days ago, the Washington Post published a major report on the explosion of violent crime that has startled and shattered communities all across America. This terrible trend is familiar to many of us by now, but the tragic human stories are still quite shocking.

In St. Louis, 25-year-old Damion Baker was killed in July in an attempted carjacking while escorting a woman to her car downtown. "Damion cannot just be some random number of homicide," his mother told reporters. "It's gotta look different."

In New Orleans this past March, 20-year-old old Shane Brown didn't come home from work one day. His body was found 5 days later in a canal, and his family still doesn't know why he was killed.

In Birmingham, 13-year-old Jaylon Palmore was on his front porch when he was cut down in a drive-by shooting that police say was targeting someone else. The family home now holds so many painful memories that Jaylon's parents have decided to sell it and move somewhere else.

The national media may just be coming around, but the American people