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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, You have said that the truth will set us free. We thank You that Your idea of freedom leads to harmony and productivity.

Lord, liberate our lawmakers from deceptions that misrepresent truth. Teach them the fine art of conciliation, and inspire them to choose roads that lead to progress. Lord, lift them above polarization, and give them the power to walk in Your light, to act in Your strength, to think with Your wisdom, to speak with Your truth, and to live in Your love.

We pray in Your preeminent 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 (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 18, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK,

a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK 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 to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Radha Iyengar Plumb, of New York, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, preserving the full faith and credit of the United States is one of the most important responsibilities that Members of Congress face. It requires cooperation, bipartisanship, and leaders who can instill confidence and calm to markets and working families alike.

But I cannot think of a worse message to send to the world than for Speaker MCCARTHY to travel all the way to New York, look Wall Street in

the eye, and threaten that the United States will default on its debt unless Republicans get spending cuts first.

Why the Speaker traveled all the way to New York to give a speech that offered nothing new in substance or concept but the same dangerous message—different than what we have done in the past—is beyond me. If Speaker MCCARTHY continues in this direction, the United States is likely headed toward default.

But do you know what will avoid default? Republicans working with Democrats to avoid this crisis—all together—just as we did under Donald Trump.

The Speaker has insisted for months on cuts, though he has failed to offer any clarity about what kind of cuts Republicans want. House GOP leadership is presenting their wish list to their Members at a closed meeting this morning. No one should confuse this wish list as anything more than a recycling of the same bad ideas we have heard about for weeks, and it is still not clear that Speaker MCCARTHY has the votes to even pass this. Indeed, a handful of House GOP Members insist they won't raise the debt ceiling for anything, not even a GOP wish list.

One of the few specific items is the Speaker's laughable suggestion—and it is laughable—that we avoid default for only a year, ensuring that this dangerous crisis repeats itself in 12 months. Why the Speaker thinks anyone—anyone—would agree to have another debt ceiling crisis next year is beyond me.

Nobody is saying that there cannot be a conversation about what kind of cuts Republicans want, but it doesn't belong in this debate, plain and simple. It belongs in discussions over the budget that Congress has every year and not as a precondition to avoiding default.

So let me make this easy for my Republican colleagues. Don't bother with partisan wish lists and unrealistic proposals that will never solve this debt

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



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default crisis. Instead, avoid default using the same approach we did under President Trump twice and under President Biden once: Democrats and Republicans, working together, without preconditions. If Republicans agree to that, there will be no default.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Mr. President, now on GOP extremism and our FBI resolution, today, the Governor of Florida is meeting with a group of hard-right GOP extremists here in DC. As the Governor comes to the Nation's Capital, the ink is still not dry on the bill he signed a few days ago banning practically all abortions in Florida after just 6 weeks.

The Florida law is not the only one. Over a dozen States in the country now have near total bans on abortions. Idaho, for instance, is now the first State to explicitly outlaw out-of-State travel for abortions. That is sinister.

Freedom of choice is not the only victim of GOP radicalism. Over 11,000 Americans have now died from gun violence in the United States this year in school shootings, birthday parties, and New Year celebrations. But what are Republicans doing in response? They pose with machine guns on their Christmas cards. They gin up the NRA. They even expel State representatives who dare speak out against GOP inaction, as the Tennessee State House did to two members of color earlier this month.

Republican radicalism is even taking aim at law enforcement. A few weeks ago, President Trump called for cutting funding to the Department of Justice and the FBI because of personal grievances, and, to date, we have still yet to hear Speaker MCCARTHY or any Republican leader speak up against this dangerous idea.

But there is good news. The Members of this Chamber will have a chance to do the right thing and stand up for Federal law enforcement later this week. That is because, today, I will be introducing a resolution denouncing the former President's call to cut funding to our Federal law enforcement, and Senators will have to choose between standing with President Trump and his dangerous, dangerous view that we ought to cut funding for law enforcement and the FBI or will they stand with public servants to keep America safe? Again, where will they stand—with the former President's dangerous call to cut funding to Federal law enforcement or with the American people who want to be safe?

The FBI and DOJ do critical work to protect our communities against drug trafficking, gun violence, terrorism, and so much more. We just, yesterday, in New York saw an example where Federal law enforcement arrested two individuals for running a secret, unauthorized Chinese police station right in the middle of Lower Manhattan.

Do Republicans agree with President Trump that funding for Federal law enforcement who guard against terrorism and CCP encroachment should be cut

or even eliminated? Again, this is the kind of resolution that should pass unanimously.

If Senate Republicans block this provision, they will be telling the American people that the GOP has been utterly consumed by extremism, where not women, not schools, not even Federal law enforcement are safe.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. President, now on Yom HaShoah and the campaign against anti-Semitism lifted by one patriotic American, today is Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Each year on this day, we are called to do something that sounds simple: "remember"—in Hebrew, "zakar." But it is much more than mere recollection. It is a moral charge to ensure the Holocaust never, never fades from memory.

Two months ago, on my first codel as majority leader, I visited Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and the Dachau concentration camp in Germany. The trip was deeply personal for me because many of my ancestors were wiped out by the Nazis in western Ukraine.

Yom HaShoah is especially important today in the face of the pernicious, poisonous, and dangerous rise of anti-Semitism in our society. I commend the many dedicated individuals and organizations actively working to rekindle the light of tolerance that has kept anti-Semitism at bay. One important effort is done by Robert Kraft's Foundation to Combat Antisemitism, which recently launched its Stand Up to Jewish Hate campaign to raise awareness about the rise of anti-Semitism in America.

The Stand Up to Jewish Hate campaign is a powerful reminder that we must never allow anti-Semitism to flourish and that we all have a role to play in standing up against bigotry.

I want to thank Mr. Kraft's foundation for their essential work, and I ask unanimous consent to have printed into the RECORD at this point the transcript of one of his videos illustrating the efforts of the Stand Up to Jewish Hate campaign.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

TRANSCRIPT OF DIGITAL AD FROM STAND UP TO JEWISH HATE AND THE FOUNDATION TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM

VISUAL ON SCREEN:

Black backdrop throughout the ad. A small blue square appears on the right side of the screen, representing the size of the population of Jewish Americans in the US.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

"Did you notice this blue square on your screen? Maybe you did. Maybe you didn't."

VISUAL ON SCREEN:

Blue square moves closer to the center of the screen.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

"But that's the point. The size of this square is 2.4% of your screen."

VISUAL ON SCREEN:

Blue square moves even closer to the center of the screen.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

"The same size of the Jewish population of in the US."

VISUAL ON SCREEN:

Blue square moves to the very center of the screen and enlarges to take up nearly half the screen.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

"Yet Jews are on the receiving end of 55% of all religious crimes"

VISUAL ON SCREEN:

Photographs of anti-Semitic messages and crimes appear on screen, including a poster reading "Wicked Jew Devils," "Hitler was right", and the image of graffiti of a swastika.

Headlines appear on screen: "NYPD Warns about Possible Anti-Semitic protests." "Law enforcement warns of Potential Neo-Nazi 'Day of Hate'"

On screen appear photos of families grieving and police activity.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

"Show them your support. And share this blue square"

VISUAL ON SCREEN:

The Blue Square reappears next to the image of a hashtag.

Ten images of appear on screen showing supporters posting social media messages in support of Jewish Americans, using the hashtag and blue square

TEXT ON SCREEN:

"Let the Jewish community know they are not fighting alone. Anymore"

VISUAL ON SCREEN:

Blue square returns to the center, with a hashtag and final message

TEXT ON SCREEN:

Stand up to Jewish hate. StandUpToJewishHate.org. Paid for by the Foundation to Combat Anti-Semitism inc.

Mr. SCHUMER. On this solemn day—on this solemn day—we owe it to the survivors, their families, and the world to continue bearing witness to the tragic legacy of the Holocaust and keep repeating our conviction and our prayer: Never again.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, on Senate business, it is a busy week here in the Senate. We are starting with a very important bill that is going to help so many communities, particularly rural and suburban communities in America, and that is the Fire Grants and Safety Act, which I expect to pass the Senate this week.

The overwhelmingly bipartisan legislation would ensure that two important Federal grant programs that support our firefighters—SAFER and AFG—remain available. We had a 96-to-nothing vote last month to move forward with the fire grants legislation, and I hope it portends swift action this week.

And on the nominations front, we are continuing to move ahead. On Thursday, the HELP Committee will hold a confirmation hearing for President Biden's nomination for Secretary of Labor, Julie Su. Julie Su is an outstanding nominee who will be a strong fighter for America's workers, and we should confirm her.

And for the information of all Senators, tomorrow, Members will receive a classified briefing from the administration on the leaked classified U.S. documents on the war in Ukraine.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Mr. President, one final note on the IRS, today is Tax Day, and thanks to the additional resources provided to