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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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, the Reverend Asriel McLain, Little Union Baptist Church, Shreveport, LA.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord, how excellent is Your Name. In the mighty Name of Jesus, we praise You for this land of the free and home of the brave.

Lord, bless this U.S. Senate and its leadership on both sides of the aisle. Remind us that Your amazing grace is, indeed, nonpartisan. Use these servants of freedom to represent all the Nation from sea to shining sea. Bless their families, their staffs, and their constituents back home.

Bless us all with the vision to see what is right and the power and strength to do what is right. Help us not to forget the Savior's words that the greatest among us will be servants of all.

Inspire us all to heed the words of the eighth century prophet Amos when we read, "Let justice run down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

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 (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 13, 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 Senate 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Elizabeth Allen, of New York, to be Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Senator from Louisiana.

WELCOMING REVEREND ASRIEL MCLAIN

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, it is my privilege now to speak to the pastor from my home State who gave the prayer today, the Reverend Asriel McLain of Shreveport.

Reverend McLain is a graduate of Bishop College in Dallas, TX, and he earned his master of divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has been a pastor, ministering to others in Louisiana, Texas, and Michigan.

Reverend McLain is the son of Mrs. Mildred Oliver McLain and the late Reverend Claude Clifford, the former pastor of the historic Little Union Baptist Church, which was the epicenter of the civil rights movement in Shreveport.

I had breakfast with Pastor McLain this morning and learned of the courage of his father and that of his congregation, while in the face of official oppression, in making sure that one Martin Luther King got to speak in Shreveport and that those in their community had a voice about how they wanted their community to evolve. The courage that his father showed and that the parish showed—I am an Episcopalian—that the congregation showed was quite remarkable.

Much like his father, Reverend McLain has spent much of his life preserving the civil rights history of Louisiana, and much like his father, he is a man of profound faith and is a messenger of God's grace.

He is a proud father of four kids and is a grandfather of four. He is also one of five siblings—Pat, John, Gene, and Clifford—and Clifford is here with him today. Pastor McLain is also accompanied by his son David and grandson Jayden.

It was a pleasure to have Pastor McLain lead us in prayer today, and I look forward to perhaps having him join us once more.

I yield the floor.

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



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RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, AI, artificial intelligence, is unlike any innovation that has previously come to the attention of Congress. In a few years, this technology will usher in dramatic changes to the workplace, the classroom, our living rooms—to virtually every corner of life—and it is already starting to happen. Maximizing AI's benefits and mitigating its potential and very real risks will require bipartisan cooperation, focus, and speed from the U.S. Congress.

Today, the U.S. Senate is taking an important step in intensifying our focus on AI by holding the first all-Senators briefing solely dedicated to AI. More briefings will soon follow, and they will help lay a bipartisan foundation on which Congress can take appropriate action. These briefings are vital because elected representatives in 2023 cannot afford to be in the dark about how AI works and how it is going to reshape our world and is already reshaping our world for that matter.

Today's briefing will focus on the state of AI as it stands today—its capabilities, its applications, its limitations, its challenges. We will hear from Professor Antonio Torralba of MIT, an expert in machine learning and the head MIT faculty member on AI and decision making. He is the head of AI at MIT. So it is pretty good stuff that people should know.

Next month, our second and third briefings will focus on where AI is headed in the very near future and AI's implications to our national security.

I urge every single Senator to join these briefings. AI is a topic none of us can afford to ignore. It should be treated with the same urgency as national security, job creation, and civil liberties, because AI will impact all of these issues and many others.

The possibilities of AI should excite every single one of us. If used correctly, AI could unlock remarkable breakthroughs in health care, scientific research, national security, and so many other fields.

Much like we did in CHIPS and Science, Congress should look for ways to promote innovation in AI so that American companies can lead the way. But the top AI developers have also made clear that Congress must play a role in safeguarding against AI's many potential risks. They have said it to us directly through congressional testimony.

We must therefore strike a balance to promote innovation and growth, on one hand, while mitigating AI's risks on the other. That will take a lot of bipartisan cooperation, and these briefings will help us move closer to that goal.

Finally, I want to thank my colleagues for the good work they have already done on the issue. I want to espe-

cially thank Senators ROUNDS, HEINRICH, and YOUNG for helping to make all of these Senate briefings possible.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Now, Mr. President, on the Republican tax plan that is over there in the House, while Democrats have spent the last 2 years lowering energy costs, lowering the price of prescription drugs, and bringing manufacturing jobs to our shores, Republicans are doubling down on what they do best: pushing tax giveaways to large corporations and the ultrawealthy.

A few years ago, the Trump GOP tax cuts proved to be a dud for our economy and a political loser for the Republican Party. We all remember, in 2017, they said: This is going to help us win the election. And, by 2018, they couldn't even bring it up because we Democrats had made clear to the American people that this wasn't aimed at the middle class or working class; it was aimed at the very rich—corporate and individual.

But Republicans don't learn from their mistakes, apparently. This morning, the GOP-led House Ways and Means Committee is going to advance a sweeping array of new tax giveaways that reward the wealthy and the well-connected while leaving ordinary families in the lurch. This latest GOP tax scam feels like a bad rerun, where the biggest winners are giant companies, big oil polluters, and the highest—the very highest—income households.

After the Trump tax law blew a nearly \$2 trillion hole in our national deficit, forecasters say this new Republican proposal would increase the deficit by another trillion dollars. Again, their proposal over in the House increases the deficit by another trillion dollars, by objective forecasters.

These are the same Republicans who just pushed our country to the brink of catastrophic default in the name of fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction, and now, before the ink is even dry on avoiding default, the same Republicans want to blow another trillion-dollar hole into the deficit—what hypocrisy, what hypocrisy.

First, they would say: We have got to default if we don't deal with the deficit. Then they come back and blow a hole—or propose to blow a hole—in the deficit by another trillion dollars so they can help the very, very, most elite in the country.

Of course, Republicans only care about the deficit when it suits them. When the deficit gets in the way, Republicans preach the fantasy that their tax cuts will somehow pay for themselves and that the benefits will magically trickle down to the rest of the country.

But facts are stubborn. The economic reality of the past few decades shows that these Republican trickle-down claims are bunkum. It has been refuted over and over again.

You know, this has come up. I remember Jude Wanniski and all of these rightwingers and Wall Street Journal

editorials in the eighties: Cut taxes, and the deficit will go down.

It didn't happen, especially when you cut taxes on the rarified few at the top of the income scale. So it doesn't work.

We all saw what happened the last time Republicans pushed tax cuts for the very, very elite—for the top, top economic end of America—in 2017. There was no historic wave of economic activity. There was no trickle-down stemming from the huge benefits Republicans gave to the wealthy. Instead, the Trump tax cuts translated into huge profits for shareholders and trillions—record trillions—of dollars in corporate stock buybacks.

We saw the vast majority of Americans reject these Republican policies when they went to the ballot box. We even saw Republicans afraid to talk about it as we got closer to the elections in 2018.

So, if Republicans really want to help working- and middle-class families, if they really want to lower the deficit as they have claimed for years, they will stop pushing this irredeemably flawed tax package.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

NOMINATION OF JARED BERNSTEIN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, since President Biden took office, consumer prices have risen more than 16 percent. American families are paying 20 percent more to put food on the table than they did in January 2021 and 36 percent more on energy. But over more than 2 years of Washington Democrats' runaway inflation, President Biden's top advisers have refused to even admit that it is a problem, let alone that their policies are driving it.

In early 2021, after Senate Democrats helped ram through the administration's reckless taxing-and-spending spree, one top White House adviser insisted that any inflationary effect would be "transitory."

Eight months deeper into the administration's inflationary spiral, the same adviser insisted that inflation would be "growing half as fast a year from now"—another fanciful prediction overcome by the harsh, painful consequence of Washington Democrats' reckless spending and another instance where Jared Bernstein—President Biden's choice to serve as Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers—was simply dead wrong on economic advice, dead wrong.

The CEA was designed to produce objective, empirical economic analysis. With the rarest of exceptions, it has been led by a seasoned economist with a Ph.D. in the field. That streak would end with Mr. Bernstein.

The nominee the Senate will consider this week can more accurately claim expertise in partisan warfare than economics. He has been labeled in the press as President Biden's "man on the left."