



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 169

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023

No. 120

## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

### PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer, president emeritus, Concordia Seminary, Collinsville, IL.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, Your eternal being is beyond our comprehension. We are but creatures of a day.

The magnificence of these buildings in which Senators and their staffs serve, these monumental buildings we Americans visit, are sacred spaces. In silent splendor they testify to the mercies You have bestowed upon this Nation in generations past. May they inspire in us a passion that our stewardship of this Republic will serve Your good will and purposes for many years to come.

Jesus said: "When I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself." He gave His life in selfless service so that all people might experience Your goodness in their lives. Such service, pure service untainted by thoughts of self, is difficult, indeed impossible. We ask You to descend upon this Chamber with Your grace, grace received in honest confession that my time, our time, is fleeting. Unless You build the house, we labor in vain. We cannot achieve justice. We cannot embrace mercy unless we humbly walk with You.

O eternal God, You alone endure from generation to generation. Help us to be faithful stewards of this trust.

In Your holy and revealed Name we pray. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The 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 Kalpana Kotagal, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2027.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. WARNOCK. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, I moved to proceed to the Na-

tional Defense Authorization Act. We will have our first vote on Tuesday.

This bill was reported out of the Armed Services Committee on a huge, 25-to-1 bipartisan vote. We are encouraging filing amendments for the managers' package before the close of business today.

Senator MCCONNELL, the committees, and I will have our teams working over the weekend to see what we can include in the package of amendments. Undoubtedly, hundreds of amendments will be filed to this important piece of legislation. I am hopeful that all committee chairs and committee members will work together in good faith.

Obviously, both sides will want to have amendment votes. Just like we have in recent efforts, I am willing to ensure we consider and vote a reasonable number of amendments. No Senator wants a dilatory process. I know Senators REED and WICKER, who have done such a fine job putting together a bipartisan bill, will work with Senator MCCONNELL and me, and we will develop a list of amendment votes and hopefully can proceed from there.

There are important issues that I believe we must address while we are on the floor. We must consider a Chinese Government competition package. We must consider the Australia, United Kingdom, and United States submarine deal. I know there will be more to do here next week, and I look forward to the debate on the floor.

#### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. President, now on AI, last night, I informed my colleagues that we will hold our third all-Senate briefing on AI on Wednesday, July 26. Our first briefing focused on the state of AI as it stands today. Our second briefing, held earlier this week, was a classified presentation on AI's national security implications.

Our third briefing will turn to the future. We will hear from Federal researchers and developers about where AI is headed in the years to come and

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



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how it will continue to change our world.

I encourage all Members to attend this important briefing. I am also pleased to announce that our presenters for that day will be Rick Stevens, from the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, and Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan—he is the head of the NSA; he is known as Panch; it is easier to say—and Dr. Kathleen Fisher, from the Information Innovation Office at DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. Our moderator will be Dr. Jos-Marie Griffiths, a member of the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence and president of Dakota State University.

So it is a broad range of presenters from academic, defense, energy, and scientific backgrounds. It will be a great discussion and a truly important one because Senators have no time to waste learning as much about AI as possible.

AI is going to be a regular part of our lives from here on out. Rapid change may, at times, seem frightening, but if applied correctly, AI promises to transform life on Earth for the better.

But there are real risks too. We must now work to anticipate the risks, mitigate them, and ensure that AI innovation is safe in the decades to come. So I encourage all Senators to attend the briefing on the 26th. I thank our presenters who will join us that day, and I thank my colleagues—particularly Senators Rounds, Heinrich, and Young—for working together as a team in putting this briefing together.

#### ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. President, now, on inflation, yesterday, we learned that inflation slowed down for the 12th month in a row, down to 3 percent—3 percent—the lowest that it has been in 2 years.

This morning, as American families stop for gas on their way to work, or check their pocketbooks, or go to the supermarket, they can continue to see throughout the country that we are turning the corner. They are seeing more money in their pockets; they are seeing inflation cool down; and they are seeing wages continue—continue—to go up.

Listen to this. This is important. Wage growth is now significantly above inflation for the first time since March of 2021. This is the work of a Democratic agenda in action, of President Biden's good work: lower costs for families, higher wages for workers, and millions and millions of new jobs created.

Republicans had claimed that if we passed the Inflation Reduction Act, inflation would only get worse. The Republican chairman of the Ways and Means Committee claimed the Inflation Reduction Act “will prolong and make worse the current inflation crisis.” It is becoming clearer and clearer that they were dead wrong. In fact, since we passed the IRA, inflation has been cut by more than half on an annual basis.

Let me say this again: Since we passed the Inflation Reduction Act, inflation has been cut by more than half on an annualized basis.

And if that is not enough proof that the Democrats and President Biden's agenda is working, the other major pieces of legislation we passed in Congress—like the infrastructure law and the CHIPS Act—are creating millions of good-paying jobs throughout the country and in my home State of New York.

Since President Biden took office, private companies have announced over \$500 billion—\$500 billion—in investments across industries like semiconductors, clean energy, EVs and battery manufacturing, and heavy industry. What does this mean? Jobs, jobs, jobs, and more jobs—so many jobs, in fact, that some of my Republican colleagues who voted against all these bills are claiming credit for the projects and the growth that they are generating in their own States and districts.

So we have a lot of work ahead of us, but yesterday's report makes clear the Democratic agenda is working.

#### DIVERSITY

Mr. President, now, on Democratic office diversity, this morning, the Senate Democratic Diversity Initiative released the results of its annual survey of Democratic staffers, the seventh year they have done so in a row.

When I became majority leader, I promised to work to increase the diversity of Senate offices so that they can reflect the diversity of the States and the communities in which we serve.

This year's survey shows that we continue to make important progress, and I want to highlight a few of the results.

For the fourth year in a row, the number of diverse staffers has increased, reaching the highest level since we launched our survey and almost certainly the highest level ever, certainly the highest level in our conference's history.

Our survey also shows that more African Americans work for Senate Democratic offices than ever, and, in fact, that is also true for Latinos, Middle Eastern and North Africans, and Asian American Pacific Islanders. Additionally, more staffers identify as part of the LGBTQ community since we first asked that question starting in 2019.

These milestones matter. Diversity matters. Our democracy can only thrive when all voices are heard and represented. I have seen that in my own office. I learn more and more from people of diverse backgrounds. It is a great thing, and it helps me be a better Senator for all the people of New York State.

And I believe our survey matters, too, because the only way we can make progress is by holding ourselves accountable through transparency. To say we are doing it is not enough. To actually do it and have the statistics

and numbers that show we are doing it shows the real progress we are making.

Now, we have a lot of work left to do. We are not there yet. No, that is for sure. But I am encouraged that our caucus continues to grow more diverse with each passing year.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

#### CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, across the country, surges in violent crime and deadly drugs have forced businesses to board up and working Americans to think twice about the cities where they have chosen to raise their families.

While repeat offenders are increasingly turned loose to run up longer rap sheets, victims of senseless violence are usually guilty of nothing more than being in the wrong place at the wrong time. For example, just days ago, I was reminded of this when a 6-year-old girl in my hometown of Louisville was shot by a group of motorcycle thugs while riding in the back seat of her car. While she remains in critical but stable condition, I join the entire Louisville community in wishing her a full recovery.

Tragedies like this are unfortunately not unique to Kentucky. In our Nation's Capital, crime has surged to startling levels. Compared to last year, car thefts have shot up 117 percent, robberies are up 53 percent, and homicides are up 17 percent.

Just last week, a social studies teacher from Kentucky who was visiting Washington for a conference was fatally shot on a university campus. The assailant had a previous firearm charge and repeatedly violated the terms of his release. This young man from my home State was one of 10 people who were shot and killed in Washington during the first 5 days of this month, including a college student and an Afghan immigrant who had risked his life as an interpreter for the U.S. military.

Too many Americans are mourning loved ones, and in cities across their country, when they look for answers to this senseless violence, they find radical prosecutors refusing to do their jobs. Liberal district attorneys are watering down criminal codes and outright refusing to prosecute repeat offenders who ought to be behind bars.

Earlier this year, the liberal DC Council tried to pass a new criminal code that would make it easier for repeat offenders to get back on the street. Thankfully, Republicans used