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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at 12 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023

(Legislative day of Tuesday, January 3, 2023)

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who restores the soul and gives life in the midst of decay, empower our Senators to accomplish Your purposes. Lord, be to them a faithful guide on the challenging road they travel. Teach them to find contentment in striving to please You and provide them with Your power, wisdom, and strength.

As tomorrow's difficulties loom large, remind them that You can move mountains and create opportunities. Blaze the trail ahead for our lawmakers with Your might and wisdom, for You are our shelter and hope.

We pray in your Holy 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 23, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. DUCKWORTH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

(The Vice President assumed the Chair.)

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair lays before the Senate a certificate of appointment to fill the unexpired term created by the resignation of former Senator Benjamin Sasse of Nebraska. The certificate, the Chair is advised, is in the form suggested by the Senate. Hearing no objection, the reading of the certificate will be waived, and it will be printed in full in the RECORD.

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

STATE OF NEBRASKA
CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

To the President of the Senate of the United States:

This is to certify that, pursuant to the power vested in me by the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the State of Nebraska, I, Jim Pillen, the Governor of said State, do hereby appoint Pete Ricketts, a Senator from said State to represent said State in the Senate of the United States until the vacancy therein caused by the resignation of Benjamin Sasse, is filled by election as provided by law.

Witness: His excellency our Governor Jim Pillen, and our seal hereto affixed at the State Capitol, Lincoln Nebraska, this 12th day of January, in the year of our Lord 2023.

By the Governor:

JIM PILLEN,
Governor.
ROBERT B. EVNEN,
Secretary of State.

[State Seal Affixed]

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Armed Services Committee is discharged from consideration of and the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brendan Owens, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Thereupon, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 is equally divided.

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



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ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE

The VICE PRESIDENT. If the Senator-designate will now present himself at the desk, the Chair will administer the oath of office.

The Senator-designate, PETE RICKETTS, escorted by Mrs. FISCHER, advanced to the desk of the Vice President; the oath prescribed by law was administered to him by the Vice President; and he subscribed to the oath in the Official Oath Book.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Congratulations. (Applause, Senators rising.)

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

MONTEREY PARK SHOOTING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today the thoughts of the Senate are with the people of Monterey Park, CA, as they heal from this weekend's tragic and terrible shooting. What should have been a weekend of joy and celebration within the AAPI community as they celebrate the Lunar New Year, turned into another occasion of grief and mourning.

I spoke yesterday with the sheriff of Los Angeles County and assured him that the Federal Government is ready to provide whatever assistance they need right now. While first responders are still investigating the causes of this incident, it is clear that the prevalence of guns in our country have made tragedies like this one too frequent. While the Senate passed bipartisan gun safety legislation last year—and that was a very welcome move—more should be done.

My thoughts are with all the families and the loved ones of the victims of this insidious attack. I thank all the first responders and even the private citizens who responded quickly to stop the shooter and prevent even more lives from tragically being cut short.

118TH CONGRESS

Madam President, I want to also welcome our new colleague from Nebraska and wish him the best.

Now, this week, for the first time in the 118th Congress, both Chambers gavel into session to begin anew the work of serving the American people. It is a new era here in Congress, an era of divided government where both parties will have to demonstrate they can work together to solve our Nation's problems. Democrats begin the 118th Congress with an open hand of cooperation, and I urge my Republican colleagues to respond in kind so we can hit the ground running.

We have a lot of difficult and important work ahead of us, perhaps none more important than working together to raise the debt ceiling and protecting the full faith and credit of the United States. In America, when it is time to pay the bills, we have followed through

on our obligations without any exception.

In the months to come, I expect we are going to hear a lot from our Republican colleagues about the debt ceiling. So let me begin by making a few things perfectly clear at the onset.

First, few issues require more bipartisanship, cooperation, and seriousness than making sure that America is able to pay its debts on time. At stake is the health of our economy and the very stability of the global financial system. Should the U.S. default on its debt, the consequences could be severe, and it is going to affect just about every average American family. This is not some esoteric issue that is just abstract and way up there in the clouds. It is going to affect all of us.

Listen to what could happen if we default: Interest rates will go up on mortgages, on car loans, on credit cards; pensions, the money people have put aside, will lose billions, so will IRAs and 401Ks, in all likelihood. Home values will decline because when mortgage interest rates go up people are willing to pay less for homes. That is a lot of money for lots of people. For many people, their home is their rock. It is all they have. By playing brinksmanship, some of the MAGA Republicans on the other side of the aisle, on the other side in the House, are risking just that.

So, again, this is not an abstract issue. Real Americans will see real dollars from so much of what they own disappear from their pensions, their IRAs, their home value. Merely approaching a default could raise costs on everything from mortgages and car loans to credit card interest rates.

So it is going to hurt average families. This is not an abstract argument. And as the months go on, and as we get closer and closer to the day that we have to act, the American people will see this, and we are going to make sure of that.

Second, raising the debt ceiling has consistently been a bipartisan responsibility for decades. Neither party has played brinksmanship. Since 1960, the debt ceiling has been raised approximately 80 times under both Republican and Democratic administrations, under both unified and divided government. I will note once again that while President Trump was in office and Republicans had the House and Senate, Democrats voted to raise the debt ceiling. We did it not once, not twice, but three times, including twice under Republican majorities in the House and Senate. Of course, we could have done what some MAGA Republicans want, threatening to block debt ceiling extensions unless we got our way. But we knew how badly it would hurt the American people, and we didn't do it. This time should be no different. Brinksmanship, hostage-taking, default on the debt should be off the table. Both parties should work together to ensure we can continue to

pay our debt on time, and we Democrats are ready to move quickly in order to make that happen. Indeed, we are ready to move well in advance of default, because even brinksmanship over the debt ceiling can cause serious damage to the economy and to individual American families.

Unfortunately, Madam President—unfortunately, House Republicans have kicked off their new majority by saying yes to brinksmanship, yes to hostage-taking, and yes even to risking default, all because of draconian spending cuts pushed by the hard right. House Republicans' approach to the debt ceiling is dangerous, destabilizing, and the only thing it accomplishes is making a bipartisan solution less likely. If Republicans want to show that they can govern effectively, they are off to a pretty poor start.

If House Republicans are serious about taking the debt limit hostage in exchange for spending cuts, the new rules that they adopted require them to bring a proposal to the floor of the House and show the American people precisely what kind of cuts they want to make. It is not enough to hide behind the old GOP talking points about wasteful spending. When you are in the majority, substance counts. If Republicans are talking about draconian cuts, they have an obligation to show Americans what those cuts are and let the public react. And let's let them do it now, not 6 months from now when the danger of default is much closer.

House Republicans: You voted for rules that require regular order for bringing bills to the floor. So put your proposals for debt ceiling on the floor, let the entirety of the House debate it and vote on it, and let the American people see and assess these cuts for themselves. Otherwise, Americans are going to be left with some pretty big questions.

Republicans say they want spending cuts. Well, does that mean cuts to Social Security or Medicare or childcare or Pell grants or our military or pay raises for our troops or funding police and law enforcement?

Many House Republicans are serious about cutting national defense in exchange for raising the debt ceiling. I hope they are not but many seem to be—or maybe they are pushing cuts to public health and nurses and hospitals. Whatever the case may be, Americans deserve to know what kind of cuts Republicans want to make and why they think it is worth forcing an unnecessary crisis that will hurt most American families.

Frankly, I expect the House Republicans themselves will struggle to come up with a serious answer, because deep down, they know that no matter what they propose, their cuts are likely to be deeply unpopular with the American people.

This is the central quandary of the new majority. By yielding so much to the whims of the MAGA hard right,