



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 169

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

No. 144

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, September 8, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

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.

God be in our heads, eyes, mouths, hearts, and in our understanding. God be in our looking, our thinking, and our speaking. God be with the Members of this legislative body today. Teach them and lead them into Your truth. Unite them with a common desire to do what is best for our Nation and world. Lord, give them grace to take judicious risks for the sake of truth and justice. Enable them to experience a fresh regenerating touch of Your power. In the decisions to be made, in crucial days ahead, make them worthy of these demanding times that call aloud for wisdom and character.

We pray in Your strong 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, September 7, 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

BUDGET

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, Appropriations Chair PATTY MURRAY and Vice Chair SUSAN COLLINS announced they are ready to move ahead with the first three appropriations bills here on the Senate floor: MILCON-VA, Agriculture, and Transportation HUD.

This is extremely good news for what has already been a fruitful and bipar-

tisan Senate appropriations process. Chair and Vice Chair MURRAY and COLLINS have done an outstanding job negotiating this difficult work, so I thank them, as well as my other colleagues, particularly those on Appropriations, on both sides of the aisle.

To keep the bipartisan momentum alive, I will file cloture on this package today, with a plan to hold our first vote early next week. The Senate appropriations process is a lesson in how governing should work. All 12 appropriations bills have been passed with bipartisan support through regular order. Nine of them were either unanimous or just had one "no" vote.

That doesn't mean the parties have to agree on everything—we know that won't happen. But what it means is that our disagreements have not paralyzed the process. That is the mark of good governance.

Of course, the work is far from over. When the House gavels back into session next week, time will be short for both parties in both Chambers to unite around a plan to keep the government open beyond September 30.

There is only one way—one way—that this will happen: through bipartisanship. Neither party can afford to go at it alone if we want to avoid a shutdown. We are going to have to work together, just as we have done in the Senate, without resorting to extremism and unseemly tactics. And that message is intended for the House, the House Republicans, and the House Republican leadership, in particular.

When I last met with the Speaker at the end of July, we had a good conversation on the matter, so I hope he

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



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sticks to his guns as this process begins in earnest. Both parties in both Chambers must come together on passing emergency supplemental funding to help our fellow Americans reeling from natural disasters, to stand with our friends in Ukraine fighting against Putin, and to fight against the fentanyl crisis, among other priorities.

Later this morning, I will attend a classified briefing on the state of the war in Ukraine, where I expect we will see precisely why, now more than ever, our friends abroad need our help. We must continue to show Putin and the forces of autocracy that the United States stands firmly behind Ukraine. The worst thing we could do right now for our own national security and for our democratic values is to waver or hesitate in our support.

What is the point in cutting off support now when we are at a turning point in the war—an inflection point—after we have invested such a large amount of resources to get us to this inflection point? It is a crucial moment right now.

So one more time, let me implore my House colleagues: Follow in the Senate's example when you return next week and work with Democrats in a bipartisan way so we can avoid a costly, pointless, and very harmful and unnecessary government shutdown. We do not need to go down that road, and we cannot follow the lead of a mindless few who believe a shutdown is a good thing and who want it and who openly admit they want it. They are hurting the American people, plain and simple. We should not follow them.

Democrats and Republicans in both the House and Senate should not follow this small band of people who are at the extreme. Instead, let's keep our economic recovery going. Let's keep our investments in infrastructure and manufacturing flowing, and let's make sure we help Americans with disaster aid, help our friends in Ukraine, deal with fentanyl, and fulfill our other needs too.

The Senate, as I said, is off to a very good start. I hope the House gets off to a good start next week as well by embracing bipartisanship. We will know very soon whether they are ready or not to follow through on this very important responsibility they have to the American people.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, nominations, well, it has been a productive first week back here on the Senate floor for nominations. Yesterday, I am proud to say, we confirmed Gwynne Wilcox to a second term on the NLRB, the National Labor Relations Board. I am happy she passed, just as she did 2 years ago when she became the first Black woman ever to be confirmed to the NLRB. Confirming highly qualified nominees like Ms. Wilcox to the NLRB is a top priority for Democrats and for all working Americans, because it is

one of the most important proworker Agencies in the country.

Under the Biden administration, the NLRB has been hard at work overturning Trump-era rulings that harmed workers and unions. They have been at work expanding protections in the workplace and safeguarding the right to organize. All important to maintaining the middle class and growing the middle class; because after all, it was the union movement that really created the broad American middle class in the first place. And when unions were attacked, the middle class declined.

During her first term on the NLRB, Ms. Wilcox was a fervent champion of the labor movement, so I am pleased that she will be back on the board again.

Now, later this morning we will confirm Adriana Kugler to be on the Federal Reserve Board. I was proud to champion this historic nomination of Ms. Kugler, a Colombian-American economist who will make history as the first—the first—Latina in the Fed Board's 109-year history. And I want to thank Chairman MENENDEZ for championing this outstanding nominee.

Ms. Kugler's historic confirmation will be a great moment for the Fed and for America, as we elevate fresh, diverse perspectives to our Nation's central bank and continue our strong economic recovery.

We also confirmed two other very impressive nominees to the Federal Reserve this week: Philip Jefferson and Lisa Cook, another historic nominee, as Ms. Cook became the first Black woman confirmed to a full term on the Fed. Both of them again passed with bipartisan support.

And, finally, today we will vote to confirm Anna Gomez as a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission. Ms. Gomez is an exceptional nominee with considerable telecom experience and broad support from groups on both sides of the aisle. And if confirmed, she will be the first Latina on the Commission in over 20 years, another glass ceiling broken. And these are so important to getting a full, diverse view on important governing Agencies like the Fed, like the FCC.

Ms. Gomez's confirmation will fill the fifth and final spot on the FCC so they can do the crucial work of expanding access to high-speed internet, administering programs for affordable internet access, and protecting consumers from junk fees and much more.

So I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their cooperation on these nominees, and I look forward to continuing this Democratic Senate's historic pace of confirming well-qualified and diverse nominees.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, finally, on AI. Next week the Senate will host one of the most important

conversations of the year when the top minds in artificial intelligence convene for our first AI Insight Forum. It will be a meeting unlike any other that we have seen in the Senate in a very long time—perhaps ever. A coming together of top voices in business, civil rights, defense, research, labor, the arts—all together in one room having a much needed discussion, conversation, about how Congress can tackle AI.

Both parties recognize that AI is something we can't ignore, but we need a lot of help understanding the best way forward. Different countries are taking such different approaches to AI, and some are more successful than others.

We have to learn from their mistakes and learn from this panel, illustrious as it is. We need to find an approach that balances both innovation and savings. That means both creative innovation to develop new applications, new technologies, new breakthroughs so we can advance in science and in medicine and in education and in health and in so many other areas—communications. But we also need innovation on guardrails so we can find creative and new ways to protect our kids, our privacy, prevent racial bias, prevent doomsday scenarios. Innovation must apply to both sides of the equation, innovating so we can move the advantages of AI forward but innovating so we can deal with the problems that AI might create and lessen them as much as we can.

It will not be easy, not easy at all. In fact, it will be one of the hardest things we undertake in Congress, the hardest thing we probably ever have undertaken. That is why next week's conversation will be so important because it will be the first of a series of forums that will give our committees the knowledge base and thought insights to draft the right kind of policies. Already our committees have done some outstanding work on this topic, holding no less than eight hearings on AI on matters related to national security, intellectual property, human rights, and more. In fact, as we speak, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee is holding a hearing on AI and the Department of Energy's role in preserving competition and new technologies.

One thing I want to underscore before I finish my speech here on my little talk here on AI is that we are doing this in a bipartisan way. Senator ROUNDS, Senator YOUNG, Senator HEINRICH, and myself are sort of steering this effort. We are having this be done in a bipartisan way, and we expect the committees to work in a bipartisan way because if this becomes a partisan issue, nothing will happen, and that could create real problems in our society. So the Senate is ready and engaged on this most important issue.

I want to thank my colleagues for their work. I want to thank Senators ROUNDS, YOUNG, and HEINRICH for helping organize these forums, and I look forward to our conversation, our very