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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 God, who soars on the wings of the wind, we cry to You, and You hear us. You rescue us from life's deep waters, restoring us when we feel powerless.

Continue to show Yourself faithful as our lawmakers seek to accomplish your purposes. Lord, be a shield for them as they place their trust in You. When they lose their courage, continue to be the God of their salvation. When they cry to You for help, answer their request. When they feel the pains of despair, fill them with Your hope, peace, and love. May they always remember that You will never forsake them.

We pray in Your precious 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, October 24, 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 Michael G. Whitaker, of Vermont, to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration for the term of five years.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last week, President Biden addressed the Nation from the Oval Office to affirm that America will stand with her friends and allies in the face of authoritarians like China, Russia, and Iran, who seek to annihilate democracy.

The future of democracy around the world faces the greatest threat since the end of the Cold War. At this pivotal

moment in history, America is once again called upon to rise to the occasion and to lead the way.

President Biden has now sent Congress a supplemental funding request with aid for our ally and partner Israel, aid for our friends in Ukraine, and funding to outcompete the Chinese Government and secure our southern border from threats like fentanyl. We must pass this supplemental as soon as we can with bipartisan support for a simple and important reason: It will make the world safer for the United States, for our allies, and for our democratic values.

In Europe, Vladimir Putin continues his onslaught against the Ukrainian people, and it is foolish to think he will stop there. In the Middle East, Hamas's brutal terrorism murdered the most Jewish people in a single day since the Holocaust and threatens our strongest ally in the Middle East. Democrats and Republicans alike know that if Putin, Hamas, or other adversaries succeed, it would endanger Americans around the world.

Now that Congress has received the President's request, I will make it a top priority for the Senate to act quickly, decisively, and most importantly, with strong bipartisan conviction.

Bipartisanship must lead the way as we take up the President's supplemental request.

To my Republican colleagues, let's work together to ensure that this process remains bipartisan, because only things that win support from both sides will make it to the President's desk.

Democrats and Republicans agree we must stand with Israel. So let's pass this supplemental, with humanitarian aid to help civilians in Gaza and elsewhere, as soon as we can.

Democrats and Republicans also agree we must stand with Ukraine. After all, over 70 Members voted for Ukraine funding last month in our CR. So let's pass this supplemental as soon as we can.

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



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And both sides want to outcompete the Chinese Government, secure our border from threats like fentanyl, and provide humanitarian aid to minimize civilian casualties in both Israel and Gaza.

All of these priorities are bipartisan. All of these provisions are included in the President's request. So let's get to work in the coming weeks to pass this supplemental package quickly and with strong bipartisan support.

With the House of Representatives in paralysis, the Senate will not wait to act. We will step into the breach and make sure the business of legislating continues. And if we act with enough bipartisan conviction, I believe it would go a long way to pushing the House to getting its act together and following suit.

The world will watch very closely what actions we take in Congress over the next couple weeks. We must send an unmistakable message to the country, to our allies, and to our adversaries that America will always spring to the defense of our allies in their hour of need. That is why we must pass this supplemental as soon as we can.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, now, on appropriations, Democrat and Republican appropriators continue making progress on an agreement to move forward on three bipartisan funding bills here on the floor. We worked all last week to clear the objections from some of our Republican colleagues, and we kept talking over the weekend in good faith.

We are not there yet, but it is my hope we can reach an agreement to begin voting on amendments very soon, in all likelihood by tomorrow morning. But, again, we need a little more time to keep working.

Here in the Senate, unlike the chaos of the House, most Members on both sides want to see bipartisanship because we know that is the only way things move forward in divided government. A clean Senate appropriations process, without poison pills or dilatory tactics, is one of the best ways we can show our desire for bipartisanship is serious, and I am optimistic we are nearly, nearly there.

I thank the Senate appropriators, Chairman MURRAY, Vice Chair COLLINS, and all the other Members, on both sides, for bringing us close to an agreement. I hope to see one very soon.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. President, now, on our second AI Insight Forum, later this afternoon the Senate will hold our second bipartisan AI Insight Forum, focusing on our North Star for AI: innovation. Our forum begins at 3 today in the Kennedy Caucus Room, and I encourage my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to attend.

We had a strong bipartisan turnout for our inaugural AI Insight Forum, and I hope we will see the same today. It is important to show how bipartisan and how seriously we are taking AI here in the Senate.

Today's AI Insight Forum includes some of the Nation's leading voices in labor, academia, business, tech, civil rights, and others, coming together to hold an unvarnished, candid, and urgent debate on AI. The topic today will be how Congress and the private sector can foster innovation. We will talk about the need for transformative innovation—the types of AI systems that will create new vistas, unlock new cures, improve education, protect national security, preserve the global food supply, and more. But we will also talk about the need for sustainable innovation—innovations that can solve the deep challenges of AI, like increasing transparency and security, and reducing bias and risk. And this means supporting effective guardrails, because everyone agreed at our last forum, from one end of the spectrum to the other, that if the Federal Government doesn't impose some guardrails, there will be none, and the whole invention of AI could come tumbling down.

We need to prioritize both transformative and sustainable innovation. We must find a balance between innovation and guardrails, without going too far in one direction and hurting the other.

And I want to thank my colleagues in our bipartisan AI little gang—Senators ROUND, HEINRICH, and YOUNG—for helping to organize and run today's AI Insight Forum.

Again, for the information of Senators, our forum begins at 3 p.m. today in the Kennedy Caucus Room. I hope to see you all there.

TECH HUBS

Mr. President, now, on tech hubs, yesterday was a really exciting day, thanks to two words: "tech hubs." I spent the day traveling across Upstate New York, sharing the great news that the Buffalo-Rochester-Syracuse and the Binghamton region just won prestigious tech hub designation that I created in our CHIPS and Science Act. This announcement means one thing: More good-paying, long-lasting jobs are coming to Upstate New York, an area that has seen so many companies leave over the last three or four decades.

Yesterday's tech hubs celebration was something I have been working hard toward for a very long time. When I was writing the tech hubs program with Senator YOUNG into our bipartisan Endless Frontiers Act, and then into the CHIPS and Science Act, I had Upstate New York in mind, and, now, thanks to this new designation, communities and cities across Upstate New York are facing an awakening. The region is now primed to become a global hub for workforce training, innovation, and semiconductor manufacturing.

But it is not just Upstate New York that is affected. It is a metaphor for the whole country. There are 2 tech hubs in New York and 30 others around the country, from coast to coast, in red States and blue States. And when I talked about tech hubs for cities like

Rochester and Buffalo and Syracuse and Binghamton, my colleague and friend on the Republican side, TODD YOUNG, was talking about tech hubs in his State of Indiana, in places like Indianapolis, South Bend, and Fort Wayne.

The whole idea is this. The tech industry has gravitated to a few large cities—my own city of New York, which has greatly benefitted, San Francisco, Boston, Austin, and Los Angeles—but there is a load of talent in the rest of the country. It is just that no one paid attention to these places. That is the idea of tech hubs.

There were 400 applications for tech hubs across the country in the Department of Commerce, and I salute Secretary Raimondo, who was very careful in picking the places where it could actually work, and that is why there are 30.

So this is a great thing, and it will spread. It will take advantage of the talent that already exists in the companies and universities and individuals and schools—in the heartland of the country, not just on the coasts—and give them a real chance to take part and create tens of thousands—millions—of good-paying jobs in every part of the country.

So I was really proud of the tech hubs proposal, and it is going to continue. We are going to put more funding into it. We are going to do everything we can to help tech hubs grow and help America grow and stay No. 1 in the world, because when we invest in science and high-end manufacturing and research, everybody—everybody—benefits.

So this is good news in red States and in blue States. Secretary Raimondo didn't look around and just say, "Oh, we can only do blue States," like Donald Trump might have done. She has put them in all the places that there can be new help.

So let's look at the contrast here, folks. While the House Republicans struggle to even select a Speaker, these tech hub announcements show that President Biden and Democrats are delivering, putting tens of thousands of people to work in good-paying jobs, opening new plants and factories, and securing American leadership in the technologies of tomorrow.

Not in a very long time has the contrast between the parties been as glaring as today. When Democrats lead the way, Americans see more jobs, more manufacturing, lower costs. When Republicans are in charge—rightwing Republicans, not all of them, but the rightwing seem to be running the show of these MAGA Republicans—it leads to paralysis, chaos, and extremism.

No matter how the GOP impasse in the House is resolved, we will not change our focus as Democrats. We will create more jobs, work to lower costs, and do it on a bipartisan basis wherever we can.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.