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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, source of our strength, we come before You today remembering that Your presence, power, and purpose sustain us during life's dangerous days. It is comforting to know that in every situation, You are always present to empower us with Your love and wisdom.

Today, use our lawmakers as instruments of Your peace and love. Examine their hearts and minds, providing them with the courage to walk continually in Your truth. Look favorably upon their efforts to bring peace to a war-torn world.

And, Lord, bless our Nation, bring healing to this land we love until all our strivings cease.

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, November 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.

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 Monica M. Bertagnolli, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the National Institutes of Health.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in the next 2 weeks, Congress must work together to avoid another pointless, damaging, unnecessary government shut-

down. We also must work together to defend America's national security around the world by standing with Israel, standing with Ukraine, and increasing our defenses in the Indo-Pacific. And we must provide critical humanitarian assistance, including to civilians in Gaza, who have nothing to do with Hamas, who need food and water and shelter.

None of this will be easy to do. None of this is guaranteed to happen. The outcome of the next 2 weeks will hang on the same thing I have emphasized all year long—bipartisan cooperation.

If Republicans are willing to work with Democrats in good faith on issues where there is real overlap—and there are many—then we can move forward on the things we must accomplish. But if Republicans inject partisanship into otherwise bipartisan priorities, that is only going to make it harder to avoid a shutdown, pass Israel aid, pass Ukraine aid, pass humanitarian aid for Gaza, and all our other priorities.

Yesterday, a group of Senate Republicans released a proposal for border security that they want in exchange for Ukraine funding, and they know full well what they came up with is a total nonstarter. Instead of putting together commonsense border policies that can pass in divided government, Senate Republicans basically copied and pasted large chunks of the House's radical H.R. 2 bill, and that is their asking price for helping Ukraine.

Making Ukraine funding conditional on the hard-right border policies that can't ever pass Congress is a huge mistake by our Republican colleagues. By tying Ukraine to the border, Republicans are sadly making it harder—much harder—for us to help Ukraine in their fight against Putin. It sends a terrible signal to both our friends and adversaries. It will be a moment that history will remember, if Ukraine aid is tied to this.

Large segments of both parties in the Senate support Ukraine. Large segments of both parties in the Senate

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



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support Ukraine. So why on Earth do some Republicans want to torpedo it by tying this H.R. 2 anchor to Ukraine funding? This move is only going to endanger Ukraine assistance in the long run.

If Senate Republicans' open bid for border is an amalgamation of hard right policies, then, sadly, the two parties are far apart, and we have a lot of work to do to bridge the divide.

Now, I want to be clear, I would like to bridge the divide. Our caucus would like to see some kind of commonsense border policies done, and the President would like to get something done, as his supplemental proposal shows. If we can come together in a bipartisan fashion to stop the flow of fentanyl and give our frontline officers the resources and tools they need to do their jobs and stop fentanyl, all while staying true to our values, that is what we should be doing.

So, today, we are going to keep working with our Republican colleagues to see if there is a chance for compromise, but Republicans need to actually work with us on realistic border policies, even if it is not everything they want. You can't get just a few Republicans who are pretty much on the hard-right side of their party to say: Here is what we want. Take it or leave it.

That won't work. Senate Republicans should not repeat the mistake of the House GOP when they tried to push H.R. 2. Their H.R. 2 bill is going nowhere, and this Senate GOP proposal is very close to H.R. 2.

I have always been clear that I am ready to have open, good-faith, bipartisan negotiations. I was one of the authors of the Senate's comprehensive immigration bill from 2013. It was led by John McCain and me. I know what it is like to have a hard conversation about these issues. I know through firsthand experience this topic is not easy, but, nevertheless, I am willing to have conversations about the border again if Republicans are willing to meet us halfway.

We have so many shared bipartisan priorities to protect our Nation, our national security. I hope partisanship doesn't tarnish our shared purpose. I hope we can work in the coming days to bridge the gap.

Again, when Republicans willingly inject partisanship into issues that could have some bipartisan overlap, they make it extremely hard to get anything done. I urge my Republican colleagues to stop using the same approach again and again of taking bipartisan issues and injecting them with corrosive partisan measures that help sink them.

NOMINATIONS

Well, Mr. President, today is going to be a very important and good day on the Senate floor. This morning we will confirm Monica Bertagnolli as the next Director of the NIH, the National Institutes of Health, and, later today, the Senate will hit a new milestone in our record of confirming President Biden's

diverse, well-qualified judicial nominees when we confirm two more district judges—Kenly Kato to serve in the Central District of California and Julia Kobick to serve in the District of Massachusetts. With the confirmations today, the Senate will hit two exciting milestones: 150 total judges confirmed under President Biden and 100 female judges confirmed under President Biden.

Two-thirds—two-thirds—of the judges we have confirmed are women, redressing the imbalance that has existed for centuries.

We have 150 judges now who have brought integrity and impartiality to the bench. We have 150 judges who have expanded the diversity and dynamism of our courts. We have 150 judges who are restoring America's trust in the Federal judiciary.

Finally, after that, we will advance the nomination of Ramon Reyes to be a district judge in the Eastern District of New York, setting up his confirmation tomorrow.

Last night, we filed cloture on additional judicial nominees. I am extremely proud of the work we have done to confirm these 150 judges, including 100 women to the Federal Bench. I am extremely proud of the work we have done, again, to confirm these 150 judges.

And let me put it in perspective. As of tonight, the Senate will have confirmed 100 women to the Federal bench, nearly double that of President Trump's entire first term and more than the full first term of any recent President.

These nominees are all historic, taken together, and many are historic in their own right. We have confirmed the first Black woman to the Supreme Court, the first Muslim woman to the Federal bench, and much more. This Senate has now confirmed more women of color to the bench than any Senate under any previous President, and we aren't done. We aren't done. We will continue to advance judicial nominations on the floor of this Congress, and I thank my colleagues for their cooperation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, 44 years ago last week, shock troops chanting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" led Iranian revolutionaries across Tehran, overran the U.S. Embassy, and took 66 Americans hostage for 444 days. Iran's war against

America, the "Great Satan," and Israel, the "Little Satan," has continued ever since. The regime has supported Shia terrorists, Sunni terrorists, and secular terrorists. It has underwritten violence across the world, from the 1983 marine barracks bombing in Beirut, to the 1992 Israeli Embassy bombing in Buenos Aires, to the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, to hundreds of attacks, masterminded by Qasem Soleimani, on U.S. forces in Iraq.

Tehran has invested its time and resources into cultivating the terrorists of Hezbollah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic jihad. The Iranian regime bears responsibility for their savagery. It is also responsible for more than 100 attacks on U.S. personnel and interests in Iraq and Syria just since President Biden took office. These attacks have spiked since October 7.

Two weeks ago, an Iranian-made suicide drone hit a U.S. military barracks in Iraq. Thankfully, the drone's explosive payload failed to detonate. But the message it sent about the state of President Biden's deterrence of the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism was as clear as day.

In recent weeks, U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria have been targeted at least another 38 times with lethal force, and more than 40 servicemembers have been injured. Let me say that again. Iran-backed terrorists have attacked U.S. forces at least 38 times since October 7.

U.S. personnel are, of course, not the only targets of the Iranian war on Western influence in the Middle East. America's Arab allies have endured repeated attacks as well. This ongoing siege is not the behavior of an adversary that is being effectively deterred.

How we got here is no mystery. When the Biden administration took office, it rushed to restore a failed nuclear agreement with an Iranian regime that had long since proven it wasn't to be trusted. When Iran-backed Houthi rebels killed three people at an airport in the UAE and aimed two ballistic missiles at its capital last year, the administration responded with silence.

In response to the latest wave of attacks on U.S. forces, the President authorized a strike on an ammunition facility. His Secretary of State felt compelled to reiterate that "we are not looking for conflict with Iran." Clearly, Iran is looking for conflict with us. The Iranian regime is working hard to kill Americans, undermine our influence, and sow chaos among our allies, and so far, you would have to say they are succeeding.

Hamas and Palestinian Islamic jihad perpetrated the deadliest day of violence against Jews since the Holocaust. Hezbollah stands ready, at Iran's behest, to escalate this conflict into a two-front war. Years of careful progress toward normalized relations between Israel and more of its Arab neighbors has been stalled.

Demanding that Israel cease fire against Hamas would lock in these