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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.

Mighty God, we praise You and will tell of Your marvelous works. Even in a chaotic and confusing time, You continue to bring us joy. Our enemies cannot conquer You. They stagger and disappear.

Today, empower our lawmakers, silence the noises that distract them, enabling them to hear Your still, small voice. Lord, infuse them also with such courage that they will patiently endure even Your silence as they seek to fulfill Your purposes by their work. And, Lord, let Your peace and power prevail in our Nation and world.

We pray in Your righteous 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 bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 9, 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 nominations, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Monica Ramirez Almadani, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today's elections were another horrible defeat—sorry—Tuesday's elections—maybe today's, too, who knows—but Tuesday's elections were another horrible defeat for MAGA extremism and another affirmation for the democratic agenda of jobs, infrastructure, and lowering costs for the middle class.

By now, Republicans need to admit there is a pretty clear pattern at play:

Ever since Donald Trump was elected President, the MAGA agenda has led to failure in big elections, in small elections, in red State elections, in blue State elections, and everything in between. And it shouldn't be any big mystery why MAGA candidates and MAGA issues keep turning out to be duds. Americans don't want hard-right extremists and the chaos they bring to govern this country. Americans don't support a MAGA agenda that has, at its bedrock, radical attacks on women's healthcare.

Americans want their elected leaders to choose bipartisanship, to focus on people's lives instead of cable news shows. Sadly, Republicans seem mightily impervious to the obvious truth that MAGA equals disaster for America and for their party.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, and there is much more to do here in Congress right now that will demand exactly the kind of bipartisanship Americans have made clear they want. In a little over a week, the Federal Government will shut down if Congress does not come together to pass a bipartisan extension of funding.

Today, I am taking the first procedural step for the Senate to move forward on a legislative vehicle we can use next week to pass a temporary extension to avoid a government shutdown. Over the next few days, Democrats will continue talking to Republicans about finding a path forward and avoiding a shutdown that both sides support, and I earnestly hope we can reach agreement sooner rather than later.

No matter how negotiations evolve over the next week, one thing is not going to change: The only way—the only way—let me say it a third time—the only way we avoid a shutdown is with bipartisan cooperation, just as it was true in September, and it will be true in the future.

I implore Speaker JOHNSON and our House Republican colleagues to learn

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



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from the fiasco of a month ago: Hard-right proposals, hard-right slashing cuts, hard-right poison pills that have zero support from Democrats will only make a shutdown more likely. I hope they don't go down that path in the week to come.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now on nominations, earlier this week, I am proud to say—really proud to say—that the Senate majority confirmed the hundredth woman to the Federal bench since President Biden took office, and I am equally proud to say it was the 150th judge overall.

Today, the Senate will hit two more significant milestones. After we confirm Monica Almadani and Brandy McMillion today, this Senate majority will have confirmed 50 Black judges and 100 people of color to the bench. Democrats are making our courts look more like America. This majority has confirmed more women, more Black people, more people of color to the bench than any full first term of any previous President. That is a record to be proud of.

Under President Trump, just 16 percent of judicial nominees were people of color. Under President Biden and this Senate majority, 100 of the now more than 150 judges have been people of color.

And yesterday, the Senate confirmed Ramon Reyes as a district judge for the Eastern District of New York. Judge Reyes is now the only male Federal judge of Puerto Rican descent and the second Hispanic man to ever sit on the Eastern District. Judge Reyes is a truly outstanding jurist who will be an excellent addition to the Eastern District. I was proud to recommend his nomination to President Biden and even prouder to see him confirmed yesterday.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. President, on our AI Insight Forum, yesterday, the Senate held our fifth and sixth bipartisan AI Insight Forums. Both AI Insight Forums were a huge success. We learned a lot; we had a lot of good discussions; we all left with a better understanding of the ways AI is already reshaping our world.

Our Elections and Democracy AI Insight Forum was especially informative. It is the area that requires the most immediate action because the 2024 elections are fast approaching, and we know there have already been—and always have been—bad actors trying to jaundice our elections. But we agreed, we agreed in the forum, that AI will be a dramatic force multiplier for the spread of disinformation.

We also agreed that government can't alone act to create guardrails to protect our elections in the age of AI. I was proud to see three major companies in the room during the AI Insight Forum—Meta, Microsoft, and Google—come out and say they supported legislation to create these guardrails.

We also agreed that we need to act quickly to secure our democracy in the

age of AI because time is of the essence ahead of next year's elections. It may be the thing we have to do first when it comes to legislating and creating guardrails in AI.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. President, on the Supreme Court, the American people are experiencing a severe crisis of confidence in the integrity of the highest Court in all the land. Today, the Senate Judiciary Committee is taking an important step to restore confidence in the Supreme Court by voting to authorize subpoenas to Harlan Crow and Leonard Leo, who have used their immense power to gain undisclosed access—undisclosed access—to Supreme Court Justices.

I support Chairman DURBIN and the Judiciary Committee's decision to authorize these subpoenas because Americans are sick of reading in the paper that rich MAGA extremists are using their yachts and jets and gifts to pal around with the Supreme Court and doing so largely in secret. These previous undisclosed reports of lavish gifts suggest there is a two-tiered system of justice, and that needs to be fixed.

Americans know there is something shady going on when ultrawealthy MAGA extremists can basically buy face time with the Justices, who then turn around and overturn Roe v. Wade, gut affirmative action, block student debt relief, and green-light discrimination against LGBTQ Americans. The same millionaires—billionaires—who are giving gifts and giving trips to these Justices are the very same people pushing a whole lot of this agenda with the Supreme Court, and, whoa, lo and behold, the Supreme Court does it.

The bottom line is, at the very least, the appearance of this kind of impropriety needs to stop, and Americans need to learn more. And the Senate is well within its right to look under the hood to ensure we can increase transparency, which these subpoenas would do.

I support the Judiciary Committee's vote to authorize these subpoenas, and I thank Chairman DURBIN and my Democratic colleagues on the committee for their work.

REMEMBERING LIZ MOYNIHAN

Mr. President, now on Liz Moynihan, this week, New York lost one of its talented figures, one of its brightest minds, one of its most radiant spirits—Liz Moynihan—who passed away Tuesday evening. I had the immense joy of knowing her for many, many wonderful years, the partner to my old mentor, Senator Moynihan, here in the Senate.

Senator Moynihan may have been the one in the spotlight, but everyone knew there would be no Daniel without a Liz, who was not just a lifelong partner but also his top adviser, his best advocate, and, arguably, the best political strategist. To borrow a phrase attributed to another powerful New York woman, “behind every great man is a greater woman.” And that was certainly true for Liz.

Liz Moynihan was someone always who preferred to operate outside the

limelight but was always able to command the attention of Presidents, Senators, ambassadors, and mayors, and even archeologists, having discovered on her own the gardens of the Mughal Emperor Babur, while living in India.

In short, Liz Moynihan was a virtuoso in so many ways. She never held office herself. Yet she made the careers of so many—most of all, her husband's—possible. May she rest in peace after a wonderful, full, and rich life, dedicated to making this country better.

My condolences to my dear friend Laura and all of the Moynihan family and everyone whose lives she touched over the years.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. McCONNELL. This weekend, with parades and gatherings, solemn ceremonies and phone calls to loved ones, America will mark Veterans Day by expressing our gratitude to the men and women who have served our Nation in the Armed Forces.

But Veterans Day is much more than a once-a-year observation. It is a reminder of our daily obligation to honor their service, uphold our promises to care for them when they come home, and do everything we can to equip those defending our Nation today and tomorrow for success.

So, today, I am reminded of some letters I have saved in my archives. They are letters my father sent home to my mother from his own service in Patton's army in 1945.

With Nazi Germany on the ropes, with peace within reach, my dad was already seeing firsthand the sorts of threats that would define the next half century of American history. In the parts of his letters that made it past Army censors, he told us how the Russians were going to be a big problem.

Well, today, America faces threats every bit as grave. Like those of the 1940s, our adversaries today aren't being shy about their efforts to win the next half century of competition with America and the West. As one recent analysis summed it up, Russia, China, and Iran are “working to end the world order that has prevailed for three generations under American leadership”—“under American leadership.”

This didn't happen by accident. The Western order of peace and freedom was delivered by the sacrifices of American servicemembers like my father and preserved by generations of brave men and women in uniform ever since.

Right now, we have an obligation to those servicemembers, to our allies, and to the American people to behave like the world-leading power we actually are. We have a duty to invest seriously in American strength. It is time to offer a clear strategy for victory against Russia and then deliver the resources Ukraine needs to achieve it right now.