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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, March 17, 2023, at 11 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who made us in Your image, thank You for Your sustaining power. Because of You, we receive the gift of heartbeats each day. Great is Your faithfulness. Lord, enable us to see Your divine image in every human being.

Bless our lawmakers. Bring to the surface the goodness within each of them. Keep them safe as You give them the wisdom to do Your will on Earth, even as it is done in Heaven.

Lord, give us all insights into Your will and the courage to do it.

We pray in Your matchless Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The 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 Jessica G. L. Clarke, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now, almost 20 years to the day that U.S. military operations began in Iraq, the U.S. Senate begins the process of repealing the Iraq AUMFs—the ones of 2002 and 1991—putting the final remnants of those conflicts squarely behind us.

The United States, the Nation of Iraq, and the entire world have changed dramatically since 2002, and it is time the laws on the books catch up with these changes. The Iraq war has itself been long over. This AUMF has outlived its purpose, and we can no longer justify keeping it in effect.

While the Iraq war was the cause of so much bitterness in the past, I am

glad that repealing these AUMFs has been a genuinely bipartisan effort. I expect we will have a number of amendment votes on the floor once this amendment is before us, and I want to thank Senators KAINE and YOUNG, Chairman MENENDEZ, Ranking Member RISCH, and all the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the cosponsors of this legislation.

Again, this is a bipartisan process. Both parties in this Chamber have voiced support for repeal. President Biden has voiced support for repealing this AUMF, and in June of 2021, our House colleagues voted 268 to 168 to repeal, with 49 Republicans in support.

I hope this year, on the 20th anniversary of the start of the Iraq war, both Chambers will finally speak in one voice and send an AUMF repeal to the President's desk.

Americans are tired of endless wars in the Middle East. Many Americans have come of age without even remembering the early years of the Iraq war. Every year we leave these AUMFs on the books is another year that a future administration can abuse them, and Congress—the rightful dispenser of war powers—cannot allow this to continue.

I want to make this clear: Repealing this AUMF will not in any way hinder our national defense, nor will it hurt the efforts of our troops deployed overseas. In fact, the repeal is an important step for strengthening our relationship with Iraq.

So once again, thank you to all my colleagues for their good work on this resolution, and I urge everyone on both sides to vote “yes” on cloture on the motion to proceed in a few hours.

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



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NOMINATION OF JESSICA G. L. CLARKE

Madam President, on the Clarke nomination today, the Senate will confirm a highly qualified judicial nominee from New York, whom I was very proud to recommend, Jessica Clarke, to serve as a U.S. district judge for the Southern District of New York.

Ms. Clarke had all the opportunities in the world to enter private practice in New York, but instead she chose the path of public service. She has worked in the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and the New York attorney general's Civil Rights Bureau. She is a great civil rights lawyer, and I am certain she will make an excellent member of the Federal bench.

It would have been difficult to imagine someone like Ms. Clarke being nominated to the Federal bench a generation ago, but because of her talent and her dedication to the rule of law, she is rightfully taking her place on the bench today. Our courts will be better for it. I look forward to supporting her confirmation and urge my colleagues to vote in her favor.

INSULIN

Madam President, now on insulin, the exponential spike in the cost of insulin is one of the most unjust and widespread healthcare bad trends in the past few decades. This drug, discovered a century ago and which is exceedingly cheap to produce, has seen its price surge in recent years, sometimes far beyond \$300 for a month's supply. That is cruel. It is unjust. It causes anguish for so many, but it is also for so many a reality.

Senate Democrats took a major step toward basic fairness last year by capping the cost of insulin for people on Medicare at \$35 a month. Since Democrats took action, Big Pharma has taken note. Eli Lilly announced a few weeks ago that they, too, will be capping the cost of insulin for patients at \$35 a month as well as dramatically dropping the overall price. And just this week, Novo Nordisk also decided to drop their price in a similar manner.

So today I call on the third big drugmaker of insulin—Sanofi—to end their practice of keeping insulin prices at sky-high levels so that Americans can afford to pay for diabetes treatment without going broke.

I will be sending Sanofi a letter soon expressing my desire and Americans' strong desire for them to drop the price of insulin.

Lowering insulin costs for all patients is the right thing to do, and I hope Sanofi makes the correct decision to lower their prices very soon, just like Eli Lilly and Novo Nordisk have done.

All of us know somebody with diabetes. Put yourself in their shoes and imagine the sheer agony of struggling to afford this basic drug just so you can live a decent and healthy life, so you don't have to worry about going blind or maybe having a leg amputated—just so you can live at all. No American should have to go through that ever—ever—but too many do.

In the Senate, I hope both parties can build on the work last year to cap patient insulin costs at \$35 a month for everyone. We did it for Medicare. We can do it for everyone else. And we hope we can get that done on a bipartisan basis. Lowering insulin prices isn't a Democratic issue or a Republican issue; it is purely American. And I hope we can get something done. But today, the most immediate thing that can happen is for Sanofi to listen to the voices of millions of Americans and make the right choice to lower the price they charge for insulin for all patients.

ENERGY

Madam President, now, on energy, yesterday, Speaker McCARTHY and House Republicans rolled out a bipartisan, unserious, and dead-on-arrival so-called energy package they laughably labeled as H.R. 1.

It is not difficult to see that the Republican proposal is nothing more than a wish list for Big Oil, masquerading as an energy package.

No serious energy package would gut important environmental safeguards on fossil fuel projects while leaving out necessary permitting reforms needed to bring transmission and clean energy projects online.

Rather than prepare for the future, Republicans' Big Oil wish list would lock America into expensive, erratic, and dirty energy sources. The Republicans' so-called energy plan would set us back decades in our transition to clean, affordable energy. It shows the influence that Big Oil has on the Republican House caucus because it seems that this package was almost written by Big Oil.

So let me be clear. The House Republicans' so-called energy bill is dead on arrival in the Senate—dead on arrival. And I would say to my colleagues: We can still get something done. Fortunately, many Democrats and Republicans understand that we need bipartisanship in order to produce a real energy package. As we speak, there are talks happening in good faith about the possibilities of a permitting deal. I strongly—strongly—support both sides working together to arrive at a real energy bipartisan package, not the partisan wish list Republicans have introduced.

Any genuine energy package must include a permitting deal that will ease America's transition to clean energy while also ensuring that clean energy is reliable, accessible, and, most importantly, affordable.

Transmission is vital to getting clean energy from where it is produced to where people live, but the Republicans' H.R. 1 proposal completely ignores this issue, to its detriment and its demise.

Until Republicans recognize that permitting reform is an essential step toward laying the foundation for a clean energy future, no proposal or package they put forward will be taken seriously.

DRONES

Madam President, finally, on drones to air defense and Israel, yesterday, it was reported that Israel approved export licenses for anti-drone jamming systems that could help Ukraine counter Iranian drones used by Russia. They are doing terrible damage, often aimed brutally at civilians who don't have a military consequence.

During our code's recent visit to Israel, my eight colleagues and I pressed the Israeli Government to take action along these lines. We stressed that supporting Ukraine against Putin is essential for the security of all democracies. The decision by the Israeli Government to approve export licenses for anti-drone jamming systems is very good news.

I urge Israel to do more to help our friends in Ukraine. President Zelenskyy has repeatedly asked for air defense systems that can counter missile barrages Putin is sending into Ukraine. I believe it is critical that Israel respond to this request favorably.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, when the Constitution was written, there were some fundamental principles which were included, and one of them said that any declaration of war in the United States had to have the approval of the American people through their elected representatives in Congress. It was an awesome responsibility and an important one. I think it was the right responsibility given to the people through their elected representatives.

After World War II, there were several engagements by the American military without such declaration of war. Those were, of course, controversial and debated, but I am sure you recall and I do, too, October of the year 2002, when this Senate was called on, with the House of Representatives, to consider the invasion of Iraq and the authorization of use of military force for that purpose.

We may have forgotten by now, 20 years later, but I remember very vividly the fearsome national debate over whether this Nation, having been hit by 9/11, needed to invade Iraq.

The rationale was weapons of mass destruction were present in Iraq, threatening not only nations in the Middle East, which were our friends and allies, but even threatening the United States of America.

That threat, weapons of mass destruction, was beaten into our heads day after day. But many of us were skeptical, and the vote came on the floor of the Senate, I recall, in October of 2002. It happened late at night. And at the end of the day, there were 23 of us—1 Republican and 22 Democrats—who voted against that authorization for the use of military force in Iraq.

I look back on it, as I am sure others do, as one of the most important votes