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## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray. God of love, whose Spirit is known by those with thankful hearts and who makes cheerfulness a companion of strength, lift our hearts to a joyous confidence in Your care. Lord, give us opportunities to tell of all the marvelous things You have done in our Nation's history, as we seek to glorify Your Name.

Lord, guide and protect our lawmakers. Teach them to find and trust You as they grow in grace and in a knowledge of Your providential leading. Remind them that when they feel overwhelmed, You stand behind the dim unknown to deliver them from doubt. May they claim Your promise to provide them with mercy and grace to help them in their time of need.

We pray in Your sovereign 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, March 11, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,  
President pro tempore.

Ms. DUCKWORTH 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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Jasmine Hyejung Yoon, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Virginia.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on Friday, the Senate completed its work on annual appropriations for six major areas of the Federal Govern-

ment: agriculture and rural development; commerce, justice, and science; energy and water development; interior and environment; military construction, veterans' affairs; and transportation, housing, and urban development.

The Senate's vote was a major milestone in a process our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee began the better part of a year ago. Thanks to Senator COLLINS and Senator MURRAY's commitment to operating in good faith and adhering as much as possible to regular order, a significant portion of the Federal Government's discretionary budget is complete.

As I mentioned last week, the agreement before the Senate includes a number of conservative accomplishments that Vice Chair COLLINS fought for upfront. I am especially pleased that it will advance priorities near and dear to the hearts of my fellow Kentuckians—from rural transportation to military readiness to stopping the flow of illegal drugs.

I am proud to represent three military installations in Kentucky that are vital to America's national defense strategy. And the bill the Senate passed last week will fund critical construction projects at each of them. It green-lights the construction of top-of-the-line training and operational capabilities at Fort Knox and Fort Campbell, both home to a number of our Nation's most storied Army units. And it resurrects resources from a National Guard training range in Greenville, KY, a long-overdue project that has fallen by the wayside for nearly two decades.

Hundreds of millions of dollars will also go toward helping rural Kentuckians and the rest of Middle America: urgent funding to overhaul aging roads, bridges, and river ports that hold back Main Street; investments for clean, reliable water infrastructure; funds to continue environmental clean-up efforts in Paducah; and resources to

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



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expand broadband access to every corner of the Commonwealth. It also empowers law enforcement with new resources to combat the opioid crisis that has devastated my home State and remains a top killer of young Kentuckians.

So I was glad the Senate finished the job on a major portion of our government funding responsibilities, and I was especially proud to deliver on some of my fellow Kentuckians' top priorities.

#### SWEDEN

Madam President, on another matter, last week, I was proud to welcome the Prime Minister of Sweden to the Capitol on a historic day in his Nation's history and a great day for America and fellow members of the transatlantic alliance.

Earlier today, the flag of Sweden was raised over NATO headquarters for the first time. Sweden is our newest NATO ally, and the Prime Minister's visit to Washington marked the culmination of a process that began more than 2 years ago. As Russian forces amassed on Ukraine's border in the winter of 2022, Putin's aggressive ambitions clarified the thinking of some of Europe's strongest security partners.

From outside NATO, Sweden and Finland had already built advanced economies, capable militaries, and impressive defense industries. But in the face of an axis of revisionist powers, our Nordic friends decided it was time to cast their lot with the most successful military alliance in history.

Their path to accession is a clarifying reminder that NATO has always been a defensive alliance. Its members first undertook the responsibility of collective security to defending against growing Soviet aggression. Central and Eastern European members pursued membership after the fall of the Iron Curtain to protect their newly reclaimed sovereignty and democracy.

NATO's expansion has always been linked to the threat posed by outside forces; and today, it is no different. I have been proud to walk with our newest allies at every stop of the process. I will never forget standing with them 2 years ago in Stockholm and in Helsinki on the very day the Swedish and Finnish Parliaments voted overwhelmingly to launch their NATO axis bills.

Russia's escalation in Ukraine has unified Swedish and Finnish leaders. In both countries, strong support for NATO and a willingness to share the burden of collective defense literally transcends party lines.

Today, America's newest treaty allies are poised to make significant, immediate contributions to the transatlantic alliance. With highly trained forces equipped with cutting-edge capabilities, their commitment to NATO is a tremendous vote of confidence in the enduring importance of collective defense.

With Sweden and Finland in our ranks, the West stands even more united against autocrats with imperial

designs. With two new frontline allies, America's interests are more secure.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

Madam President, on another matter, this week, the Senate will get yet another chance to put the emergency brakes on a particularly harmful piece of the Biden administration's Federal regulatory state.

The Federal Highway Administration finalized a rule late last year that would force States and local planning agencies to set declining greenhouse gas emissions targets and require them to meet those targets. The idea is to make the entire country build its infrastructure the way the bluest coastal cities, like San Francisco, do. Subway stops, electrical vehicle chargers, and bike lanes in rural places like North Dakota? It is a one-size-fits-all mandate. In other words, it forces Middle America to say goodbye to urgent projects on the sort of transportation infrastructure that actually makes sense for them.

What is more, FHWA lacks the authority to implement this rule. Congress explicitly debated and rejected language to authorize this type of target during the lead-up to the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

So I am very grateful to my colleague Senator CRAMER for taking the lead on this CRA, and I would urge all of our colleagues to support him on the floor this week.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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.

#### COMMUNICATION OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate a communication from the Secretary of the Senate regarding a message from the President received during the adjournment of the Senate.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Dear Madam President, on Saturday, March 9, 2024, the President of the United States sent by messenger the attached sealed envelope addressed to the President of the Senate dated March 9, 2024, said to contain a message regarding the designation of funding as an emergency requirement in H.R. 4366, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024. The Senate not being in session on the day which the President delivered this message, I accepted the message at 12:05 p.m., and I now present to you the President's message, with the accompanying papers, for disposition by the Senate. Respectfully,  
Sonceria A. Berry, Secretary of the Senate.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

##### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

##### PRESIDENT BIDEN'S BUDGET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today, President Biden released his budget for fiscal year 2025. President Biden's budget can be summarized in three words: bold, optimistic, responsible.

President Biden's budget highlights the sharp contrast between the Democrats' positive, proactive vision and the Republicans' negative, regressive vision for our country.

Democrats are focused on growing the economy in a responsible way, while making smart investments in the American people and our future. That is why a centerpiece of President Biden's budget focuses on creating opportunity for working Americans by ending the reckless Trump-era tax scam, which overwhelmingly cut taxes for the wealthiest few and large corporations and added trillions to the national debt.

It was recently confirmed that the Republican tax law did not pay for itself, as we heard over and over again from our Republican colleagues. Democrats know that we can and must do better.

As the President pointed out during his State of the Union Address last week, a fair Tax Code is how we can better invest in things like healthcare, education, and economic opportunity for more Americans. President Trump's tax scam proved everything but fair. It rewarded the wealthy and well-connected, while leaving working families with the tab.

Time has shown that this tax scam was a dud for our economy and a political loser for the Republican Party because the American people saw it for what it was.

Republicans also talk a big game about lowering the deficit, but President Biden's budget actually proposes measures to do it. It proposes measures to reduce the deficit by nearly \$3 trillion over the next decade.

That budget will help improve the solvency of vital programs like Medicare and Social Security, which tens of millions of Americans rely on every single day.

It will reinstate the child tax credit we passed in the American Rescue Plan, which greatly reduced child poverty before expiring.

That is not all. President Biden's budget builds on the progress Democrats have made to help grow America from the middle out and the bottom up. From the infrastructure law, to the CHIPS and Science Act, to the Inflation Reduction Act, to the PACT Act, and more, Democrats made a lot of good investments that are already paying off for the American people. Inflation is cooling down. Manufacturing is surging. Consumer sentiment is growing. The cost of insulin and other drugs