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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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Pastor Adam Weber, of Embrace Church, from Sioux Falls, SD.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious Lord, we thank You for this day. Help us to not take this day or any day for granted.

Thank You for the breath in our lungs. Thank You for hearing our voice when we cry out, for hearing our voice when we ask for Your wisdom. Today, I lift up the Senate body to You. Would You fill them with Your love, Your joy, Your peace, Your grace, and Your truth. Fill them with Your wisdom which starts and ends with You, O Lord. Would You guide and lead and direct them. Help their thoughts, their conversations, and their decisions today to be pleasing to You.

I am so grateful that You are all-powerful Lord, and we are mere instruments in Your hands. Today, we dedicate this day, our country, and our lives to You, and we pray this in Your holy and 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, May 23, 2024.

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.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, let me just say a word of welcome today to Pastor Adam Weber. You heard him offer the opening prayer today. I am very privileged to have him here, and Adam is someone whose family I have known for a long time. I sort of watched him grow up, if you will. He is a Milbank, SD, native, a graduate of Augustana College, and at the young age of 24, started a church called Embrace Church in Sioux Falls, SD. And at that time, I think their first service had 32 people.

His office was a Chevy Cavalier, and a decade later, it was one of the fastest growing churches, literally, in this entire country. They have continued to grow through the years and they will do it the same way they always have and that is one person at a time.

Embrace's heart is to relentlessly reach the next person for Jesus. It is something that Adam lives out. He seeks out strangers. He goes for what he calls "nonfluff" conversations, and he reaches people, lots and lots of people, with the good news of the Gospel.

And I have had the opportunity to attend services at Embrace along with my wife. Adam also has a podcast

which reaches literally thousands and thousands of people that I have listened to.

He interviews people from all walks of life and talks to them about their spiritual formation, and it is very meaningful to his listeners and certainly has been important in my life, too, as we try to apply the truth of the Scriptures at a time when we face enormous challenges as a country and in a lot of our communities across the country.

So I am delighted to have Adam here, thankful for his ministry, and grateful to Chaplain Black for making it possible for him to be Chaplain for the day. And I would tell my colleagues what I have said many times before, and that is that we do have a Bible study the Chaplain leads on a weekly basis, Thursday at noon, and encourage all of my colleagues to attend.

It has been enormously important to me through the years in keeping me anchored and grounded on the solid rock at times when things can be very uncertain and sometimes tumultuous around us. So I am grateful for the Chaplain for his leadership here and delighted to have Pastor Adam Weber from Sioux Falls, SD, and Embrace Church with us here today in the U.S. Senate.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

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



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LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BORDER ACT OF 2024—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 397, S. 4361.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 397, S. 4361, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for border security and combatting fentanyl for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

BORDER ACT OF 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first let me add my greetings to our Chaplain from South Dakota and welcome him under JOHN THUNE's auspices. So welcome, Pastor. Pastor, welcome.

Three months ago, something truly stunning happened here on the Senate floor. Senate Republicans filibustered the strongest, most comprehensive border security bill Congress has seen in a generation. And they did it because Donald Trump wanted to exploit the border for political gain on the campaign trail.

Well, today, we are going to try again. We will vote to move forward on a border security bill that Democrats and Republicans spent months on together. I hope our Republican colleagues join us to reach a different outcome.

We all know the situation at the border is unacceptable and demands attention from Congress. Democrats believe that, our Republicans have been saying it, and that is why 3 months ago we sat down with them to write a strong and necessary and bipartisan border security bill.

Poll after poll shows that a large majority of Americans across party lines support our position of getting a bipartisan bill done, and only 8 percent are in opposition.

When Republicans like Donald Trump say: Don't support a bipartisan bill, wait till next year, they are in a distinct minority with the American people from one end of the country to the other.

People want us to get things done. People want us to come together. And when they hear that the only reason Republicans backed away from this bill is not that it wasn't strong enough but that Donald Trump said he wanted chaos at the border, they don't like that.

This is our bill. The public is on the same page, and in polling data, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents are all on the same page: act on a bipartisan bill; get something done; don't play political games.

And this is a bill that will hire thousands of new border agents, a bill that will finally reform asylum, a bill that will commit billions to stop the flow of

fentanyl, a bill endorsed by the National Border Patrol Union, the Chamber of Commerce, and the very conservative Wall Street editorial page.

So to my Republican colleagues, you wanted this border bill. Today, we vote on this border bill, and it is time to show you are serious about solving the problem.

Look, I understand that today's bill is not going to win every single Democratic vote or every single Republican vote. That was never the goal of this bill. The goal was rather to come up with something that could get 60 votes, a majority on both sides of the aisle. That is how it was crafted.

And it is far different than what the Republicans have done. Look at what happened to H.R. 2. It didn't get a single Democratic vote here in the Senate. It did not even get the support of every Senate Republican.

If anything is political theater, it is H.R. 2. It is not designed to solve the problem. It is designed to make a political point. The bill we are bringing up was designed to solve the problem. And Republicans and Democrats labored together in good faith to get that done, and it would have gotten done had Donald Trump not said: I don't want this done. Blame it on me. I want chaos at the border so I can win reelection.

That is not what the American people want, as I mentioned. The polling data is clearly on our side.

The bipartisan border bill is something so different than H.R. 2 because it is a serious attempt at legislation that Republicans helped put together.

Now, people might forget, but there was actually a lot of bipartisan interest in getting this bill passed before Donald Trump killed the bill and told the country, "Please blame it on me." That is what he said, blame it on him.

My friend the Republican leader openly admitted that "it's actually our side that wanted to tackle the border issue. We started it." That is what Leader MCCONNELL said.

My friend, the Senator from Texas, similarly said: "It makes no sense to me for us to do nothing when we might be able to do things better."

That is just what we are doing today, I would say to my friend the Senator from Texas.

A few weeks before our bill was released, our colleague from Iowa warned:

We stand the risk of losing the chance to actually get something done on the border now, because I don't see this opportunity coming up again any time soon.

Again, that is what we are doing, just what our Republican Senators asked us to do for months. And I would be remiss not to include the good observation of my friend from South Carolina.

He said:

H.R. 2 was unable to get any Democratic support in the House; we lost one Republican in the Senate. So to the conservative world: you have a unique opportunity to get border security reform.

And he added:

This moment will pass. Do not let it pass.

I can't say it any better. And what they said then is perfectly applicable now. What made them change when they had such conviction that we had to get something done in a strong bipartisan way? One thing. Donald Trump said turn around, reverse yourself, 180-degree reversal, and they did.

The words I have mentioned are not the words of Senators who think this was all political theater. They sound like the words of Senators who were hoping to get something done. But as I mentioned, it wasn't until after Donald Trump swooped in that they changed their tune.

So we are going to try again today. I hope Republicans join us on today's vote to reach a different outcome than the one in March. If Republicans were truly serious about calling the situation at the border an emergency, they shouldn't delay any longer. You can't call something an emergency one day and then suddenly kick the can down the road the next day.

Let me finish with this: America is proud of its immigrant tradition. We always have been—and always will be—a nation comprised of people who come from across the world looking for an opportunity here in this country, knowing that there is no place better than America. If you work hard, you can provide a good life for yourself and your family. That is what has importuned people for generations. We should never let go of that.

We must always work to give people more opportunity to come here to treat them humanely and embrace people who want to contribute to our economy. There is nothing more American than that.

Immigration has been one of the great causes of mine since my earliest days in the Senate. Over 10 years ago as part of the bipartisan Gang of 8—led by myself and my late friend, the late John McCain—that wrote comprehensive immigration reform.

We passed that historic bill because both sides were able to work together. The lesson of that bill is—passed the Senate with 68 or 69 votes bipartisan—we can only do these things in a bipartisan way, only.

So today, knowing that lesson, we need to try and work again together. We know our Nation is stronger because of immigration. We know that the status quo at the southern border is unacceptable, the results of decades of neglect going back administrations on both sides. So to all those who said for years we must act on the border, this is the chance to show you are serious about fixing the problem.

This is our chance to show the American people that we are willing to reach across the aisle and work to solve one of the most vexing problems that affects our country and what the public overwhelmingly wants in poll after poll.

I urge my colleagues on both sides to join us in moving forward today. A