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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, who rules the raging of the sea in a world facing hurt and pain, help us also to see the beauty of Your creative power. Enable the Members of this body to sense the transcendence in the beauty of the Earth and the glory of the skies.

Lord, help our Senators to hear Your music in the symphony of the seasons, in the whispering of the wind, and in the constellations of the night. May the sounds of nature's music lead our lawmakers to place greater trust in the movement of Your prevailing providence.

Lord, give them spiritual power so that they will do your will on Earth even as it is done in Heaven.

We pray in Your powerful 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, September 25, 2024.

To the Senate:

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

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH 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 resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Byron B. Conway, of Wisconsin, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

FILIBUSTER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, "I am prepared to get rid of the filibuster to pass a Green New Deal."

"I think we should eliminate the filibuster for Roe."

These are the words of the Vice President of the United States and the Democratic nominee for President.

Her willingness to shatter the institution of the Senate is not unique. Nearly every single one of our Democratic colleagues was willing to do it 2 years ago, and they would have succeeded had two Members of their own caucus not stood in breach.

Nor is this campaign to rip up precious safeguards for political minorities confined here to the Senate. From a sitting President all the way down to grassroots activists, Democrats have made smashing institutions a core pillar of their party's platform.

The Vice President's latest comments are not novel, but they are shocking, no less so than the votes our colleagues cast here on January 19, 2022. There is nothing normal or rational about blowing up the dam holding back simple majority rule, and the fact that a major political party has welcomed this shortsighted radicalism into the mainstream will be to their eternal shame.

To lean on today's "fill in the blank" justification is to miss entirely what is at stake. The Senate's protections against the vacillations of simple majority rule are bigger than Washington Democrats' policy preferences. They are bigger than my own. A Senate that can steamroll a legislative minority to codify *Roe v. Wade* or enshrine the lunacy of the Green New Deal into law is a Senate that will drive a stake through liberal hopes as soon as the political winds change.

To gamble the guardrails that make the Senate what it is—to short-circuit the process by which dissenting views are guaranteed a hearing—ought to be disqualifying by itself. Then again, so should the Vice President's record on these issues. In November, the Democratic nominee will own the worst border crisis in American history and the broken policies that invited it. She will own the worst inflation in 40 years and the reckless spending and tie-breaking votes that enabled it.

The American people may well worry, like I do, about the future of an

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



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institution designed to be the world's greatest deliberative body, but, more than that, they worry about keeping their families safe and putting food on the table, and I expect they will vote accordingly.

CHINA

Mr. President, on another matter, I have spoken frequently about the welcome signs that America's European allies are waking up to the strategic challenge posed by the PRC and to the dangers of predatory Chinese influence in their own backyards.

Like America, our allies are watching the flaws of the Chinese statist economic model laid bare. They are increasingly wary to hitch their wagons to a totalitarian system that stifles innovation, discourages free thought, and complicates free enterprise.

They are hesitant to take risks in a system where the rule of law is trampled by the whims of the State and assets are subject to expropriation by the regime.

Encouraging progress, like a German security strategy that explicitly recognizes the Chinese threat, and efforts across the EU to reduce reliance on Chinese technologies, presents opportunities for the West to work closer together to secure supply chains and to lower barriers to cooperation among allies.

Unfortunately, this progress is not across-the-board. China may not be a safe business partner, but it is still an enticing one for far too many in economies, including, believe it or not, within the NATO alliance.

I have spoken before about Hungary's decade-long drift into the orbit of the West's most determined adversaries. It is an alarming trend. And nobody—certainly not the American conservatives who increasingly form a cult of personality around Prime Minister Viktor Orban—can pretend not to see it. Hungary's leaders are cozying up to Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran in private. They are doing it publicly and vocally as well.

The Orban government has welcomed China's view of a "European bridgehead" in Hungary as the perfect complement to its own declared policy of an "opening to the East," and it hasn't been shy about turning words into actions.

When Chinese state enterprise has said jump, Hungarian officials have asked, how high?

As European allies began to heed warnings from the Trump administration to reduce reliance on Chinese industry and technology, Budapest repeatedly blocked EU progress and welcomed a geyser—a literal geyser—of the Chinese Belt and Road investment. Included in the torrent of PRC influence was 500 million euros from a Chinese electric vehicle manufacturer to build a new facility on Hungarian soil and another 7 billion euro investment in a new EV battery plant.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister of a former vassal of Russian communism

has nothing but praise for the neo-Soviet imperialist responsible for the first major land war in Europe since 1945.

Viktor Orban describes the regime that has sacrificed tens, if not hundreds of thousands, of Russian lives and more than \$200 billion in military force for its unprovoked—and thus far unsuccessful—aggression against Ukraine as "hyper-rational." But this NATO Prime Minister doesn't just admire Putin, he helps him. His government runs interference for Moscow, gumming up European and trans-Atlantic efforts to combat Russia's unlawful aggression at every turn.

European allies are providing more assistance to Ukraine than the United States is, but Americans who complain the EU isn't doing more to help Ukraine should look no further than to Budapest's efforts to block additional EU assistance for the answer.

Then there is Budapest's relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hungary's Foreign Minister has bemoaned that ongoing international sanctions make it "really challenging to build effective economic and trade cooperation" with the world's most active state sponsor of terror.

I have little sympathy for Hungarian companies that struggle to profit from their ties to the genocidal regime in Tehran. Of course, that hasn't stopped Hungarian firms from committing tens of millions of dollars to financing joint nuclear projects with Iran.

It didn't stop a national Hungarian university from inviting a former Iranian President to a conference on—listen to this—"common values in the global environment."

"Common values" with Tehran? And here I thought it was American conservatives who claimed shared values with Hungary's ruling party. Has the Orban government forgotten its adoring fans on this side of the Atlantic?

No, Hungary's leaders have made no secret of their conviction that the future is one of American decline. The future is one of American decline—that is the Hungarian view. They are not hiding the ways they are preparing for American weakness and betting on our failure.

There is nothing tough about bowing to autocrats, and there is nothing for American leaders to gain by praising those who do. Subservience to revanchist powers is not an American value. But far more importantly, it is not in America's interests.

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. SCHUMER. 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have good news this morning. Before the day is done, the Senate will pass a temporary extension of government funding, avoiding a painful and unnecessary shutdown next week. The agreement we locked in last night allows for no poison pill amendments.

Americans can breathe easy that because both sides have chosen bipartisanship, Congress is getting the job done. We will keep the government open. We will prevent vital government services from needlessly coming to a halt. We will give appropriators more time to fully fund the government before the end of the year. And I am especially pleased we are getting the job done with some time to spare.

Now, none of this would have happened without bipartisan cooperation.

For the information of my colleagues, later today, the House is expected to take up the CR and pass it on suspension. Once the Senate receives the House bill, we will immediately move to its consideration. We hope to vote early this evening, with final passage set at 60 votes. So if all goes well in the House, the Senate should be sending President Biden a bill before the end of today.

This is a good outcome for the country. There will be no shutdown because, finally, at the end of the day, our colleagues in the House decided to work with us.

So thank you to my colleagues on both sides for their work. We aren't quite done, but we are now on a clear glidepath to getting the CR across the finish line.

I hope the House will have learned its lesson that, once again, listening to the hard right on these vital issues, funding the government, avoiding default, cannot lead to anything that is useful or constructive. In fact, I hope this positive outcome of bipartisanship can set the tone for more constructive bipartisan work when we return in the fall.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. President, now on the Senate session, a little over a month from now, the American people will exercise the most precious right that could ever exist in a free society. I will not get into the back-and-forth of campaigns here on the Senate floor, but as we prepare to depart for October, let us take a moment to look back at the work of the Senate these last few months and these last few years—last 2 years.

We had lots of obstacles to getting things done this year. The Republican House was replete with disarray throughout the last 2 years, almost paralyzed. And there was much Republican intransigence in both Houses on issue after issue that prevented many good proposals from moving forward, despite our offers for compromise. Despite that, there is still a good amount we have gotten done.

First, Senate Democrats continue to bring balance back to the Federal