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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.

Ever-loving and eternal God, a source of the light that never dims and of the love that never fails, draw near to us today. Lord, we know not what the future holds, but You do. We rejoice that You hear and answer prayers as we watch the unfolding of Your prevailing providence. Lord, continue to be the sustaining presence in all of our tomorrows, bringing us to the destination of Your choosing. Today, use our law-makers for Your glory. Strengthen them in all goodness that they may experience the joy of your Eternal Presence.

We pray in Your merciful 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, November 14, 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.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Cathy Fung, of California, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court for a term of fifteen years.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, our Republican colleagues officially decided who will lead their conference beginning in the new year.

Once again, I congratulate Senator THUNE on being chosen by his colleagues as the next Republican leader.

I have served with Senator THUNE in this Chamber for many years, and I am glad to say we have found common

ground on a number of different issues, including veterans' assistance, strengthening our national security, and more recently the Kids Online Safety bill, among other bills.

We have gotten along well and worked together in the past. I look forward to finding ways to work together in the future. We will have our differences for sure, and we will make those differences known on a regular basis here on the Senate floor, but my friend from South Dakota can rest assured our side of the aisle will always seek to work in good faith and seek common ground whenever possible. But if the Senate is to be successful in the years to come, if we are to continue to be productive and effective in representing the American people as well as we have over the past 4 years, there are a few things the new Republican majority should not forget. Hopefully, they won't.

Most importantly, Senate Republicans should continue to prioritize bipartisanship when they enter into the majority next year. On my first day as majority leader, I pledged to make bipartisanship a key part of how the Senate does its business. I said then—I have said it many times since—the Senate works best when both sides work together. Four years later, Democrats have not only kept our promise, but we have proven that bipartisanship can work in very significant ways. This majority was the most productive majority the Senate has had in decades, but that could not have happened had we not made the conscious choice to reach across the aisle.

It was bipartisanship that cleared the way for the biggest infrastructure bill in a generation. It was bipartisanship that got the CHIPS and Science bill done and now hundreds of thousands of jobs are returning to the United States and we are making those chips here.

It was bipartisanship that held the line against Putin and defended Ukraine.

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



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It was bipartisanship that made sure we saw zero government shutdowns under this administration. The list goes on: marriage equality, the first gun safety bill in decades, Kids Online Safety. All of these accomplishments were possible because Democrats were willing to work with the other side.

We still have work to do in this Chamber before the year is out, but I am proud of the record we have built over the last 4 years, one that we accomplished by reaching across the aisle whenever the chance presented itself.

I earnestly hope the next few years are as fruitful and collaborative as the last four. I earnestly hope bipartisanship continues because that is the only way we will be successful in the Senate, but that will be up to Senate Republicans to decide for themselves.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, now on Senate business, there is much the Senate has yet to accomplish before the end of the year. It will be a busy time.

Government funding is scheduled to run out on December 20. Both sides must work together to prevent a shutdown before then. Nobody wants to hear the words “Christmastime shutdown” a few weeks from now. I can’t think of something the American people would want less during the holidays. Just as we have done repeatedly over the past couple of years, both sides must compromise and work together to make sure the government remains funded.

We also need to pass the National Defense Authorization Act—the NDAA—to provide for our troops and hold the line against America’s adversaries. I hope our Republican colleagues work with us to advance key policies to outcompete the Chinese Communist Party and secure America’s leadership on some of the most cutting-edge technologies of our time, from AI to innovations in biotech and quantum computing and more. We have gotten the NDAA done over the last six decades without fail, and we must do it again this year.

Another issue that requires our attention is disaster aid funding, to support communities across the country in times of disaster. No State or community is immune from disaster. We have seen that over the last few years—from hurricanes in Florida and wildfires in Hawaii, floods in the Northeast, droughts on the west coast, and everywhere in between. If we want to help these communities recover and rebuild after disasters, we must pass comprehensive, robust funding that leverages all programs across the Federal Government to help our communities in need.

It has been a hallmark of America that when one of the regions of our country, one of the parts of our country—the towns, the villages, the counties, the States—have had real trouble because the hand of God, through weather and disaster, has affected them, the whole country rallies to

their side. That has been a tradition. A few haven’t abided by it on instances on the other side, but it is a tradition we must keep, and, hopefully, we can move forward on disaster aid.

We also need to make progress on the farm bill, and I commend Chair STABENOW for her bipartisan work on this matter. Democrats are serious about getting a farm bill done, one that represents the needs of everyone, from farmers and ranchers to hungry Americans.

Finally, as we continue to work through these matters, the Senate continues to make progress on confirming President Biden’s highly qualified nominees. Today, the Senate will confirm another judge on the U.S. Tax Court and the Director of the Office of Government Ethics, and we will advance Embry Kidd’s nomination for circuit court judge for the 11th Circuit.

So, Mr. President, we have a lot of work to do on several fronts, but I am encouraged, so far, by the cooperation on both sides.

I yield the floor.

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. MCCONNELL. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

INSTITUTIONAL THANKS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yesterday, Senate Republicans elected leaders to steer our incoming majority through the 119th Congress. Senator THUNE, Senator BARRASSO, Senator COTTON, Senator CAPITO, Senator LANKFORD, and Senator TIM SCOTT have earned the trust and support of their colleagues.

I would like to congratulate each of them and reiterate that the entire Republican conference stands united and ready to tackle the important work of the country.

As I have said before, I am very much looking forward to taking on this next chapter from a different seat here on the floor. But before the year is out, I would like to continue thanking the many individuals and teams who have served this institution so well during my time as Republican leader.

I have had the privilege of working with consummate experts and relying on the professionalism of so many unsung heroes.

Take the Office of the Sergeant at Arms. Under the leadership of a distinguished career Army officer, Karen Gibson, and with the deep bicameral experience of senior staff like Jennifer Hemingway, the SAA shoulders enormous responsibilities—from the day-to-day security procedures to telecommunications infrastructure.

I am particularly grateful to the staffs of the Protocol Office, whose

work helps us navigate the most solemn and visible occasions; the Chief Information Office, telecom, and the Help Desk, who keep essential communications and technology across the Senate running smoothly; Capitol facilities, including Gary “Tiny” Richardson, who clean and maintain this magnificent building and the campus around it with unfailing care; the Employee Assistance Program, who help dedicated public servants around the Senate access important resources; the doorkeepers and Press Gallery, who carefully control access to this Chamber and make constituents feel welcome here in the Gallery; the Appointment Desk, who greet and direct a steady stream of distinguished individuals—in particular Patty Reilly, who has made a habit of sharing a daily word of motivation with my chief of staff; the Senate Recording Studio and Photo Studio, who capture the Senate for posterity; the Office of Printing, Graphics, and Direct Mail and State office operations, who put Senate business within reach for the American people; and the Office of Security, Emergency Preparedness, and Continuity, whose careful attention, training, and planning ensure that the Senate is able to discharge its constitutional duties even under the most trying circumstances.

So to everyone whose work under the Sergeant at Arms keeps the Senate safe and operating smoothly, thank you very much.

Now, every day, my team also relies on the work of several more teams working under the leadership of the Secretary of the Senate, Ann Berry, and her professional staff, like Sydney Butler. Stretching from here on the floor to outposts across the Senate campus, the Secretary’s Office is involved in a dizzying array of critical operations.

I would like to thank the staffs of the Senate Library, who collect and maintain a rich archive of institutional knowledge and help Senators and staff tap into it; the Senate Historical Office, the Office of the Senate Curator, and the Office of Conservation and Preservation—including the frame shop—who dedicate deep expertise to understanding the Senate’s history and maintaining its home here in the Capitol for posterity; the Office of Senate Security, who maintain our ability to conduct oversight and address highly sensitive matters of national security here in the Capitol; the Office of Interparliamentary Services—particularly Sally Walsh—who support Senate delegations and conferences overall; the Office of Printing and Document Services, the Daily Digest, and the Office of the Official Reporters of Debate, who carefully transcribe, format, and preserve Senate proceedings, and the Office of Captioning Services who make them accessible to all Americans; the Stationery Room and the Senate Gift Shop, who keep every office supply closet well-stocked and offer mementos for every occasion; the Disbursing Office, who diligently process all Senate