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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable MARK KELLY, a Senator from the State of Arizona.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal, unchanging God, You are our rock, our fortress, and our stronghold. Empower our lawmakers to change in ways that will render them more faithful to Your will and more responsive to Your call. May they develop such moral and ethical fitness that they will clearly comprehend Your desires and be eager to do Your will.

Lord, as they grow in grace and in knowledge of You, deliver them from the bonds of fear as You turn their spirits toward the light of Your presence. May the knowledge of Your blessings to our Nation and world bring us all to a deeper commitment to You.

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 executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 3, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MARK KELLY, a Senator from the State of Arizona, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. KELLY 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 executive clerk read the nomination of Anthony J. Brindisi, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of New York.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning, the Senate Democratic caucus held leadership elections for the 119th Congress.

I am grateful, I am honored, I am humbled that my colleagues have again unanimously elected me to serve as their Democratic leader.

To my Democratic colleagues: Thank you for this opportunity. Thank you for extending to me your trust.

Serving as Democratic leader has been one of the greatest honors of my time in public office, as has been representing the people of New York. It has allowed me to learn more from my colleagues than I could have possibly dreamed of when I first took this job. And after 4 years of the most productive and consequential years the Senate has had in decades, it has galvanized my faith in this Chamber's ability to get big things done for the country because, wow, we got a lot done, even in times of division, especially when bipartisanship prevails, as it did with so many of our bills. Most of the major bills we passed were done in a bipartisan way.

Anyone who thinks in this Chamber that we should abandon bipartisanship is making a huge mistake. Whether it is CHIPS and Science or infrastructure or gun safety or helping the veterans, gay marriage—you name it—we did it in a bipartisan way.

I pledge to dedicate every ounce of my strength and focus and wit—however much I have of that—to keep serving as leader dutifully the years ahead to help our caucus better serve the American people.

I want to say, Mr. President, that I love my caucus. They are just such a beautiful group of people. We don't all agree—from different parts of the country, different ages and philosophies and backgrounds—but every one of my caucus Members loves his or her country. Every one of them has made huge sacrifices to be here. And every one of them strives for unity, and it is one of the reasons we have been so successful in my last 4 years as majority leader, because our caucus has been great.

I sent a little message to every Member of my caucus on Thanksgiving Day that I am thankful for them. It is a great group.

Congratulations, of course, to my fellow Democrats elected to serve on our caucus's leadership, as well. You can't do it all alone, and I am glad to count

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



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the Members of our leadership team—every Member of my caucus—as a friend, in addition to being your faithful colleague.

I would also like to thank our dear friend Senator PATTY MURRAY, who for the last 2 years has served this Chamber and served the American people faithfully as President pro tempore of the Senate.

Everyone here knows no Senator can get through the day or even through the hour without incredible staff. I have an amazing staff led by Mike Lynch, who has been with me since I just about started leading our team in Washington, and Martin Brennan, who has also been with me since I just about started in New York. What an amazing group of dedicated people. I am blessed, truly blessed to have such a great staff. I thank them, each and every one for their dedication, their brilliance, their unflinching faith in our democracy.

I wish to thank all of the staff across the Senate who do our caucus's work. You are the unsung heroes of our democracy. Every one of our staffers labors hard. Just about everyone could go out and make more money, but they are dedicated to making this country a better place, to helping the working people of America. We are lucky and blessed to have such a great staff.

I want to send a particular thanks to the Senate floor staff. We weren't able to get this much done without them, particularly Gary Myrick and the miracle workers in the Cloakroom who make this Chamber come to life, as well as the members at the front desk. Thank you all.

We have more work to do in this Chamber before the year is out, and we will have to hit the ground running when 2025 arrives. The challenges of our country remain great. Our divisions still run very deep, but our task in this Chamber cannot and will not change. We are sent here to make life better for the American people. So thank you to all of my colleagues. Let the work continue.

TRIBUTE TO LAPHONZA R. BUTLER

Mr. President, we are bidding farewell today to two of our Members on the Democrat side who will give speeches of farewell.

Later this afternoon, our colleague from California, Senator LAPHONZA BUTLER, will deliver her farewell address here on the Senate floor. Before she speaks, I want to share a few words about her time in the Senate.

When our late colleague Senator Feinstein passed away over a little over a year ago, I remember wondering to myself how anyone could ever follow in Dianne's footsteps. To follow Dianne, I knew it would take someone really special, someone really smart, really honorable, someone who always stepped up to the plate. It would take someone like LAPHONZA BUTLER.

Senator BUTLER wasn't out looking for this job. She didn't campaign for it. But it came to her doorstep; and when

asked to serve, she answered with great humility and a great sense of service and belief in America.

She followed her innate calling for service, which she learned while watching her mom work multiple jobs to keep their family above water. For the last year, she represented her beloved California—a huge complicated and beautiful State—admirably.

There is a general assumption around here that if you want to make a real difference in Washington, you have to spend years—sometimes people say even decades—learning the ropes and rising through the ranks. Well, Senator BUTLER sure turned that myth on its head. She proved that it isn't about how long you are here. It is about what you choose to do with the time you are here. And Senator BUTLER did a lot.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, Senator BUTLER has helped advance and confirm one of the most well-qualified and diverse classes of judicial nominees in recent history.

She has been a champion for women and women's rights. She co-led legislation to restore the rights enshrined under *Roe v. Wade*.

She has done great work to bring our workforce up to speed in the age of artificial intelligence.

She has introduced legislation to provide more opportunity to farmers and small business owners, to help parents and families and caregivers address the mental health and substance abuse crisis, to increase civic participation among young voters, and so much more.

The bottom line is that Senator BUTLER did practically everything in her time in the Senate. She did it in only 1 year, and she was always ready to serve. When I had a tough job or even a job that wasn't very glamorous but would take some time and effort, Senator BUTLER always said yes. She wasn't one of these people just looking out for herself. She was looking out for the greater good in a beautiful way.

And, of course, as well, Senator BUTLER, much like her predecessor, was a historymaker, too. When she was sworn in a year ago, she became only the third Black woman in American history to serve in the Senate, the first openly lesbian Senator from California, and the first openly LGBTQ Senator of color.

And, finally, while I say reluctantly as a New Yorker, Senator BUTLER's year in the Senate concludes with one of the greatest accomplishments a Senator can achieve: one of her home State teams winning the World Series.

So, Senator BUTLER, thanks for all you have done. Thank you just for being you—such a decent, wonderful, honorable person. And the people of California and all of America are certainly proud of you and grateful for your service, too.

TRIBUTE TO JOE MANCHIN III

Mr. President, this afternoon another dear colleague of ours will give his farewell address, Senator JOE MANCHIN

of West Virginia. It fills me with great pleasure and a little sadness to say a few words in his honor.

Every now and then, you get to work with someone who reminds us that politics, just like practically all other pursuits in life, is deceptively simple. It is about relationships, about strong partnerships, about strong beliefs, and it takes having good friends in this place to get difficult things done.

Today, I wish to pay tribute to a very dear friend, one of my closest friends in the Senate—even when we disagreed, we stayed friendly, stayed good friends—and, of course, a longtime colleague, Senator JOE MANCHIN of West Virginia.

On the surface, JOE MANCHIN and CHUCK SCHUMER will appear to have little in common. For one, JOE was born in Farmington, WV, a coal mining town of around 400 people. I was, of course, born in Brooklyn, where you can walk past 400 people before breakfast.

JOE's family on his father's side traces their lineage to hilly enclaves of the Calabria region of Italy. Much of my family, meanwhile, comes from Galicia, in modern day Ukraine.

While JOE got a scholarship to play football at West Virginia University—he was going to be great star until he was injured—I was cut from the college basketball team on day one. Coach asked me could I dribble. I said: It is not my strong suit, sir. He said: Go home.

Beneath the surface, however, JOE and I have some unexpected common links. We both have grandparents whose lives were shaped in dramatic ways by union life. My grandfather went as far as helping his employees form a union in Utica, while his grandfather, sadly, was fired for trying to organize a union in Farmington.

Both of our fathers were small business owners. JOE's dad took over a family grocery store where JOE himself worked for much of his early years, while my dad ran an exterminating business.

Both our families found home within communities where everyone knew your name and where hard times forced everyone to come together.

For JOE's family, it was the awful day that the Manchin Grocery store burned down. When JOE recalls the incident, he has said that moment taught him the value of persistence—that is something my dad, my late father, always talked about—and the importance of leaning on your community to rebuild from tragedy. And that is something any New Yorker will relate to.

So yes, Mr. President, it is these common threads that fill me today with gratitude. These are links that shape who JOE MANCHIN the public servant is at his core: someone who wants to keep alive the very same American dream his family got to enjoy—a place where hard work, community and equal opportunity are the keys to a better life.