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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, You inhabit all ages and all worlds. Dwell among our Senators today. Tune their hearts to Your purposes, and open their lips to speak Your wisdom.

Lord, infuse them with Your Spirit so that their work will make a positive impact on our Nation and world. Banish their anxieties as You provide them with a faith strong enough to face whatever challenges they must confront. Give them openness of mind in order that they might perceive Your will more clearly, sincerity of heart that they might love You more profoundly, and clarity of purpose that they might serve You more devotedly.

We pray in Your loving 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, December 4, 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 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 Anthony J. Brindisi, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of New York.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic whip.

TRIBUTE TO SENATORS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Biden-Harris administration will go down in history as arguably the most productive and consequential administration in the last 75 years. They couldn't have done it without a good partnership in Congress.

Today, I want to thank five Democratic Senators who played key roles in the historic achievements of this Congress and many others. They include chairs of four committees and one subcommittee, and they will all be leaving

when they finish up their work this month.

I have more words of thanks for other departing colleagues and will deliver those soon.

Collectively, these five Senators have given nearly 135 years of service to the U.S. Senate. They represent not only a good deal of this body's institutional memory but a large share of its heart and its conscience as well.

TRIBUTE TO BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Senator BEN CARDIN. He has served for 58 years in State and Federal office. Through it all, BEN CARDIN has been a pillar of decency, modesty, civility, and good-faith bipartisanship.

As a longtime member and now chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, BEN CARDIN has worked to place America's most fundamental values, including human rights, at the center of our foreign policy.

In 2009, I traveled with BEN CARDIN to Bosnia, Lithuania, and Belarus. Together, we saw the tremendous esteem in which he is held globally. He is a true statesman.

In 2012, working with Senator John McCain, BEN CARDIN authored perhaps his most important achievement—the Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act. In 2016, Congress expanded the reach of that accountability by passing the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. Following America's lead, more than two dozen other nations have since passed their own Magnitsky sanctions laws.

Recently, the Netherlands honored Senator BEN CARDIN for his leadership with its Anne Frank Award for Human Dignity and Tolerance. In accepting that honor, BEN said:

We need to keep hope alive that with patience and persistence, we can create a world that is safe and peaceful and prosperous.

BEN CARDIN's work in this Senate shows us how we can create just such a world.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS R. CARPER

TOM CARPER. Mr. President, it was late on a Friday afternoon in the 1990s

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



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when a staffer handed a letter to Delaware's then-Governor TOM CARPER. The letter from a girl named Melissa read: "I am writing to the governors of all 50 states to ask the same question: What is the secret to happiness?"

"Dear Melissa," the Governor replied, "serve others. Sincerely, Tom." That was it. For then-Governor, now-Senator TOM CARPER, that simple selfless bit of advice—"serve others"—could sum up his entire political career and his life. He is moderate, bipartisan, and relentless.

As chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, TOM CARPER helped lead the fight to pass the Inflation Reduction Act, the most significant investment ever—to tackle the climate crisis. The law also helped lower healthcare costs and energy costs and strengthen America's energy security—what a combination.

TOM CARPER was a key author of the largest long-term infrastructure investment in the history of the United States, the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

As the last Vietnam veteran serving in the U.S. Senate—think about that for a moment: the last Vietnam veteran serving in the U.S. Senate—Senator TOM CARPER was a key force in passing many laws, including the Agent Orange Act of 2009; the PACT Act, to provide healthcare for veterans sick by exposure to burn pits and other toxic hazards; and a measure I authored with him that allows the VA to provide modest compensation for family members serving as caregivers for severely injured veterans.

TOM CARPER has also encouraged a generation of young people to enter public service and run for office. Next month, one of those people, one of those public servants who got her start as an intern in a congressional office that TOM CARPER handled, will take his place in this body. LISA BLUNT ROCH-ESTER will be the first woman and the first person of color Delawareans have ever sent to the U.S. Senate.

Thanks, TOM, for showing her and countless others the importance and dignity of public service.

TRIBUTE TO JOE MANCHIN III

JOE MANCHIN. As chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee since 2021, Senator JOE MANCHIN has been a decisive force on America's energy and environment agenda. He was a key player in passage of the Inflation Reduction Act. Independent analyses project that law will reduce U.S. carbon emissions by 40 percent by the year 2030 compared with 2005—if we give it a chance to work.

JOE MANCHIN was elected to the Senate in 2010 to fill the legendary vacancy created by the death of Robert C. Byrd. While he arrived here following the footsteps of a legend, he leaves behind some pretty big footprints himself.

TRIBUTE TO DEBBIE STABENOW

DEBBIE STABENOW. In the year 2000, Senator DEBBIE STABENOW became the first woman ever elected to the Senate

from the State of Michigan, but, as she says, it doesn't matter if you are first unless there is a second and a third.

Her leadership and example have undoubtedly persuaded more women to run for and win public office, including in the Senate. America is better for it even if we still have a long way to go.

As a longtime member and now chair of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, she wrote much of the bipartisan 2014 farm bill and coauthored the 2018 farm bill. There is no other Senator on the floor of this body who has the competence, skill, and track record of DEBBIE STABENOW in the field of agriculture, forestry, and nutrition. She is simply the expert and has taught herself an arcane body of law to a degree that most of us just don't even comprehend.

Eight months ago, she unveiled the foundation for a strong, new farm bill containing hundreds of bipartisan provisions. More than ever before, these farm bills that DEBBIE has helped to write meet the needs of farmers in rural communities, while also protecting low-income seniors, moms with kids, and people with disabilities in need of affordable groceries.

In addition, Senator STABENOW has been a leader in protecting one of our greatest natural resources—and I know this one as well—the Great Lakes, including her pivotal role last year in advancing the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, a project with a long name but with a simple purpose: stop the invasion of the carp into the Great Lakes, which could be devastating to the future of those great bodies of water.

I know her Oldsmobile dealer father would be proud of the way she fought to save the U.S. auto industry when others were ready to give up on it. DEBBIE never gave up on the auto industry. She became our most forceful champion of that provision.

I am sorry that DEBBIE, just a few days ago, lost her mother, who was an extraordinary woman herself. But her mother, I am sure, was deeply proud of the time that DEBBIE spent her entire career prodding government to work for everyone, not just those who are well-connected.

I am proud to call DEBBIE my friend and colleague.

TRIBUTE TO LAPHONZA R. BUTLER

Finally, I want to acknowledge Senator LAPHONZA BUTLER. She was appointed just over a year ago to finish the term of the late Senator Dianne Feinstein. She took Senator Feinstein's seat on the Senate Judiciary Committee. I was honored to chair that committee and work with her every time we met.

Thoughtful, collegial, hard-working—you could always find her ready to proceed forward for as much time as it may take. She sought to advance the ideals of our Nation and give voice to Americans facing critical challenges, from access to reproductive health care to voter suppression.

She is one of the youngest Senators, the third Black woman and 12th Black

person to serve in this Chamber and the only Black person ever to chair the Constitution subcommittee. She has brought an important new voice to our debates. We are grateful for her new perspectives and her distinguished service.

As I said, Mr. President, I will have more to say about other departing Senators. For now, I want to say to these Senators: It has been an honor to serve with you, to work with you for the good of our Nation and the good of the world.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, the Senate will continue working to confirm more of President Biden's well-qualified judicial nominees.

On Monday, I filed cloture on five more district court judges. We will continue the process of confirming those judges later this morning. We will begin with votes on two district court judges for the Northern District of New York, Anthony Brindisi and Elizabeth Coombe.

Anthony Brindisi, I know well. He is a proud son of Utica, a former Member of Congress. I worked closely with him on many issues for Upstate New York, particularly his hometown of Utica, where my dad was raised, so I have a particular affinity to him.

Anthony Brindisi is a proud son of Utica. He is also an exceptionally qualified attorney whose legal acumen and deep care for the Mohawk Valley and all of Central New York will make him an excellent addition to the Northern District.

Beth Coombe has also been a trailblazing prosecutor for her entire career in Albany and Syracuse, the first woman to become Federal criminal chief for the Northern District. I am proud to see her ascend to the Federal bench.

After we vote on these judges, we will then vote to advance Sarah Davenport to be a district court judge for the District of New Mexico, and we will keep moving forward with the remaining judges as soon as possible.

Democrats have made confirming President Biden's well-qualified judges a top priority the last few years. It will remain a priority until our very last day in the majority.

TRIBUTE TO DEBBIE STABENOW

Mr. President, finally, let me close on a bittersweet but deeply grateful note.

Later this afternoon, Senators will gather in the Chamber to hear the farewell remarks of a beloved colleague, our dear friend—my dear friend—DEBBIE STABENOW of Michigan. She will leave the Senate at the end of this year after 24 remarkable years in this Chamber and many, many more in public service.

But today, I don't want to start my tribute by listing off DEBBIE's myriad