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## House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 12 p.m.

## Senate

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable CORY A. BOOKER, a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God of love, bring unity to Capitol Hill.

Lord, we do not ask for uniformity with its leveling process that reduces everything and everybody to its lowest common denominator. We ask for true unity with its bountiful diversity in which each person finds individual fulfillment in doing Your will.

Lord, give our Senators unity to light the symphony with its variety of instruments, its many different notes which produce grand harmonies. May our lawmakers reduce these melodies on this Super Bowl Sunday by seeking to understand before being understood, to console before being consoled, and to serve before being served.

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, February 11, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CORY A. BOOKER, a Senator from the State of New Jersey, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. BOOKER thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, the Senate gavels in on a Sunday to continue our work on the national security supplemental. In about an hour, we will take the next procedural vote—on cloture on the substitute amendment. I can't remember the last time the Senate was in session on Super Bowl Sunday, but as I have said all week long, we are going to keep working on this bill until the job is done.

Even though we are keeping the process moving on the floor, Democrats

still hope we can reach an agreement with our Republican colleagues on a reasonable list of amendments. We are happy to have fair and reasonable amendment votes on the floor, so we will see if there is any possibility for speeding this process up. But at the same time, it is essential we finish the work on this bill.

It has been years, perhaps decades, that the Senate has taken up a standalone bill that so significantly impacts not just our national security, not just the security of our allies, but the very security of Western democracy and our ideals.

As we speak, Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine has rendered parts of Eastern Europe a war zone, the likes of which we have not seen in those regions since the Second World War. Ukraine is dangerously low on supplies, including ammo and air defenses. If America doesn't assist Ukraine, Putin is all too likely to succeed, as President Zelenskyy repeatedly has reminded us. The only right answer to this threat is for the Senate to face it down unflinchingly by passing this bill as soon as we can.

Again, Democrats are ready to work with the other side in the spirit of bipartisanship. I know many of my Republican colleagues are working in good faith to get this done. I thank them for their dedication, for their good work, and for doing the right thing by voting yes yesterday. Let us move forward.

I yield the floor.

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



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## 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.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## REMOVING EXTRANEOUS LOOP-HOLES INSURING EVERY VETERAN EMERGENCY ACT—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 815, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 815) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes.

## Pending:

Schumer (for Murray) amendment No. 1388, in the nature of a substitute.

Schumer amendment No. 1577 (to amendment No. 1388), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 1578 (to amendment No. 1577), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 1579 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1388), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 1580 (to amendment No. 1579), to add an effective date.

Schumer motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Veterans Affairs, with instructions to report back forthwith Schumer amendment No. 1581, to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 1582 (the instructions (amendment No. 1581) of the motion to commit), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 1583 (to amendment No. 1582), to add an effective date.

## RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

H.R. 815

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, from the earliest days of Vladimir Putin's escalation in Ukraine, America's closest allies and partners have been paying close attention.

From halfway around the world in the Indo-Pacific, our friends have made it clear that in the Ukrainian people's fight, they see their own future.

From Taiwan:

Ukraine's survival is Taiwan's survival.

From Japan:

Security in Europe and security in the Indo-Pacific are inseparable.

From Australia:

It is absolutely in the interest of every free country that Putin's aggression fails.

But why? Why would peaceful people dare to get involved in others' fights? Why would leaders in Asia contribute billions of dollars in weapons to help

Ukraine defeat Russian aggression? Why would the Prime Minister of Japan and the President of South Korea bother with long journeys to wartime Kyiv to express solidarity with Ukraine? Why not just pull up the drawbridge and keep quiet? Because our allies and partners are not naive. Because they know that unchecked aggression begets more. Because they know that victory for Russia means a green light for China. Because they know that neglecting Ukraine's fight to restore its sovereignty raises the costs of defending their own.

Our partners don't have the luxury of pretending that the world's most dangerous aggressors are someone else's problem, and neither do we.

So, today, it is no exaggeration to say that the eyes of the world are on the U.S. Senate. Our allies and partners are hoping that the indispensable nation—the leader of the free world—has the resolve to continue, and our adversaries are hoping for something quite different. Friends and foes alike pay close attention to what we say here and to how we vote because American leadership matters, and it is in question.

But let's be absolutely clear. The United States didn't give our "greatest generation" to the fight against Nazi Germany or commit half a century of focus and resources to defeating Soviet communism just out of a sense of altruism, and we aren't helping partners resist authoritarian aggression today out of some warm and fuzzy sense of charity. We haven't equipped the brave people of Ukraine, Israel, or Taiwan with lethal capabilities in order to win philanthropic accolades. We are not urgently strengthening defenses in the Indo-Pacific because it feels good. We don't wield American strength frivolously. We do it because it is in our own interest. We equip our friends to face our shared adversaries so we are less likely to have to spend American lives to defeat them.

For years, I have warned about the growing threats to America's national security and the growing coordination among our adversaries.

And, for years, I have worked to steer greater investments toward the hard power needed to deter them.

The Russian despot trying to conquer Ukraine also wants to see America weakened.

The Chinese autocrat hoping to subjugate Taiwan also wants to consign American leadership to history.

The Iranian regime that equips the slaughter of Israel's Jews and a terrorist war on international commerce also wants to shatter our influence in the region and spill American blood in the process.

They tell us by their actions. Pretending not to hear them is not an option. Delaying until the costs in American lives and treasure rise immeasurably is not an option. The time to stand up to these gathering threats is right now.

Every night, millions of Americans sleep in peace because brave men and women continue to answer the call to serve in our Nation's Armed Forces. Every day, millions of Americans turn for their livelihood to an economic order built and underwritten by American leadership. And every time that peace and prosperity are threatened, we stand with allies and partners who trust in the righteousness of that leadership and the credibility of our commitments.

Today, the future of the world I have just described is in question. The endurance of an order in which American support is craved and American strength is feared is in doubt. And we, the United States of America, have the most to lose.

Ever since we came to the aid of our allies 80 years ago, America has been an inseparable partner in the security of Europe, not out of charity but because our own security and prosperity is tied to it.

Ever since we were attacked in 1941, America has helped guarantee stability and free commerce in the Indo-Pacific, not as a moral gesture but because we have core interests of our own in this critical part of the world.

Ever since the establishment of the modern Jewish State of Israel in 1948, America has stood by her, not out of generosity but because of the enduring values and interests we share: in security, in democracy, and in peace.

I know it has become quite fashionable in some circles to disregard the global interests we have as a global power, to bemoan the responsibilities of global leadership, to lament the commitment that has underpinned the longest drought of great power conflict in human history. This is idle work for idle minds, and it has no place in the U.S. Senate.

In this Chamber, we must face the world as it is. We must reject the dimmest and most shortsighted views of our obligations and grapple instead with actual problems, as they come, in the harsh light of day.

And, today, the questions facing this body are quite simple. Will we give those who wish us harm more reason to question our resolve? Or will we recommit to exercising American strength?

Will we give those who crave our leadership more reason to wonder if it is in decline? Or will we invest in the credibility that underpins our entire way of life?

I cannot answer these questions for any one of my colleagues, but none of us can afford to get them wrong.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The senior Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, the national security supplemental before us is of profound importance to America's security. It will provide updated, modern, effective munitions to our troops, rebuild our flagging defense industrial base, allow our Navy to continue its vital operations in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, and support our allies.