



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024

No. 35

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 12 p.m.

Senate

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024

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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Our guest Chaplain, the Reverend Dr. Frank Carr, national chaplain of the American Legion, from Halifax, VA, will open the Senate in prayer.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, giver of all peace, freedoms, and victories we enjoy in this great Nation we call America, we invite Your Holy Spirit to take control of these Your Senators today, that they will serve the people of this Nation with Your spirit and truth. We pray Your holy hand will keep them forever righteous, humble of heart, unselfish in the governing of this Nation, that their decisions be made with love of this Nation and all the people they oversee and serve.

We pray, Father, they discharge their duties with honor and dignity; that they will always remember the blessings of freedom were purchased at a great cost; that with their loyalty and service to God and country in the spirit of true democracy for our Nation, God will allow America to be that Nation He intended it to be.

And now, unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless before the presence of his Holy Spirit, with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory,

majesty, dominion, and power, both now and forevermore. 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 27, 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 Jacqueline Becerra, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, later this morning, I will join with Leader MCCONNELL, Speaker JOHNSON, and Leader JEFFRIES for a meeting with President Biden at the White House. I expect today's meeting to be an important, timely, and fruitful discussion about how congressional leaders, in conjunction with the White House, can meet the immense responsibilities facing Congress at this moment.

This Friday, unless both sides act quickly, the Federal Government will enter a partial government shutdown, with yet another funding deadline looming a week after that. Agriculture,

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S991

transportation, veterans programs, and more will be thrown into chaos this Friday if we fail to extend funding.

As I have said throughout the 118th Congress, there is no justification—none—for provoking a government shutdown. Democrats strongly oppose shutdowns, and I know many of my Republican Senate colleagues, including the Republican leader, want to avoid one as well. And we Democrats want to work with them to ensure that a government shutdown does not happen.

And look, we realize the Speaker of the House is in a difficult position. But he must reject the MAGA hard right, which wants a shutdown, wants to hurt America, and which does not represent a majority of Republicans in the House, a majority of Republicans in the Senate, and a majority of Republicans in America—let alone, all Americans.

So if both sides work together, if we reject poison pills that can never become law, and if we tune out the extreme radical voices of the hard right, then the task before us becomes much, much easier.

Again, these hard-right chaos agents in the House do not represent a majority of Republicans in the country. They do not represent a majority of Republicans in the Senate. They do not even represent a majority of Republicans in the House, and yet they are trying to bully everyone else into submission to get what they want. And what they want—make no mistake about it; they say it openly—is a government shutdown, with the harm it will do to millions of people.

The chaos we have seen over and over again in the House just goes to show you that the hard right is not serious about governing. The only tactic in the hard-right playbook is to try to bully the rest of Congress to bend to their views.

By now, I expect many House Republicans are beyond exhausted by their colleagues' bullying tactics. It is one of the biggest reasons why the Republican majority in the House can't get anything done.

But for all their bullying, all their bluster, all their attempts at intimidation, the hard right's efforts have consistently—consistently—ended in failure. I hope this time will be no different. I hope that, in the coming days, serious-minded House Republicans can work with Democrats to find a path out of the shutdown threat. There is every reason in the world for both sides to work together this week and in the weeks to come. So I look forward to making that case to congressional leaders at the White House.

Speaker JOHNSON, we are looking forward to working with you to avoid a government shutdown.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, on Ukraine, today at the White House, I will also make a strong case to congressional leaders—especially to Speaker JOHNSON—about the immediate need to pass the national security supplemental.

I just got back from Ukraine a couple of days ago. What I saw there, what I learned there will stay with me for the rest of my life.

The people of Ukraine, for all their courage, for all their spirit, for all their ability to defend their homeland, are dangerously close to running out of supplies. Ukraine is low on ammo, on anti-air defense systems, on munitions, on long-range artillery. This shortage is creating asymmetry on the battlefield: Russia can fire and take out Ukrainian targets but Ukraine, increasingly, can't fire back. They don't have the weaponry that has the length of the Russian weaponry.

As President Zelenskyy has said to us, if Ukraine gets the package of aid they need, they will win the war. But if they don't get those armaments, they will lose.

The Senate has stepped up to the plate. We have passed a strong, bipartisan supplemental—70 votes. The Speaker must likewise put the supplemental on the floor for a vote. I believe that if the supplemental were voted on in the House right now, it would pass with similar bipartisan support that we saw here in the Senate.

I hope, I pray—for the sake of values, for the sake of our country, for the sake of the brave people in Ukraine and those who have died in the war—I hope Speaker JOHNSON recognizes that history is watching us and watching him. Failure would be the best thing Vladimir Putin could hope for.

ALABAMA IVF COURT DECISION

Mr. President, now, on the IVF presser, following the Alabama Supreme Court's stunningly radical opinion jeopardizing in vitro fertilization, Democrats are taking action to protect every American's right to IVF.

I just returned from a press conference with Senators DUCKWORTH, MURRAY, and several other of my Democratic colleagues—Senators KLOBUCHAR and BALDWIN—expressing our support for protecting the right to reproductive technology like IVF. I commend Senators DUCKWORTH and MURRAY for their leadership on this issue, and I strongly support their efforts to safeguard and strengthen IVF access for all Americans.

But make no mistake about it, what happened in Alabama is a direct—a direct—consequence of the hard-right MAGA Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. And make no mistake about it, there will be other awful restrictive decisions emanating from the Dobbs decision.

And just like the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe*, there is only one word to describe last week's Alabama Supreme Court decision: "shameful." It is shameful that families who are trying to get pregnant now have to worry that access to in vitro fertilization will be taken away. It is shameful that, in the 21st century, women have to travel hundreds of miles for basic healthcare and that doctors fear criminal prosecution just for doing their

jobs. It is shameful that the United States has become an embarrassment to the world when it comes to reproductive freedom. And it is especially shameful that hard-right Republicans—who have spent decades packing our courts with hard-right judges who have called for national abortion bans—are now trying to backpedal and sound reasonable and supportive of IVF.

But that backpedaling won't last. It is as if they lit a match, the House is now on fire, and they say: "Why is that house on fire?" They did everything that would lead up to this. We know that.

So make no mistake, the shameful state of a woman's healthcare and reproductive freedoms is a product of the hard-right Republican agenda. The minority—the small minority—in this country, the far right, are very happy today with this decision, but no one else in America is.

The American people watched for decades as the hard right led a relentless campaign against the fundamental right to choose. Republicans aren't fooling anyone by now trying to run away from their record.

Republicans own the disasters of *Roe v. Wade*. Republicans own what happened in Alabama. And Republicans will own the consequences.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

UKRAINE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, nearly 20 years ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin described the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union as the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the [20th] century," and, for decades, he has worked incessantly to revive the repressive empire built by Stalin, including by redrawing European borders by force.

Back in 2008, he sent the Russian military to bring Georgia, a sovereign democracy, to heel. His forces occupy parts of that country right up to today.

Precisely 10 years ago today, Putin launched a military invasion into Ukraine to seize Crimea and the Donbas region.

Of course, today isn't an anniversary of a settled event in the past; it is a mile marker in a campaign of subjugation, brutality, and conquest that remains very much alive.

Over the past 10 years, Putin's invasion has grown from an initial incursion by "little green men" to a massive ground campaign to seize all of Ukraine. But as Russian aggression escalated, two things remained the same: first, the incredible resolve of the Ukrainian people to defend their sovereignty, and second, the tendency of Western partners capable of supporting Ukraine's defense to hesitate instead.

Think about America's own behavior back in 2014. President Obama was 6 years removed from a promise to "reset" relations with Russia and a little more than a year removed from