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Senate

The Senate met at 2:30 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, teach us the mystery of life. Help us to not be victims but victorious in the living of our days. Lead us to a place of understanding in spite of pain and sorrow. Lord, make us more than conquerors because You love us.

Today, instruct our lawmakers as they seek to do Your will. As they perform their daily tasks, guide their priorities. Show them Your truth so that they will be instruments of Your purposes. Lord, transform their lives from a hurried succession of days into a walk with You that brings enduring peace.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER OF THE CURRENCY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY RELATING TO THE REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS UNDER THE BANK MERGER ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S.J. Res. 13, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 13) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency of the Department of the Treasury relating to the review of applications under the Bank Merger Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

JEFFERSON, IOWA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, over the last 2 weeks, during the Senate recess, I continued my annual 99 county meetings across Iowa.

My travels brought me to the Western Iowa community of Jefferson, in Greene County, for a Q&A. I often say Iowans don't brag enough, and Jefferson has got something to brag about, so I want to take this opportunity to brag about the people of Jefferson, IA.

Jefferson is about an hour northwest of Des Moines, our capital city. This community is home to the 168-foot Bell Tower, located in an iconic town square. These hard-working Iowans went to bat for their community and came out on top. In other words, it is like baseball—they hit a home run.

Jefferson recently was presented with the 2025 Great American Main Street Award at a national conference

in Pennsylvania. Winners are recognized for excellence in commercial district revitalization and historic preservation efforts. Jefferson exemplifies how "small communities can overcome economic challenges through ingenuity and collective effort."

As a product of smalltown Iowa, I am aware of obstacles facing rural communities. So I applaud everyone involved in the program named "Jefferson Matters" for your teamwork, your resilience, and your can-do attitude.

Jefferson is a shining example to communities across Iowa and all America.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, one of Republicans' biggest priorities this year is extending the tax relief we passed in 2017 and preventing a massive tax hike on hard-working Americans.

We took a big step forward before Easter with the passage of a budget resolution necessary for a final bill, and we are rapidly moving toward final bill text. Senate Republicans held hours of great discussions today to hammer out a number of details.

The issue before us is simple: If we don't act, Americans making less than \$400,000 will face a \$2.6 trillion tax hike next year—\$2.6 trillion. Small businesses will face a \$600 billion tax hike. Republicans do not intend to let that happen.

We are going to extend the tax relief we passed during President Trump's first administration, starting with the lower individual rates that put more money in Americans' pockets and eased the burden on small businesses. I say "extend," but in fact, we intend to make that tax relief permanent. Hard-working Americans should not have to worry about tax hikes every few years, and small businesses need tax certainty for long-term planning. So we

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



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are committed to not only extending the lower individual rates we passed in 2017 but to making them permanent.

We are also committed to making other small business tax relief from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act permanent, like bonus depreciation and the section No. 199A deduction. The National Federation of Independent Business reports that making the small business section No. 199A deduction permanent would result in the creation of an additional 1.2 million jobs annually, with that number climbing as the law goes on.

And the Tax Foundation reports that long-run GDP would increase by a substantial 1.1 percent. That means more jobs and more opportunities for American workers. It also means an increase in Federal revenues—but an increase in Federal revenues the right way, by growing and expanding the economy, not raising taxes.

Ensuring permanent tax relief for hard-working Americans and small businesses would be a substantial part of the final bill, but that is not all that would be included. We will also be focusing on some of the other challenges our country has faced over the past 4 years: a dangerous border crisis, deficiencies in our military readiness, and Biden administration policies that threaten to weaken our already shaky electric grid and jeopardize our Nation's energy supply.

President Trump has already made tremendous progress on securing the border and deporting criminals here illegally, but we need to dedicate additional resources to border security to secure those gains for the long term. So the final bill that we pass will include a transformational investment in securing our borders, including things like additional detention space, more Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, and additional barriers and technology.

We will also make a transformational investment in our military readiness to address deficiencies and ensure that we are equipped to detour and defeat any threat.

And we will implement policies to unleash American energy production to ensure a secure, stable, and affordable energy supply for the long term.

Finally, we will take a hard look at how we spend taxpayer dollars and implement savings measures to put our country on a more fiscally sustainable path.

It is going to be a great bill, and it is going to help produce a stronger and a more secure America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

ECONOMY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, over the Easter break, I continued my annual 99 county meetings. And, as always, Iowans set the agenda.

At my open town meetings, I had big turnouts. People shared strong views about tariffs, deportations, and the Department of Government Efficiency. At

nearly every one of those Q&A's, Iowans also raised concerns about the Federal deficit and the \$36 trillion debt hanging over our heads.

I am sharing this feedback with my colleagues here because that is what representative government is all about.

It seems like, no matter which issues put a burr under their saddle, my constituents are hungry for the same thing. So, simply, they would like to have some certainty of policy coming out of Congress and some predictability. Such predictability is very essential for our country to move forward economically.

Some people see Washington in chaos. These feelings of uncertainty keep Americans up at night. Workers are worried about their retirement savings when they watch the stock market seesaw. Farmers are wondering if they will have a market to export their grain. Small businesses are worried that rising import costs will drive them into the red or force them to jack up prices on their customers. And everybody is concerned that come January 1, 2026, they could be subject to the largest tax hike in U.S. history. And that is without even a vote of Congress.

I have long been an open book regarding my concerns about tariffs. I consider myself what, around this town, we call free and fair traders, negotiating tariffs down.

That said, the President has another approach. President Trump has raised valid concerns about some of our existing trading relationships, especially with China. That is why I am willing to take a wait-and-see approach as Trump's trading partners come to the negotiating table.

I hope his policies will ultimately result in free and fairer trade. If they do, he will be much more successful than my approach over the last 50 years. If he is successful, I will be the first one to say: Praise the Lord.

But in the meantime, it is clear the on-again, off-again tariffs are driving uncertainty, and that uncertainty is the same that is reverberating across our economy.

There is no better example than when the market for U.S. treasuries went haywire at the beginning of April as a result of some of this tariff talk. Foreign investors got skittish and actually dumped U.S. treasuries. That caused interest rates to spike on the 10- and 30-year bonds. That should have set off the alarm bells here in Congress.

American taxpayers are on the hook for a \$36 trillion national debt. Americans are already paying \$1 trillion a year in interest payments—about three times what they were before interest rates and inflation hit us after the last 4 years. This trillion dollars is more than we spend annually on national defense, and, in the end, we don't have anything to show for all that interest.

Don't forget, those costs rise when interest rates rise. If we pay more servicing on our debt, there is less money

for everything else that the Federal Government does to help the American people.

Given the size of our national debt, even slightly higher than expected interest rates mean trillions more spent servicing our debt over the next decade.

Worse yet, if our bondholders were to lose confidence in our ability to budget or govern responsibly, soaring debt payments could trigger a return of sky-high inflation or even end America in a fiscal crisis.

In 2023, the credit rating agency Fitch downgraded the U.S. credit rating, noting the size of our national debt and "the erosion of governance." Those words, "the erosion of governance" are from the Fitch report.

More than ever, Congress must step up—step up its game—to provide stability in the form of good governance and fiscal restraint. This means we must work to deliver on essential congressional functions without the last-minute brinksmanship that has become a norm when either we don't appropriate for next year and government should shut down or, like I am going to talk about, with the national debt and the debt ceiling coming, if we don't handle that issue, we can possibly shut down the government.

Along the lines of what I am talking about, I would like to delineate three must-do items on our agenda that need to be completed before October 1 of this year.

First, we must pass a tax and spending package to avert massive tax hikes on the American people. That must include resources for the administration to secure our borders and beef up our depleted military.

Second, we must guarantee that we will always pay our debts. This means we must raise the debt ceiling well in advance of the Treasury running out of money to pay the bills.

Currently, we are expected to hit the debt ceiling mid-summer to early fall. So common sense tells me we should avoid the chaos in the bond market, which could cause our debt payments to skyrocket. We must lift the debt ceiling with plenty of room to spare. Why wait to the midnight hour of government shutting down? That is too often the practice around here in the U.S. Senate.

Finally, we must fund the government to avoid the threat of that government shutdown. Our rinse-and-repeat shutdown stare-downs have become an unnecessary recurring source of heartburn for our constituents and deliver unnecessary uncertainty for the economy. We can surely do better.

Completing our must-do list on time and drama free begins with passing the tax and spending package in a timely and fiscally responsible fashion.

I know what it takes to grease the wheels and enact historic tax cuts using the budget reconciliation process. It is a four-letter acronym, KISS, K-I-S-S. In other words, keep it simple, Senators.

The 2017 Trump reform was a historic achievement. We cut taxes across the board. We did so by simplifying the Tax Code and trimming back the special deductions and credits. As a result, most taxpayers paid less tax simply by claiming the increased standard deduction that was in that 2017 law. They were able, then, to avoid the headache of spending hours sifting through receipts and IRS forms.

We now have the chance to make these tax cuts and reforms permanent. This alone would take the weight of a \$4 trillion tax hike off the chest of the economy. That would provide much needed certainty to families and businesses.

So we must keep our eye on the ball. Let's avoid the laundry list of costly new items that we can't afford and that, at the same time, complicate the Tax Code and, at the same time, risk causing progress on the reconciliation package to come to a screeching halt.

We are coming off of an unprecedented peacetime spending binge, and it is time to pay the piper. The fact is, the Federal Government is broke. We are currently running \$2 trillion annual deficits, and in just 3 years, our national debt is set to eclipse the World War II-era record relative to the size of the U.S. economy.

Let's get in the habit of paying for all new policies so we don't continuously keep digging ourselves into an ever-larger fiscal hole.

Let's stick to common sense. When you find yourself stuck in a hole, stop digging. Start climbing. This would require Senators, Congressmen and Congresswomen, and President Trump to set priorities and be willing to make tradeoffs.

Let's move forward with consensus spending reductions. Let's pull back expensive Biden-era regulations that supercharged mandatory spending programs. And, at the same time, who is going to argue with eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse?

Relative to new tax-and-spending policies, the overall package must result in significant deficit reduction, but we can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. We didn't get into our fiscal situation, the present situation, overnight, and we are not going to solve it in this single bill either.

Polling repeatedly shows Americans hold Congress in low regard. I have said this before, but it bears repeating. At my county meetings, someone will yell at the back of the room "Grassley"—referring to me—"why can't you do something about the deficit?"

We can begin to restore the public's confidence in Congress by doing our jobs, getting our work done on time, and—egads—stop digging a deeper fiscal hole.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING DIANA DENMAN

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today with both sorrow and gratitude in my heart to honor and celebrate the life of an extraordinary woman, the Honorable Diana Denman.

Diana has rightly been described as the "Godmother of the Texas Republican Party." She was a fierce warrior for freedom, but she was also a radiant spirit, a source of wisdom and kindness, and the embodiment of grace, conviction, and truth. Diana was a patriotic American. She loved this country. She was a true daughter of Texas and a very dear and cherished friend.

Diana was born in Abilene, TX. Her grandfather, Jefferson Davis Sandefer, Sr., led Hardin-Simmons University for decades, and Diana often said she inherited her lifelong passion for service and scholarship from his example.

But Diana's journey took her far beyond Texas. She left Abilene for Washington to study at George Washington University, from which she graduated with a degree in journalism. From there, she traveled to Hollywood to be an actress. She worked with legends like Cecil B. DeMille as well as a young actor named Ronald Reagan. Ever quick with a smile and a story, Diana used to say that the very first vote she ever cast for Reagan was for president—of the Screen Actors Guild.

That vote was the start of a lifelong commitment to conservatism. From Reagan's 1976 campaign to his election and through the Presidency, Diana stood shoulder to shoulder with the movement for freedom and optimism that defined the era and which we so badly need today. She later served in the Reagan administration in roles ranging from the Peace Corps to the National Museum Services Board. She did not see that as a break in the work she had been passionately doing.

She brought to Washington the same conviction as President Reagan, the same impulse that had brought both to Hollywood—that politics requires persuasion, that it requires winning hearts and winning minds, that we need to tell stories, that we need to bridge the gaps between generations, between communities, between ideologies.

Diana knew exactly what and why she was doing. When she was nominated by President Reagan in 1986 to be a member of the National Museum Services Board, her bio read:

Since 1983, Mrs. Denman has been vice chairman of the Republican Party of Texas. She owns and operates a ranch in San Antonio, TX, and was formerly an actress in Los Angeles, CA.

By her side throughout her remarkable journey was her beloved husband Leroy, who was the chief lawyer for the storied King Ranch for more than 50 years. Plenty more offers came to

Diana for prestigious diplomatic appointments, and yet Diana turned them down because she would not be separated from him.

I came to know Diana through politics, but she became family. I would not be standing here today were it not for her faith in me. She was among my earliest and strongest supporters when I first ran for Senate in 2012, and in 2016, Diana was a Presidential delegate for me. You could not ask for a fiercer fighter. Despite her diminutive stature, she could carry a knife crawling under barbed wire.

Diana's devotion to others extended especially to our men and women in uniform. Her home became a refuge for young servicemembers far away from their families. She visited bases. She met with veterans. She wove their struggles and triumphs into the fabric of her life's mission.

Even into her nineties, Diana remained undaunted. She sent emails, she hosted gatherings, she mentored young conservatives, and she dreamed bigger dreams for Texas and for America. Her energy defied her years, and her vision never dipped.

Her consistent friendship and endless hospitality meant the world to me and my family. Diana was dear friends with my father and dear friends with my wife Heidi, and Diana loved our daughters Caroline and Catherine. When we were in San Antonio, Diana invited us over. When she came to Houston, she always stopped by. When I was up here in Washington, Diana would always call, would always text, would always provide a word of encouragement, a word of hope, and a word of wisdom. And she always had a word of wisdom.

Diana was proper. She was elegant. She was old-school. One time, when she was hosting a dinner for me at her home, I had the temerity at the dining room table to remove my jacket. I will say, Diana braided me for 10 minutes after the dinner at lacking the good graces to know that a good gentleman should keep his jacket on during dinner.

Through and thanks to her tireless work, Diana changed how Republicans approached politics across the country, and she always led with humility and courage and grace. She cared passionately for foreign policy, for defending America, and for America being the leading voice for freedom in the world—America being a shining city on a hill.

Diana was many things. She was a journalist. She was an actress. She was a leader. She was a mentor. She was a philanthropist. And at her core, she was loyal—fiercely loyal—to those she held dear.

And now, Diana has been laid to rest in the soil of Abilene where her story began and from where she became part of Texas's story. Diana loved Texas with all her heart. Diana loved America with all her heart, and she loved freedom with all her heart.

I loved Diana. My entire family did. May God bless Diana Denman, and may

He continue to bless the great State of Texas that she loved so dearly and the United States of America that Diana was so instrumental in shaping.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PHARMACY BENEFIT MANAGERS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, when it comes to healthcare access, one of the biggest issues that Tennesseans face is rising costs, especially on prescription drugs. I will tell you, this comes up in meeting after meeting, questions about why our pharmaceuticals are costing me so much.

According to a study by the Department of Health and Human Services, the average drug price increased by more than 15 percent—15 percent—between 2022 and 2023. That translates to about \$590 per prescription. Nearly half of all the medications that were studied saw price increases that outpaced inflation, including some with increases of—get this—over 3,000 percent.

This is unsustainable. And the reason it is unsustainable is why President Trump decided to take Executive action last month to lower drug prices for so many Americans. Among his actions, the President is taking on a category called pharmaceutical benefit managers or they are referred to in acronym parlance as PBMs.

PBMs raise prices and limit choices for consumers. When you look at this industry, we have pharmaceutical companies that are manufacturing the pharmaceuticals. You have health insurers that cover the cost of these. You have pharmacies that sell them, patients that rely on them, and in the mix, there are now PBMs. They are middlemen that came about decades ago. They are between the drug manufacturer, the health insurer, and the pharmacies. Think of this as a triangle with the cost of that running around from point to point.

PBMs came into play decades ago. Bill Clinton was President when they came to be. They were supposed to help manage prescription drug costs and benefits for employers. It sounds like a worthy goal. But over time, these benefit managers have gained incredible power over the prescription drug access across the entire country. They determine which medications will be covered by health insurance plans. I would imagine that many of us have had something that was prescribed, and then we find out no longer can we take that; there is going to be something to replace it or it is not going to be covered at all.

They also determine the price. Many times, we have gone to pick up a phar-

maceutical, and we have known what the copay was. It was covered. Then, all of a sudden, it is not and the price jumps and you are standing there at the pharmacy counter asking what has happened. Then you have to go call your insurance company. Then they say it is because of the pharmacy benefit manager, and then they will tell you, well, the employer is trying to reduce their costs—all of this “excusitis” because they are focused on how much money they can make.

This revenue is often linked to the price of the drug, and the PBMs steer health plans toward more expensive options rather than lesser expensive options. They game the system by tying administrative fees, rebate-based compensation, and other payments to the list price of the drug. And to make matters worse, current regulations allow Medicare Part D plan sponsors to contract selectively with pharmacies, favoring PBMs’ preferred networks that often exclude independent pharmacies that are probably located on the town square there in your hometown.

This is something we have seen far too often in Tennessee, and we have realized this hurts those who live in rural and other underserved areas the most.

Recently, the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance conducted an audit of a single PBM in our State. They wanted to see how this is affecting the price of pharmaceuticals in our State. What they found was truly troubling. To the report, the PBM in question forced nonaffiliated pharmacies to pay higher rates for more than 550 medications, including some drugs that they tagged as, again, 3,000-percent more expensive than what would have been the lower cost option.

A nonaffiliated pharmacy is generally an independent pharmacy. They are not part of a chain. They are not part of that vertical integration of the pharmacy—the physician, the PBM, the insurance company, the drug manufacturer. They are there in your neighborhood.

We also saw in this report that the PBM in question repeatedly failed to reimburse low-volume pharmacies. Again, that is probably the pharmacy in your neighborhood. And they, in good faith, fill your prescription. And then the PBM challenges it and does not pay the bill.

So the next time you go to the pharmacy, what do you hear? Oh, this is not covered. We cannot help you. You are going to have to drive 30 miles or 20 miles or whatever to get to one of the affiliated pharmacies, which, again, that is one of the big changes.

Again, what you are seeing is those that are in underserved and rural areas and use an independent pharmacy, they lose out. We also found that this PBM in question was engaged in spread pricing that allowed them to pocket \$30 million.

That is one PBM in one State—Tennessee—and spread pricing put an extra

\$30 million in their pocket. What that means is patients were overpaying by \$30 million, plus the inconvenience, plus the accelerated price, plus the fact that these PBMs jockey for what they can get in these rebates, and they change what you are allowed to get. And by the way, they do that without ever talking to your physician.

When you look at that spread pricing, it is the difference between what the PBM charges the health plan and what they reimburse to the pharmacy. This is increasing the cost—another burden you bear—of your insurance. That is what PBMs are doing.

So President Trump is addressing this issue by directing his administration to evaluate the role of PBMs in raising drug prices. The resulting report should provide an even clearer picture nationwide of the harms that are being caused by these PBMs, these middlemen, and they are totally unnecessary.

In the Senate, we are working on bipartisan legislation to hold the PBMs accountable. In March, Senator HASSAN, Senator WARNER, and I reintroduced the bipartisan Patients Before Middlemen Act. This piece of legislation—which we want to get across the finish line and to the President’s desk—would restore fairness for patients by requiring Medicare Part D plans to contract with any willing pharmacy, not just those in the PBM network. That means Medicare Part D would be contracting with your local community pharmacy, the one where you have a relationship, the one where you know the pharmacist, the one where you go in and say: Help with this; explain this medication to me; talk me through this.

Also, our legislation would enhance transparency by assuring that PBMs are not limiting patient access to available pharmacy options under Medicare Part D. If your doctor says: You need this, and the PBM says: No, we are not going to pay for that; we are going to pay for this one over here, it would give you the right to get what the doctor says is best for you. It would ensure PBM service fees are no longer connected to the price of drug discounts, rebates, or other fees.

When you hear these rebates advertised, guess who gets them. The PBM. When you hear discounts advertised, who gets it? The PBM.

Also, this would create an enforcement mechanism requiring PBMs to pay the Department of Health and Human Services any amount more than the designated service fee. It means they would no longer be able to game the system, get the rebate and the money, pocket it, and you get a higher price.

It is far past time that Congress took action to hold these middlemen accountable. I think we should just do away with them completely. It is time that we lower these drug costs for Tennesseans and Americans across the country. With the PBM Act, we know that this will happen.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, 100 years ago this November, the world of American music changed forever. Nashville's Grand Ole Opry hit the airwaves for the very first time. Today, fans across the country know it as country music's most famous stage.

It began as a small radio show at the National Life and Accident Insurance Company right in downtown Nashville. In those early days, the Opry showcased the dance tunes and ballads that were being performed by a new generation of musicians in Tennessee and across the South. Drawing on America's folk tradition, these artists were pioneering an entirely new genre—country music. Soon crowds were showing up at the company's radio station. And after moving between different venues in Nashville, they settled down. The Opry called the Ryman Auditorium its home. That was in 1943.

At the Ryman, some of the music tradition's biggest stars made their Opry debut: Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton, and the list goes on and on.

Since moving to its current home at the Grand Ole Opry House in 1974, the Opry has welcomed generation after generation of new stars who have stepped into its famous wooden circle and added another chapter to country music's incredible, amazing history. Along the way, the Opry has become the longest running radio show in U.S. history, reaching millions of listeners in America and across the world with its weekly broadcast.

To honor this extraordinary and historic institution, I am asking for unanimous consent to pass my resolution that congratulates the Opry on 100 years of incredible music, legendary performances, and musical heritage. Here is to 100 more.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 207, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 207) celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Grand Ole Opry.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 207) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER OF THE CURRENCY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY RELATING TO THE REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS UNDER THE BANK MERGER ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF MICHELLE BOWMAN

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, this week, the Senate Banking Committee—the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs—advanced the nomination of Michelle “Miki” Bowman to be the Vice Chair for Supervision at the Federal Reserve. Miki Bowman is my constituent. She is a Kansan, a native of Morris County. Miki has deep roots in rural America.

After graduating from the University of Kansas, followed by Washburn University's Law School, she came to Washington, DC, working across Capitol Hill and the executive branch. Like many good Kansans, Miki eventually found her way back home, and she became the vice president at Farmers and Drovers Bank, a community bank in Council Grove, KS. That occurred in 2010. In 2017, Miki became the Kansas State bank commissioner, where she was responsible for overseeing hundreds of State-chartered banks, trust companies, money transmitters, and other nondepository entities.

When President Trump chose Miki to serve as the community bank representative on the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, it was clear she was a great choice, the right choice to give small lenders and rural communities a voice at the Fed. Not only did Miki exceed the qualifications for the position set by law, but her time living and working in rural Kansas helped guide her decision making.

With immense experience working in and supervising community banks, I am confident Miki will continue to be a champion for those community banks but really, more importantly, for those those community banks serve, the people of States like mine and the Presiding Officer's. She will serve those people and those communities well.

The Vice Chair for Supervision plays the critical role of overseeing the regulatory environment and the supervision of many of our Nation's financial institutions, large and small. This Vice Chair position will be responsible for both rightsizing regulations for smaller lenders and finalizing the Basel III Endgame.

Not only do I trust Miki's professional experience, but I have come to know her as an independent, forthright, intelligent, quality individual with a demonstrated record of service to her State and Nation. Miki will make an excellent Federal Reserve Vice Chair for Supervision. I look forward to voting to confirm her nomination here in the full Senate, and I urge my colleagues to support her confirmation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Louisiana.

S.J. RES. 13

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, as I have said before—and I want to make this really clear—I don't hate anyone. I don't. I look for grace wherever I can find it, and when I say my prayers, one of the things I ask my Maker for is, “Please, God, don't let me hate,” because sometimes it is hard here in Washington.

You know, there have been many a morning when I have gotten up in my overpriced Capitol Hill apartment, and I am walking over here to the Capitol, and I give myself a pep talk. I talk to myself. I say: Kennedy, today you are going to follow Jesus.

And by 10 o'clock, I still want to follow Jesus, but I also want to slap the hell out of somebody.

So it is important that we remind ourselves: Don't hate.

And I don't hate anyone. And that includes President Biden. But President Biden and his people had the remarkable ability to take something that wasn't broken and try to fix it. They would take something that wasn't broken in government and take it apart, loosen a few screws, and then it would be broken.

In a few minutes, I am going to ask the Senate to vote to try to repair some damage that President Biden's folks did in that regard. It has to do with banks.

As you know, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency—I will call it the OCC, so you will know what I am talking about. The OCC regulates our banks, and that includes big banks but also small banks. We have got more small banks in America than we have big banks.

In fact, our smaller banks throughout this wonderful country make most of the loans to ordinary people. At a lot of the big banks, now, if you are just an average small businesswoman or businessman and you need a loan, you go to the larger banks, and they won't even see you. You have to go to a small bank to get that loan.

Small banks merge all the time. You have probably seen it in your local communities. Why do small banks merge a lot? Well, one of the reasons is they can provide better services to their customers.

Another reason that small banks tend to merge a lot is because maybe they want to move into a new geographical area, and they can't do it