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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.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.

Eternal Father, who extends daily to our lawmakers compassionate love, we praise Your Holy Name.

Lord, in a challenging world where we often find ourselves waiting to exhale, You remain our shelter for every storm. Relieve the shadows of pessimism and cynicism, as we face a world often filled with despair.

Lord, bring our Senators from the fatigue of doubts to the buoyancy of hope. Make their lives unflickering lights that transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Give them an unflinching certainty that You are Sovereign.

We pray in Your great 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 3 minutes in morning business.

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

119TH CONGRESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, as the 119th Congress kicks off, I look forward to continuing my work for Iowans. As President pro tempore of the Senate, Iowa is No. 1 with my leadership.

I look forward to working with my colleague Senator JONI ERNST to represent

the people of Iowa and bring their views to the policymaking tables. The two of us will work with our colleagues—Congresswoman MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS, Congresswoman ASHLEY HINSON, Congressman ZACH NUNN, and Congressman RANDY FEENSTRA—across the Capitol to represent the good people of Iowa. We are ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

I just emphasized the Iowa delegation putting Iowa first. I do that at the same time we remember the voter mandate of the last election to put America first. We will work with President Trump to bring that goal to fruition.

ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS

Mr. GRASSLEY. On another point, yesterday, January 6, was Christmas Day for many Christians of the Orthodox faith. But during the Soviet Union—if you remember the history of the Soviet Union—Christmas had to be celebrated in secret, lest the communist authorities would find out and you would be punished.

The godless Soviet regime encouraged celebrating the new year with a visit from Grandfather Frost, a secular Russian folk character, in place of “Jolly Old St. Nick.” In a repeat of history, “KGB Dictator Putin”—now President Putin, supposedly—banned Santa Claus in occupied Ukraine. Christmas caroling, Nativity scenes, and any mention of St. Nicholas were reportedly banned in Russian-occupied Ukraine for fear of spreading Western influence. A video recently came out showing the Russian military shooting down Santa’s sled over Russia to the praise of Grandfather Frost. This is a war on Christmas, communist style.

In Russia today, religious expression outside of the state-controlled church is discouraged. And in Russian-occupied Ukraine, all Protestant churches have been closed. The head of the Russian church is a KGB guy who answers

directly to KGB Putin. It is no wonder, then, that only 16 percent of Russians say religion is very important to them, and only 7 percent attend church weekly. It is also no wonder that most Ukrainians chose to celebrate Christmas with the West on the 25th, even while under rocket fire from Russia.

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.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING JIMMY CARTER

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, later today, President Jimmy Carter will arrive here at the Capitol for the last time. He will lie in state until Thursday in the Capitol Rotunda so Americans can pay final respects to our Nation’s 39th President.

It is the great American story—how a man or woman can rise from humble origins to the highest levels of government or business or academia—and it was Jimmy Carter’s story.

Born in 1924 in Plains, GA, he grew up on a peanut farm, in a house that had no running water or electricity. President was probably not the first thing people would have thought of when considering his future career. Most might have thought that he would end up running the family farm, as, indeed, he did for a while.

But he decided to also dip his toe into politics, and, within 14 years, he had gone from taking up office in the

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



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Georgia State Senate to taking up office as President of the United States.

His Presidency was notable for a number of things, including successful brokering of a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel, an agreement that stands to this day. But it was, perhaps, his post-Presidency that came to define his legacy the most.

Jimmy Carter left office in 1981, and during the four decades that followed, he dedicated himself to making a difference to the causes of peace and human rights and to improving the wellbeing of his fellow man. Together, with his wife Rosalynn, he founded the Carter Center, which, among other things, works for the eradication of disease in some of the poorest areas of the globe. Among the center's successes is the almost whole eradication of Guinea worm disease, a painful and devastating tropical disease whose cases numbered in the millions at the time the Carter Center was beginning its work. Through the first 10 months of 2024, there were just seven reported cases—an incredible legacy for anyone, but just part of President Carter's.

President Carter is also known for his work with Habitat for Humanity to provide affordable housing for those in need. And I do mean his work. President Carter didn't just lend his name or image to Habitat. He built houses. He nailed it, drilled it. He installed toilets. Well into his nineties, you could find him in a hardhat on worksites, participating like any other volunteer.

In one early Habitat project, he and Rosalynn worked in New York City. The former First Lady and the former President spent the week sleeping in the basement of a church with other volunteers—a characteristic example of unpretentiousness from a couple who lived all their lives in a modest house in Plains, GA, that they built long before the Presidency.

All told, the Carter Work Project at Habitat for Humanity has worked on 4,447 homes in 14 countries, including homes in Eagle Butte, in my State of South Dakota, which the Carters worked on during a 1994 trip to our State. It is unknown how many more homes have been built by volunteers who came to know about Habitat for Humanity through President Jimmy Carter.

It would be wrong to mention Jimmy Carter's years of service without mentioning what animated them. Jimmy Carter saw his service as a natural outgrowth of his faith in Jesus Christ. "One of the best ways to practice my faith as a Christian," he would say, "is to participate in Habitat projects every year." His life was about putting his religious principles into practice, whether that was through Habitat for Humanity or through his other work.

And, of course, anyone attracted by his example who wanted to learn more about the Christian faith could head down to Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, GA, to his Sunday school class, which he taught into his nineties.

Madam President, I cannot close without mentioning Jimmy Carter's 77-year-long marriage to his beloved wife Rosalynn, who preceded him in death a year ago. And while I join all Americans in mourning the death of President Carter, I rejoice at the thought that he and Rosalynn are again together before the face of their Father.

My thoughts and prayers are with the Carters' children—Jack, Chip, Jeff, and Amy—and with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

I look forward to paying my respects to this public servant later today.

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.

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

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

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 5

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess today from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference lunches.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

URBAN AREA SECURITY INITIATIVE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, last week, 14 people were killed in a terrorist attack in New Orleans, and an explosion in Las Vegas injured several others. The FBI has warned that other attacks that copycat what happened in New Orleans could be a threat. Cities like New York and population centers like Long Island need to be prepared. There is one Federal program that stands as the cornerstone for anti-terror preparedness for places like New York City and Long Island—the Urban Area Security Initiative, known as UASI.

Today, I am announcing that I will request \$615 million for UASI in the upcoming funding negotiations this spring. UASI is one of our best firewalls for staying vigilant against terrorist threats. My request of \$615 million will help communities like New York City, Long Island, and the entire metropolitan area stand ready against acts of terror.

Last year, I was proud to deliver \$2.3 million in UASI funding for both Nassau and Suffolk Counties. That is over \$4.5 million in anti-terror funds just for Long Island this last year. I know these funds are critical for these communities and for people's safety on the island. I am also proud last year that we delivered another \$150 million to New York City in this funding. We must keep this robust funding going this year too.

UASI funds help pay for everything needed to keep people safe—from training and joint anti-terror operations across the city and Long Island to emergency medical equipment to better tools for Homeland Security officers for intelligence sharing and for so much more.

We need UASI funds to keep people safe here in the Nation's Capital too. Over the next few weeks, millions will come for the inauguration and for paying homage to former President Carter, and many people will be moving in and out of the city as the government enters a period of transition. Strong UASI funding is vital to ensuring security during all of these events.

I want to be clear: Any effort to cut this anti-terror program, especially right now, cannot stand. We in New York and on Long Island use these funds on a rolling basis. We need these funds. And to repeat: UASI funds are a firewall at a time potential copycat attacks, like the FBI has warned, are happening.

REMEMBERING JIMMY CARTER

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on Jimmy Carter, this morning, Special Air Mission 39 took off from Georgia, carrying the 39th President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, so he may be honored here in the Capitol one last time.

For the next 2 days, President Carter will lie in state in the Rotunda of the