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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, January 31, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025

The Senate met at 12 noon 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.

Merciful Father, our refuge and strength, we pause to thank You for the courageous contributions of Mark Gazelle during his 34 years of dedicated service with the U.S. Capitol Police. Be with him in all of his tomorrows, doing for him more than he can ask or imagine.

In the midst of our gratitude, our hearts are also filled with sorrow. We mourn the loss of precious life last evening at Reagan National Airport because of the collision of a jet with an Army Black Hawk helicopter.

Our grief reminds us of Your words in Proverbs 27:1, which states:

Don't brag about tomorrow; you don't know what may happen then.

You are kind, Lord. Please have pity on us and all who mourn.

We pray in Your merciful 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. HAGERTY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 Douglas Burgum, of North Dakota, to be Secretary of the Interior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

NOMINATION OF DOUGLAS BURGUM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, Governor Doug Burgum of North Dakota will soon be our next Secretary of the Department of the Interior. I am going to support that nomination.

I think he will be confirmed, but until that happens, we always say "if confirmed."

If confirmed, Mr. Burgum will play a critical role in balancing the importance of conserving our wildlife and natural resources, while also assisting in the enhancement of domestic energy production.

Now, we must remember, over the last 4 years—in other words, under the Biden administration—many of our Nation's Federal lands were off limits for any type of use, and the excuse was for the sake of conservation. Though that is a broad stroke—the word "conservation"—it wasn't made very clear what was meant.

Many know that I have been a long-time advocate for transparency in the public's business because transparency brings accountability. Mr. Burgum will be expected to be transparent and forthcoming when leading the Department, and I expect that he will be, but especially when responding to letters from Members of Congress.

If confirmed, Mr. Burgum will oversee several Bureaus and Agencies that all work together supporting the Interior Department's mission of protecting, of managing, and of honoring our Nation's natural resources and lands.

On the topic of our country's resources, the United States has ample resources for energy production and generation, and President Trump winning the election has made clear that that is a top priority for him. And the President has created a special council on energy, and Mr. Burgum will be chairing that council.

Now, I happen to be a believer, as I am sure Mr. Burgum is, in what you call an "all of the above" strategy on energy. An "all of the above" strategy really means just that, in other words, an emphasis upon what we have got energy from—fossil fuels—and that is declining in use, but it is still going to be around for a long, long time. It means

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



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all the energy—alternative energy—that we can create. It means conservation, and not necessarily conservation promoted by government but individual conservation. And, of course, nuclear, and nuclear brings to our attention a whole new generation of ways to produce nuclear energy. That is “all of the above.”

And, of course, we ought to, in order to accomplish that, cut back on Biden-era regulations. These regulations seem to be very opaque. And, consequently, we would forge a fiscally sound path forward in regard to everything that less regulation would bring us.

I believe that Mr. Burgum understands the need to support an “all of the above” approach to energy policy, given his leadership on that issue as Governor of the State of North Dakota.

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. THUNE. Mr. 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 majority leader is recognized.

REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT FLIGHT ACCIDENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to comment on last night's horrific tragedy. As most now know, last night, around 9 p.m., a passenger flight out of Wichita, KS, coming into Reagan National Airport collided with a Black Hawk helicopter based out of Fort Belvoir.

As recovery efforts continue, authorities confirmed that they do not expect any survivors.

Mr. President, there are few words in instances like this, only our heartfelt prayers for those who have received unbearable news over the past few hours and our gratitude for rescue personnel who spent the night searching for survivors and remain on the river.

It is too early to know why last night's crash occurred, but we are going to find out. Congress and Federal Agencies will be closely examining this tragedy to ensure that America's skies are safe.

My prayers today are with all those suffering, with our first responders, and with our Kansas Senators and everyone affected by this terrible event.

NOMINATION OF DOUGLAS BURGUM

Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote on former North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to be Secretary of the Interior.

Governor Burgum knows that America's natural resources are our greatest national asset. And in the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt, he believes energy can be a big stick to promote peace and prosperity. But we have to be able to leverage our resources.

Too often, under the Biden administration, the Interior Department was

the tip of the spear in restricting development of America's resources. The Biden administration seemed to believe that land use and conservation were mutually exclusive. But people in places like my State and Governor Burgum's, where the land is part of our way of life, know that the farmer, the rancher, the forester, and other landowners are some of the best conservationists.

And I am pleased that Governor Burgum is committed to restoring the multiple-use approach to managing public lands.

I might argue with Governor Burgum over whether North Dakota's Badlands are, in his words, “significantly badder” than South Dakota's, but I can't argue with his record of success. He literally bet the family farm on a small technology company, and he grew it into a major player in a then-nascent sector.

When he turned his sights on public service, he made a huge impact on North Dakota. He leveraged the State's natural resources to grow its economy and attract talented people to move to the Great Plains, and he will bring the same data-driven, consensus-based, “think big” work ethic to his work as Secretary of the Interior.

I look forward to working with him to protect our public lands and leverage some of America's greatest assets for a safer and more prosperous future.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. CAPITOL EMPLOYEES

Mr. President, I have said it before, and I will say it again: Not one of us would last a day here in Congress without our staffs. But it is not just our staffs; there are a lot of other people on this campus who are essential to ensuring the continued running of this institution: the men and women who clean our offices, who perform ongoing maintenance around the Capitol Complex, who ensure that Members and staffers have some place to get food, who issue ID badges, who run the Press Galleries, who maintain our historic buildings, who set up for events—sometimes very big events—and then break things down afterwards.

The list is long. Day-to-day operations in the Capitol Complex are significant in themselves, but there have been some particularly noteworthy events recently: President Carter's lying-in-state, a Presidential visit, and President Trump's inauguration. Every one of these events required substantial planning and coordination and a lot of extra work for a lot of people, and today, I want to say thank you.

There is no way to name all of the people who were involved in pulling off these events, but I want to make sure to recognize the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, ably led by Senators KLOBUCHAR and FISCHER and by Mike Wagner and Julia Daniel, executive director and chief of staff of the committee. The inauguration would not have happened without these folks, and I am very grateful for their work.

I also want to thank the Architect of the Capitol, Tom Austin, and his incredible staff. From preserving the historic treasures in this building to tending the gardens around the Capitol Complex, staff of the Architect of the Capitol Office make sure that our Capitol continues to stand as a visible beacon of freedom and the rule of law. The work they did for the inauguration and for President Carter's lying-in-state was tremendous.

From building an inaugural stage and then another inaugural stage once freezing temperatures forced the inauguration indoors, to setting up chairs, providing support for TV and press operations, and decorating the building, Tom and his staff worked tirelessly.

I want to give special thanks to Raynell Bennett in Tom's office, who plays a key role in ceremonial events here in the Capitol and whose unfailingly can-do attitude makes planning these events a lot easier.

In addition to the Architect of the Capitol Office, I also want to recognize Jennifer Hemingway, the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and her office. Members of the Sergeant at Arms Office perform essential security and preparedness functions in the Capitol. They monitor the doors to the Senate floor, maintain order in the Galleries, and they are custodians of Senate protocol, including providing key ceremonial support when dignitaries visit. They were essential to both the inauguration and President Carter's lying-in-state, and I am very grateful for their work.

I also cannot fail to mention the Secretary of the Senate's Office as well as members of my staff, who worked on both the lying-in-state and the inauguration.

My deep thanks to all those who maintain the cleanliness of the Capitol and Senate buildings and ensured that so many spaces were ready to welcome visitors.

Finally, I want to recognize all of the women and men of the Capitol Police who stand on guard for us every day but whose workload was vastly increased by these events. They put a lot of effort and a lot of overtime into ensuring safe and successful events, and I am grateful every single day for their service.

Thanks is also due to other law enforcement agencies and officers who contributed to these events, including the Secret Service as well as members of the National Guard. I am grateful for every man and woman in this country who put themselves on the line to protect their fellow Americans.

TRIBUTE TO KAREN PAUL

Mr. President, before I close, I want to mention another Senate employee, the first and so far only archivist of the Senate, who is retiring after an incredible 40-plus years. As the first-ever Senate archivist, Karen Paul has played a significant role in creating archiving standards for the Senate and in drawing attention to the need to preserve records of the work we do for posterity.