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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Ever-present and ever-gracious God, touch the hearts of our lawmakers today with the warmth and wonder of Your wisdom and grace. Infuse their lives with an exemplary integrity that illuminates the darkness of doubt, division, and despair.

May our Senators see beyond baffling events to the power of Your prevailing providence, providing them with a vision of a better nation and world.

Lord, use our legislators for such power that they may honor their calling by faithfully serving You and country.

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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert P. Chamberlin, of Mississippi, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Mississippi.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

SUDAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, since 2023, Sudan has been engulfed in a civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces under the government of that country and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, it is called. It is termed in the paper and reports regularly—Rapid Support Forces—as “RSF.”

After an 18-month siege of El Fasher in the Darfur region, RSF forces took control, and the Sudanese Armed Forces retreated.

Now, the RSF controls roughly half of the country of Sudan. Following the violent takeover of El Fasher, there have been reports of mass killings, reports of executions, and reports of sexual violence.

According to the Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale University, satellite imagery found evidence of mass killings and executions. The Humanitarian Research Lab also alleges war crimes, including the targeting of health facilities, targeting of workers, patients, and even humanitarian aid workers.

Through the curse of this conflict, millions have been displaced and tens of thousands have been killed. The United Nations has determined that the conflict in Sudan is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

Our own country, the United States, has condemned reports of mass atrocities committed by the RSF in El Fasher. The United States has gone as far as in January 2025 to declare that the RSF and its allied militias are committing genocide in Sudan.

The atrocities in Sudan are not just a foreign tragedy. I have been hearing from Sudanese Iowans who have families in Sudan.

I wish the Trump administration well as it attempts to bring the violence to a halt. I have heard President Trump, in his many news conferences, sometimes bring the Sudan atrocities to our attention, indicating he wants to take some action to bring peace to that country. I thank him for doing that. The Sudanese people have been through enough over the years and deserve a chance at a peaceful and prosperous life.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it wasn't long ago that the southern border was in a state of chaos. During the Biden administration, we routinely saw hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants arriving at the border in a single month. It was a situation that the Democratic Senator from Pennsylvania likened to the population of the city of Pittsburgh showing up at the border.

And that is to say nothing of the 1.9 million known “got-aways” who slipped into the country during the Biden years or the suspected terrorists, gang members, and other criminals who were among those coming across our open border.

And then there was the Biden administration's catch-and-release approach to illegal immigration and the way the Biden administration abused asylum and parole to allow individuals to take up residence in our country.

It is hard to believe that the Biden administration and Democrats allowed their border crisis to rage quite literally for years, but they did.

Even the New York Times now admits that President Biden chose not to secure the border when given 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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chance. The Times reported this weekend:

[An] examination of Mr. Biden's record found that he and his closest advisers repeatedly rebuffed recommendations that could have addressed the border crisis faster.

Let me repeat that: They "repeatedly rebuffed recommendations" to ease the border crisis.

Well, I am glad that the New York Times is finally reporting what we have known for a long time, and that is that the Biden administration was completely uninterested in solving the border crisis.

Fortunately, those days are over. When President Trump and Republicans took control this year, we moved to quickly restore order at the southern border, and the numbers speak for themselves.

Customs and Border Protection reported a record low number of encounters in November. Fewer than 250 people per day are being apprehended. Compare that to the Biden administration, where law enforcement was catching more than 5,000 per day on average.

And, in November, for the seventh month in a row, zero illegal immigrants have been released into the United States.

So under the Trump administration, we have a 95-percent drop in apprehensions at the southern border, and not a single one of the individuals apprehended is being released into the country. This is remarkable, remarkable progress. This is what the American people expect when it comes to securing our border.

Republicans are doing everything we can to ensure that this will be the new standard for border security for a long time to come.

Our One Big Beautiful Bill, which we passed in July, makes a generational investment in the resources that law enforcement needs to secure the border and deter illegal immigration. We funded completion of the border wall, new technology and equipment for law enforcement, additional Border Patrol agents, expanded detention capacity, and expanded partnerships with local law enforcement to enforce immigration law.

These investments are beginning to be implemented across the immigration system. Hiring efforts are underway to bring on additional agents. More than 1,000 State and local law enforcement agencies have partnered with the Federal Government to enforce immigration laws through the 287(g) Program. And the Department of Homeland Security is awarding contracts for new technologies and wall construction at the southern border—investments that will improve law enforcement's ability to apprehend the illegal immigrants and smugglers who attempt to cross our southern border.

Republicans promised to secure the border. We wasted no time in delivering on that promise. And thanks to the One Big Beautiful Bill, the American people can be certain that border security is here to stay.

I am grateful to the men and women on the frontlines who come to work every day committed to a safer and a more secure America, and Republicans will continue to work to ensure that they have everything they need to get the job done.

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. SCHUMER. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

AFFORDABILITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, Donald Trump will travel to Pennsylvania and try to convince the American people that he is lowering their costs, but the American people, seeing their costs go up left and right, aren't going to buy it. Tonight, Donald Trump will throw a barrel of hay into the audience and tell them it is spun gold, but the American people know he is lying because everywhere they look, prices are going up and up and up.

We have all read how the White House very soon will start getting "serious" about messaging more on affordability. They don't get it. The problem is that affordability is not a messaging issue; it is real. It is real when people go to the supermarket or buy a car or try to buy a house or see their electric bill, their healthcare bills.

The American people know it is real, and Donald Trump tries to wish it away. He believes that people will believe his words when he says it is a hoax. They won't. They won't. There aren't enough speeches in the world to paper over the fact that Donald Trump has sent costs up and up, not down. His tariffs raised the price of groceries, raised the price of clothing, raised the price of energy. And it is not just his tariffs. It is his policies that cut out the cheapest form of energy we have: clean energy. It is his policies that allow food producers to get away with monopoly pricing. It is his strategy to impose tariffs on the American people and say: It is good for you.

The fact is that Donald Trump can do nothing to erase this, that life is more expensive under Donald Trump than it was before he took office. He will hate to admit it, but life is more expensive under Donald Trump than it was under Joe Biden.

Just 36 percent of Americans approve of his job and the job he is doing on the economy. Thirty-six percent of Americans—that is it—approve of the job Trump is doing on the economy, according to a poll by Marquette University, which is widely respected. Even a significant portion of Trump voters—37 percent—say the cost of living is the worst they can ever remember, according to POLITICO. So when Trump vot-

ers say it was better under Biden than it is now, whoa, something is wrong.

So, no, Donald Trump, affordability is not a hoax; it is not a Democratic scam. You try to make everything, even the most commonsense things, partisan.

The affordability crisis is very real. It is being felt by everyone, and the American people know it is Donald Trump's fault. No speech in Pennsylvania or anywhere else can undo that.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, but I have good news for the President. He and the Republicans do have one chance left to do something meaningful about lowering costs, something real—not a speech, something real—and that is to work with Democrats to extend the enhanced ACA premium tax credits before they expire at the end of the year.

Democrats have put forth a simple proposal for a clean, 3-year extension of the ACA credits. We will move forward on this bill on Thursday. Senate Republicans have 2 days—2 days—to choose to vote to lower the American people's healthcare costs or to vote to continue sending those costs through the roof. That is what is at stake on this vote.

If our bill becomes law, we will accomplish the single most important thing we can do right now to lower prices, prevent premiums for tens of millions of Americans from shooting through the roof. We have an obligation to act now.

Now, if Republicans are left to their own devices, there is not a snowball's chance in hell that they fix this healthcare crisis on their own. Republicans are nowhere, by their own admission.

Leader THUNE has come down to the floor day after day excoriating the ACA, brings a lot of charts, has quotes at the ready, and on and on and on, but he doesn't have a plan. He has no proposal.

Charts are not a plan, Leader THUNE. It is not enough for Republicans to say that they don't like the ACA. That is not a secret. We know that. They have been trying to get rid of it since 2008. They nearly succeeded until the courage of John McCain stopped them in 2019.

The real question is, What will Republicans do to prevent premiums from skyrocketing in 3 weeks? So far, we have heard no real answer. The only ideas we have heard from Republicans are loaded with poison pills, unworkable restrictions, and don't do anything to bring premiums down, which is most important. None of their proposals address extending the ACA credits—the most important thing we can do now. So those kinds of proposals don't get the American people's support or Democrats' support.

The party is adrift at sea. The Republican Party is adrift at sea, trying to find a plan. So far, we have heard no serious plan at all. And that is not just me saying it. Here is what a Republican Senator said yesterday: