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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.

God of mystery and clarity, open our eyes to see the unexpected ways You come to us. Lord, reveal to us Your presence in the beauties of nature and the promises of Sacred Scriptures and in the challenges that deepen our dependence on You.

Make clear Your plans to our lawmakers and infuse them with confidence in Your power. Inspire them to use their talents as instruments of liberation and healing. Lord, keep them purposeful and expectant so they will experience a deeper friendship with You in the living of their days.

We pray in Your abiding 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. MULLIN). 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 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 Tulsi Gabbard, of Hawaii, to be Director of National Intelligence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF BROOKE ROLLINS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, for the third time, I come to the Senate floor to ask my Democrat colleagues if they will respect the Democrats on the Senate Agriculture Committee. That committee voted unanimously to approve Mrs. Rollins to be Secretary of Agriculture. There should be no reason to spend 30 hours of debate, and it would show disrespect for the Democrats on the Agriculture Committee not to approve her unless we did it by unanimous consent.

TRIBUTE TO COOPER DEJEAN

Mr. President, on another point, the champions of the 59th Super Bowl will celebrate with a parade on Valentine's Day in Philadelphia. I can say with pride that the State of Iowa is celebrating this victory with Cooper DeJean, a hometown hero and former Iowa Hawkeye. On Super Bowl Sunday, he made history on his 22nd birthday in his rookie season with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Cooper grew up in the northwest Iowa farming community of Odebolt, population 985. He was a four-star varsity athlete in high school, competing with the Odebolt Arthur Battle Creek Ida Grove Falcons. From Odebolt, he went to the University of Iowa, becoming a two-time all-American cornerback. Last year, Cooper was drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles.

As you would expect, his hometown had a watch party on Sunday. They

called it "Cooper Bowl" and, boy, did Cooper shine. He had a thrilling 38-yard "pick 6" in the second quarter. Cooper made Super Bowl history, becoming the first player to intercept a pass or score a touchdown on his birthday.

The young man from Odebolt was spotted entering the Super Dome in New Orleans—you know what—wearing his high school letterman jacket. He also had a "712 to 215" printed on his cleats in homage to his hometown area code and his new Philadelphia area code.

So congratulations, Cooper. You are a role model for young athletes to dream big and put in the work.

A smalltown kid from Western Iowa made history and made all Iowans proud. We look forward to watching you shine for many years to come.

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.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, President Trump's border czar was at the Capitol yesterday to update Republican Senators on the progress the administration is making on arresting and deporting criminals here illegally. And it is difficult to believe some of the individuals they have arrested were still in the country—members of violent international gangs; individuals arrested for murder, for rape, for kidnapping, for drug trafficking, for sexual crimes involving children, and for human smuggling. Again, it is staggering to think that these criminals were out there on our Nation's streets. And our communities will be safer places without these individuals.

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



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Since day one of his administration, President Trump has been fulfilling his campaign promise to crack down on illegal immigration and secure our border. And it is good to see.

Immigration is a key part of our country's story, and immigrants have made untold contributions to our country. But we need to ensure that immigration is done legally, for both the safety of our country and to preserve respect for the rule of law. The chaos of the last 4 years was unsustainable, and it was dangerous.

We had 10 million individuals flood across our southern border. We had millions—millions—of undocumented individuals take up residence in our country, more than the population of a number of U.S. States. Law enforcement officials were overwhelmed, and officers were pulled off of essential work of guarding the border just to process the flood of migrants.

Border cities and other cities across the United States struggled to deal with the influx. And all of this chaos was an invitation to terrorists, to smugglers, to drug cartels, and other dangerous individuals to enter our country.

So I am tremendously proud and grateful for the incredible amount of work the President has done so far to make it clear that illegal migration will no longer be tolerated. There is a lot more work to do, and some of that is going to require Congress's help.

Mr. Homan, President Trump's border czar, made clear to Senators yesterday that Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement are going to need additional resources to continue the good work they have been doing to secure our border and to get criminals off of our streets. We intend to deliver.

Today, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, is kicking off the committee markup of a budget resolution that will lay the foundation for a transformational investment in border security and immigration enforcement and in our national defense. We will provide resources to increase the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and Border Patrol agents, expand detention space, facilitate deportations of dangerous individuals, and obtain the barriers and technology that we need to secure the border.

Mr. President, for too long, our country has tolerated rampant illegal immigration. That ends now. I am grateful for everything the President is doing to protect our streets and uphold the law. And the Republican-led Congress will ensure that the administration has the resources needed to continue this important work.

TRUMP CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, in a few minutes, we are going to be voting on a couple of nominees. The first one is Tulsi Gabbard to be the Director of the DNI. The second one will be a cloture vote to proceed to the nomination of Bobby

Kennedy to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

What I observe—it is interesting about both of these nominees—is that both are former Democrats. In fact, a year ago—a year ago—they were Democrats. I would argue they have seen the light. They have become Republicans and now they have been nominated by President Trump to fill important roles within his administration.

But I made that observation only because there is a lot of talk these days about loyalty oaths and allegiance and saliva purity tests for people to be considered good enough to be in the so-called MAGA movement—in other words, the Republican Party.

Yet when it comes to Democrats, a very different standard seems to be applied here because both of these people were former Democrats. In fact, frankly, they probably agree with the Democratic Party here in the Senate on a lot of positions that they hold.

And yet they have the temerity to come out and support positions that, perhaps, run contrary to some of the positions held by, particularly, the progressive wing of the Democrat Party in this country—in the case of RFK, coming out for positions that run counter to the orthodoxy of the healthcare so-called establishment, or in the case of Ms. Gabbard, different views, perhaps, about national security matters than those held by a lot of Democrats, certainly here in this Chamber, and progressive movement in the country.

It harkens back to two other Democrats who pretty much got pushed out of their party here in the U.S. Senate for holding views that ran contrary to the majority view of the progressive wing of the Democrat Party. Those two Democrats were Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema.

In the case of Kyrsten Sinema, she was viewed, I think, by Democrats as, perhaps, too free market. She was viewed as pro-business, as pro-investment, and as pro-jobs, lighter regulatory touch, lighter tax policy, pro-energy policy.

In the case of Joe Manchin, he had—I should say he had what I would say are accurate views with respect to energy development in this country—in other words, making America energy dominant, a view shared by many in our party, including our President. And for that, he was viewed as too conservative to be a true Democrat.

So Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema ended up getting pushed out of the Democratic Party here in the U.S. Senate.

Their ultimate cardinal sin, however—in the case of Manchin, as I said, he was pro-energy in a party that is dominated by climate, green, all those—whatever adjectives you want to use to characterize it or describe it—his views ran contrary. In fact, he tried to cut a deal with the Democrats in the Inflation Reduction Act only to find out they kind of went back on it, and the deal wasn't what he thought he had agreed to.

So his views were out of step, out of the mainstream of the Democratic Party, as were Kyrsten Sinema's. But their cardinal sin—their cardinal sin—was that they voted against getting rid of the legislative filibuster, a view that was held by—up until just a few years ago—a majority of Democrats here in the U.S. Senate. There was a letter signed, which I shared the other night, that had 32 Democratic signatures on it pleading with the leadership here in the Senate not to abandon the Senate tradition and heritage with respect to the Senate filibuster; to maintain the heritage and tradition that the Senate has for open debate and for representation of the minority; for the requirement of collaboration and bipartisanship when it comes to moving consequential legislation. Those are the things that the filibuster traditionally was about.

And up until a few years ago, most of my colleagues on the other side—a majority on the other side—signed a letter articulating their views that it ought to be the position of the U.S. Senate.

Well, they tried to push it because they weren't getting the outcomes they wanted on a couple of pieces of legislation when they had the majority a couple of years ago. And they forced a vote on changing the rules—breaking the rules—to get rid of the legislative filibuster and be able to map an agenda that is more consistent with their liking.

There were two people that voted against it on their side, Kyrsten Sinema and Joe Manchin. And for that cardinal sin, they were essentially ostracized. And to this day, the Democratic Party continues to hold a position now, very contrary to the one they held just a few years ago, about getting rid of the legislative filibuster.

Why do they want to do that? Because they want to enact an agenda—a progressive leftist agenda—which the American people voted against in November.

As recently as last summer at the Democratic convention, the Democrat leader basically laid out the things they want to do. First he said: We are going to get rid of the filibuster because we have the votes now. Manchin and Sinema are gone. I talked to the Democrats that we think we are going to elect, and we will have 51. At that time, he was predicting a clean sweep—they were going to win the House, the Senate, and the White House. They would get rid of the legislative filibuster, and the first thing they would do is they would Federalize our elections. That was the first thing they would do.

Then they said they would enshrine abortion rights in law. That was one thing they would do. There were many on their side who talked about packing the Supreme Court, about allowing statehood for Puerto Rico and for Washington, DC—all elements of the agenda they want to accomplish through getting rid of the legislative