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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.

Sovereign God, thank You that Your mercies endure forever. Show us Your ways. Teach us Your paths as You lead us with Your truth. Guard our hearts from fear and confusion when the road ahead is unclear. Give us patience when we want quick answers and faith when we cannot see the outcome.

Lord, strengthen our Senators. May they trust in You when circumstances feel unstable as You remind them that You are steady, even when they are not. Order their steps according to Your will. Close every door that is not from You and give them wisdom to recognize the doors You have opened.

We pray in Your amazing 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.

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.

The President pro tempore.

TRIBUTE TO DANIEL UMEMEZIE

Mr. GRASSLEY. I want to honor a young Iowan, so I am here to recognize Daniel Umemezie, who was recently named the 10th National Youth Poet Laureate.

Daniel is a recent graduate of Cedar Falls High School, Cedar Falls, IA. That is 10 miles from my farm.

Daniel is already a master of poetry. Last year, he was named Iowa's Student Poet Ambassador. This year, he was named the 10th National Youth Poet Laureate. This makes him the first Iowan to receive this prestigious award in poetry.

Daniel's poetry uses his childhood growing up in Nigeria as inspiration for his work.

I want to congratulate Daniel on this achievement. Daniel, you are making the State of Iowa proud.

IOWA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on another matter, as I hold my 99 county meetings, I always hear from the farmers about the ag economy, and it is a top concern for all Iowans, of course, because Iowa is the No. 1 State in the Nation for food production.

Yesterday, I welcomed the opportunity to discuss what is on the minds of family farmers with Agriculture Secretary Rollins as she appeared for her annual oversight appearance before the Senate Agriculture Committee. And it happens that I believe that the Madam Secretary is a great advocate for the family farmers, and I appreciate how she is handling the Office of the Agriculture Secretary.

Now, back home in Iowa, I hear Congress could do more to help the farmers. For instance, I hear about year-round E15. Now, that is good for the consumers because it would reduce gas prices 20 to 40 cents, but it is also good because our major crop in Iowa—corn—is where ethanol is manufactured from.

And then I also hear from the agriculture community about we need to

deal with the problem of the State of California having what is called Proposition 12, and that prohibits Iowa pork that isn't raised just exactly the way California says it is raised. It can't be sold in the State of California, and that ought to irritate Members of Congress because 1 of the 18 powers of Congress under the Constitution in article I is the power to regulate interstate and foreign commerce.

So we have 1 State out of 50—California—saying that you can't sell pork in their State—and California is about 15 percent of the consumer market in the United States—if it isn't raised just exactly the way the law of California says it should be raised. So the farmers of Iowa are telling me: Get rid of Proposition 12.

Now, basics of a strong society is feeding your people. And the tax bill that the President signed last July 4, called the Working Families Tax Cut, was a good start to strengthening farm programs because we strengthened the farm safety net by raising support prices for corn to \$4.10 and soybeans to \$10 a bushel. But that isn't enough to help farmers that are underwater, not making a profit. So there is more work that needs to be done.

So here, in somewhat of a repetitive statement, it is time for the Senate to pass a 5-year farm bill. The last one was 2018. Inflation affecting agriculture demands that there be some changes in the 2018 farm bill and that we pass E15 by law and not rely on Presidential waivers anymore and that we pass Proposition 12 legislation to get rid of the bad environment in California for selling our product there—pork—because Iowa is the No. 1 pork producer in the Nation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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



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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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 4744

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

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

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4744) to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, and other Federal laws, to improve benefits for veterans and the administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. THUNE. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the 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.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last week, Senate Republicans passed legislation to fund Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the next 3 years. On Tuesday, House Republicans passed the legislation, and, yesterday, the President signed the bill into law.

I am proud that we got this done, of course. Republicans are deeply committed to ensuring a safe country and safe communities, and border security and immigration enforcement are key parts of that. No country—no country—can be secure if bad actors can make their way freely across the borders or criminal illegal immigrants are able to operate freely within our neighborhoods.

So, as I said, I am proud that we got this done, but I also have to ask: How did we get here? How did we get to the point where one party has completely abdicated any responsibility for our Nation's security?

It is not just this bill. Democrats have been playing fast and loose with our national security all year. Their two recordbreaking shutdowns strained our Nation's critical national security Agencies, particularly Agencies at the Department of Homeland Security, which was shut down for a staggering 119 days, all told, this fiscal year. The TSA, responsible for the security of our Nation's airports, has seen a flood of resignations, thanks to Democrats' decision to make these critical workers go without pay for quite literally months.

And then there is border security and immigration enforcement. Democrats absolutely refused to provide so much as a dollar—a dollar—to fund the agents who provide security at our Nation's borders and remove criminal illegal immigrants from America's streets. I can't make that point enough.

If Democrats had their way, there would be zero—zero—physical presence at our Nation's borders and zero agents to remove criminal illegal immigrants who do make their way into our country. It is a breathtaking—breath-taking—level of irresponsibility.

I am still not done because I haven't yet talked about FISA. Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act is our Nation's most critical intelligence-gathering tool. Policymakers across the Federal Government from both parties rely on section 702 information on a near daily basis. And we were well on our way to reauthorizing it, with Democrat and Republican lawmakers here in the Senate working on an agreement. And then, as has happened more than once this year, Democrats backed out. Now, this critical tool is set to go dark on Friday, and what the consequences of that will be we cannot predict.

It is striking how weak Democrats' ostensible reasons have been for all of these actions. They are blocking a critical national security tool because they don't like the President's temporary, short-term pick for Acting DNI. They shut down the Federal Government twice and refused to fund border security and immigration enforcement because they couldn't take yes for an answer.

Ultimately, Democrats have made it clear this year that, for them, it is always politics over policy. And if our economy suffers, if our national security suffers because of Democrats' decision to shut down the government or refusal to fund border security, well, Democrats are apparently just fine with that.

Polls tend to show that Americans trust Republicans more than Democrats when it comes to crime and national security. I think Democrats are making it very clear why that is. The fact that Republicans had to act alone to fund security at our Nation's borders is all the evidence you need to know to show that Democrats are fundamentally unserious about their national security responsibilities.

Republicans, of course, will continue to do everything we can to keep our country and our communities secure. It is too bad the same cannot be said of Senate Democrats.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

INFLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, it may genuinely be impossible for Trump to be more out of touch with the American people than he already is. After Trumpflation reached a record high yesterday, Donald Trump said:

The numbers are great . . . I love the inflation.

That is what he said. Those are his words.

The numbers are great . . . I love the inflation.

That is when inflation hit a record high, long-time high of 4.2 percent. Look at this guy. How out of touch is he?

Donald Trump, the American people hate the inflation. They are shouting it from the rooftops every day: Bring costs down. And Donald Trump says "I love the inflation."

What is wrong with him? How out of touch is he? It is sickening, and you can't even make this stuff up. Americans are losing their homes. Parents are working multiple jobs just to feed their kids. Workers are walking to their jobs because they can't afford to fill up their tanks, but Donald Trump has the audacity to say "I love the inflation."

In fact, I was told that a veteran in New York one night had to choose between feeding his child and feeding his service dog. Isn't that—doesn't that make you sad?

What we are seeing from Trump isn't just benign neglect or blind indifference. Trump is actively rooting for the financial demise of the American people when he says "I love the inflation."

What is Trump thinking? Did Trump lose a bet where he had to say the most asinine, tone-deaf thing imaginable on national television?

Trump has torched the American economy with his tariffs, with his disastrous war in Iran, and with his unprecedented cuts to healthcare and other vital services. Now most arsonists flee the scene of the crime; Donald Trump calls a press conference. The only thing Donald Trump loves more than inflation is the corruption.

As Americans live through a financial nightmare, Donald Trump is living out his billionaire dreams: golden ballrooms, lavish gifts from foreign countries, sweetheart deals for his family business, taxpayer-funded cash payouts for him and his cronies through the slush fund.

Apparently, Senate Republicans love the inflation too, helping Trump every step of the way as he drives up costs and lines his pockets. You would think