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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who remembers the weary, lift Your hand and we shall live. You are King forever, hearing the desires of the discouraged and encouraging them.

Today, lead our Senators, and may their labors honor You. Use their talents to bring concord to Capitol Hill. Lord, make our lawmakers instruments of Your prevailing providence. Give them a spirit of peace, even in the midst of life's storms. May they follow Your example of sacrificial service, striving to commit themselves to justice and truth. Place Your truth in their minds, Your love in their hearts, and Your compassion on their lips.

Lord, make us all instruments of Your will on Earth, upholding us with Your righteous right hand.

We pray in Your Holy 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING BILL AND FISCAL AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate voted overwhelming

to pass another piece of important legislation for our country. By a vote of 74 to 21, the Senate said yes to protecting the private information of every American. The significant bill we passed would do so through the sharing of threat information from cyber attacks.

It couldn't have passed without the hard work of Senators from both sides of the aisle. I particularly thank Senator MCCAIN, Senator RON JOHNSON, and Senator TOM CARPER, who worked hard to move this bill forward. I appreciate in particular the outstanding work of our chairman, Senator BURR from North Carolina, and our vice chair, Senator FEINSTEIN from California. They worked together seamlessly to move this challenging bill forward.

It is worth noting something the vice chair recently said. She said: "One of the things I've learned from two prior bills of this type is that if you really want to get a bill done, it's got to be bipartisan—particularly a bill that's technical and difficult and hard to put together."

After watching the Senate fail to act on cyber threat information sharing for years, the new Senate majority resolved to move forward instead. As our Democratic colleague from California put it, "We stood shoulder to shoulder and the right things happened."

Yesterday's bipartisan vote was an important step forward for our country. It represents the new Senate's latest notable accomplishment on behalf of the American people. We remain determined to keep pushing ahead as Congress continues its work to send a strong cyber security bill to the President's desk.

On another matter, the House will soon consider the fiscal agreement. After the House acts, the Senate will take up the measure. Republicans approached the recent fiscal negotiations with several goals: No. 1, reject the tax increases proposed by Democrats; No. 2, secure long-term savings via struc-

tural entitlement reforms; and No. 3, protect our troops and strengthen national security. The agreement pending before the House meets those goals. It is not perfect—far from it—but here is what we know: It is offset with other cuts and savings. It would enact the most significant reform to Social Security since 1983, resulting in \$168 billion in long-term savings. It would repeal more of ObamaCare. It would provide greater certainty to our military planners to help ensure readiness and preparedness for our troops.

At a time of diverse and challenging global threats, when we see ISIL consolidating gains in Iraq and Syria and Russian aircraft flying over Syria as the forces of Assad march alongside Iranian soldiers and Hezbollah militias, the importance of this cannot be overstated.

Our All-Volunteer Force loyally goes into harm's way, and our commanders tell us that additional resources are required to ensure their safety and preparedness.

I urge my colleagues to consider these important issues as they continue to examine the agreement. We plan to consider it after the House acts.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, our goals regarding the budget agreement were to make sure that we got rid of sequestration—we did that for 2 years—and that we had a treatment in this legislation where defense, which is so important to our country, is treated no better or no worse than nondefense. We accomplished that.

We are months behind in the appropriations process because the Republican leader decided he was going to

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



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push forward and not take care of the middle class. I was stunned—I shouldn't say that. That is not appropriate. I was not surprised when the Republican leader laid out his goals for his budget agreement—not a single word about the middle class.

I compliment the negotiators for coming up with something that is really good. It is a 2-year deal that allows more money to be spent for defense and nondefense, and it doesn't affect the deficit in any way. It is a good agreement.

Before we start the backslapping and congratulations, let's make sure that we, first of all, pass the budget agreement. I think we will. I was happy to see the new Speaker-to-be came out for the budget agreement today. He complained about it yesterday, and when he was reminded that it was the same pattern he and Senator MURRAY came up with 2 years ago, I guess he changed his mind. He said now he is in favor of this. I think that is good, that Congressman RYAN said that.

After we pass the budget framework by December 11, we have to make sure the appropriators are able to move forward on legislation that takes into consideration the budget agreement we have. I am certain that can be done, but it is not a given based on all of the finger-pointing by the Republicans.

This is a significant agreement. I repeat: We have relief from the vexatious sequestration. We have dollar-for-dollar help for the middle class as well as defense. There are no destructive riders in this.

When we work together, as we are supposed to do—as the Republican leader just mentioned—on legislation, it works out well.

I would suggest this. We had the House of Representatives yesterday, after years of refusing to move forward on an important piece of legislation—that is, to reestablish the Import-Export Bank. It only came about as a result of courageous Republicans saying: We have had enough of this.

This is one of the most important business-directed initiatives we have here, and it has been held up for years in the House of Representatives. It was because of these courageous Republicans who said: We have had enough of this. And they joined with Democrats to do what is rarely done in the House of Representatives. They signed a discharge petition—getting more than 218 votes—to say: We have had enough of this stalling; we want to move forward. And they did. Yesterday, that passed by a vote of 313 votes. That is a tremendous push.

I hope that over here the Republican leader will move forward on this now. There are stories coming out every day about American companies that are moving their businesses overseas because the Export-Import Bank is gone. It creates 160,000 jobs for people to work in this industry. It is important to our country. Right now, businesses are moving out of the United States be-

cause this legislation never came forward. The Bank had to close. It is basically closed right now.

I hope that we are not going to wait for some package deal with the highway bill. The highway bill should stand or fall on its own merits.

We are pleading with the Republicans to allow us to have a vote on this. We have Republicans who will vote with us. Virtually every Democrat will vote for it. We should get it done this week. Every day it is held up is a bad day for the American business community.

I ask the Chair to announce the business for today.

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 until 12 noon, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The assistant Democratic leader.

THE BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is possible this week that we will pass a budget agreement for the fiscal year we are currently in. That year started October 1 and runs, of course, until the end of December in the next calendar year. If we do reach that agreement—and I hope we do—it is going to give us some opportunities. One opportunity it will give us is to spare ourselves the possibility of this Congress failing to enact a new budget ceiling to basically guarantee the full faith and credit of the United States of America. We won't face that showdown. Also, the possibility of a government shutdown will be relieved by the passage of this budget agreement.

Those are good, positive things for this institution and for the economy of America, but there are specifics that also need to be noted because this budget agreement gives us a chance to invest in areas of our budget that sadly would have been overlooked if we hadn't reached this agreement.

This morning we had an extraordinary presentation by the National Institutes of Health. Twenty Senators came to hear the presentation about research at the National Institutes of Health and what it means to us. Dr. Francis Collins is the Director and is an extraordinary man. He is a medical doctor who was given the task of mapping the human genome and did it. He did it in an extraordinary way, creating new information and new opportunities.

A doctor from the Mayo Clinic explained what that meant. It meant that we have now reached a point

where we can map the genome of individuals, their DNA, and we can then make decisions on the appropriate prescriptions for illnesses and diseases they face and in doing that, be more effective, save lives. That is what medical research can mean. Each of us will not only have a basic biography in our medical record—when we were born and some of the basic illnesses we have faced—but also our individual map of our DNA, which will instruct doctors when it comes to treatment of cancer, if it should strike us, or some other disease.

It is an amazing leap forward. It is a leap forward that would not be possible without medical research. Yet, in the past 12 years, we have seen a downturn in investment in medical research of more than 20 percent—more than 20 percent. It has meant that a lot of researchers have been discouraged and walked away and said there is no future in medical research. What a loss. They don't make a lot of money—many of them don't. If they don't think we are going to support them with our investment in NIH and medical research, they look in other places.

This morning we considered where we are. At this moment in time, the Senate, under the leadership of Senator BLUNT of Missouri and the Appropriations subcommittee on health and human services, has provided basically a 7-percent increase in the funding for the National Institutes of Health next year. That is a good thing.

I will say quickly that Senator BLUNT cut a lot of other areas in his bill that I think need to have help, but I hope that he will stand tall and tough when it comes to that 7-percent increase as we approach this budget negotiation. The House, conversely, did not give such an increase to NIH, but they increased the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which is a companion sister agency that is important for medical research.

We have a chance to come together on a bipartisan basis and come up with a number that gives 5-percent real growth in spending at both the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It will pay us back many times over.

Most Americans say: What are we going to do about the cost of Medicare? Medicare is an important program to over 40 million Americans, and the costs keep going up. There are two facts that we learned about this morning and people should be aware of them: \$1 out of every \$5 spent under our Medicare system is spent on Alzheimer's and dementia. If we could have a means of early detection, prevention, treatment or cure for these horrible diseases, that would dramatically change the lives of millions of Americans and millions of families, and it would dramatically reduce the cost to Medicare and Medicaid.

Medicare spends \$1 out of \$3 for the treatment of people with diabetes. If we put the research into finding a cure