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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.

God of grace and glory, on Your people place Your power. As we turn our hands and hearts in grateful praise to You, use us for Your glory.

Touch our Senators. Lift them from valleys of pessimism as You fill them with Your abiding hope. Prepare them to receive Your best gifts, helping them to remember that You are able to do more than they can ask for or imagine.

Thank You that You are the beginner of our yesterdays, the mystery of our today, and the hope for our tomorrows.

We pray in Your sovereign 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.

RESTORING AMERICANS' HEALTH-CARE FREEDOM RECONCILIATION ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, when Washington Democrats passed ObamaCare over the objections of the American people, they were confident Americans would soon warm up to this new law, but more than 5 years later,

the American people continue to oppose this unprecedented Democratic attack on their health care. Is it any wonder? When Americans think ObamaCare, they think increased costs, runaway premiums, surging deductibles, and tax hikes on the middle class. When Americans think ObamaCare, they think decreased choice, fewer doctors, far-away hospitals, and a frightening scarcity of options for too many when they get sick. When Americans think ObamaCare, they think broken promises and endless failure, imploding State-based exchanges, collapsing co-ops, insurers eyeing the exit door, fewer jobs, and the lie of the year: If you like your health care plan, you can keep it. It is not as though ObamaCare's structural failures are just going to go away. They are baked right into the law. They only seem to get worse as time moves along.

Just as we have seen costs rise, choices narrow, and failures mount, we have seen congressional Democrats block attempts to start over with real health care reform. Well, this week we finally have a chance to vote to end ObamaCare's cycle of broken promises and failures with just 51 votes. This week we will take up the Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act of 2015 that already passed the House of Representatives. It is a bill that will take the first steps necessary to build a bridge away from ObamaCare. By building upon the House's good work, this bill will also save billions in spending and eliminate more than a \$1 trillion tax burden on the American people.

By employing the same tactics Democrats used to help get ObamaCare across the finish line, this bill will not be subject to a filibuster. In other words, it cannot be blocked by defenders of ObamaCare's failed status quo. In other words, the President cannot be shielded from the weighty decision he will finally have to make when this

measure lands right on his desk. When the President picks up his pen, he will have a real choice to make. He may decide to stick to his rhetoric that the law is working better than even he intended and veto the bill, but he should instead decide to finally stand with the middle class that has suffered enough from this failed law and actually sign it. We will see. It is a choice the President has never faced before. It is a choice he is going to face after Senate action this week.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, the new Republican Senate has been working hard to get Congress back to work over the past year. We have obviously had a lot of success. As I noted yesterday, the new Republican Senate will soon pass two very significant bipartisan bills for a second and final time: the bipartisan multiyear highway bill and the bipartisan replacement for No Child Left Behind. We will send them to the President for his signature.

These are the latest examples of a new Congress that is back to work on behalf of the American people. They are hardly the only examples we will be talking about. Take another important issue that languished for too long but passed the new Senate: cyber security. By a vote of 74 to 21, we ended years of Senate inaction on this issue by passing an important bipartisan cyber security bill that even the White House has endorsed. That bill was the product of a lot of hard work by the top Republican and the top Democrat on the Intelligence Committee. I am glad that the new, more open, and more inclusive Republican Senate made their cooperation possible because even though the old forces of gridlock tried to trip that bill up several times along the way, we kept moving forward, and we always knew we were doing the right thing for the American people.

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



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