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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

Almighty God, draw near and walk with us today. Lead our Senators beside still waters and restore their souls. Comfort them with Your grace as they strive to keep America strong. Use them to make our Nation a less dangerous place to live.

May our lawmakers find fellowship with You as they seek Your guidance and rely on Your wisdom. Direct their steps, providing them with confidence for every contingency. Make them more than conquerors in all of life's alternating and fluctuating intricacies. Fill them with reverential awe as they comprehend their accountability to You.

We pray in Your merciful 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. JOHNSON). The majority leader is recognized.

ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Democratic leader, who has been leading a partisan filibuster of anti-Zika funding for over a week, said this about anti-Zika funding yesterday:

There's no excuse for inaction and partisanship. We can't afford to waste another day, a week, another month.

Maybe Democrats are finally ready to end their partisan attack on women's health. I certainly hope so, and, as I have said many times, they will have that opportunity soon.

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, far too many Americans know the toll the prescription opioid and heroin epidemic is taking on our families, our communities, and each of our States.

Anti-drug groups certainly know the toll this crisis is taking. Nearly 200 groups dealing with this crisis in their communities called for action in a letter to Congress just this week. They wrote to endorse the conference report for the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act.

Let me share what they wrote:

We commend the conferees for the final bill and are calling on Congress for quick action to send this to the President's desk for signature.

The report is truly a comprehensive response to the opioid epidemic, which includes critical policy changes and new resources. The report also acknowledges that the six pillars of a comprehensive response are each of equal import and interdependent as a whole, including prevention, treatment, recovery support, criminal justice reform, overdose reversal, and law enforcement. Only through a comprehensive response can we reverse current trends and provide individuals and families impacted by addiction with the services they need.

As you know, 129 Americans die each day as a result of drug overdose and this epidemic affects the public health and safety in every community across this country. This bill is the critical response we need.

These are groups such as the Vermont Recovery Network, the Free Heroin's Hold in Minnesota, Kent County Memorial Hospital in Rhode Island, and Voices of Hope, in my home State of Kentucky, among dozens and

dozens more. Many have seen the impact of this epidemic firsthand. They know the difference this legislation could make, and they are calling for us to send this bill to the President as soon as possible.

There is no reason our Democratic colleagues shouldn't support this conference report now as well, especially given their support for CARA when the Senate voted 94 to 1 to pass it.

The senior Senator from Vermont called the bill "historic" and said he was "proud to be a cosponsor."

The senior Senator from Ohio has commended colleagues for "coming together in a bipartisan way" and "taking action on the opioid epidemic that is devastating communities across our country."

Just last week, the senior Senator from Washington penned an op-ed praising the progress on addressing the epidemic. She wrote: "I'm proud to be working with Republicans and Democrats to conference legislation, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA), which would offer cities and states stronger tools to confront opioid addiction."

It is understandable why she should be proud. The Trilogy Recovery Community, an organization in Washington State that has joined the chorus of those calling for passage of the CARA conference report, would certainly agree.

The conference report the Senate will soon consider can make a difference for the American people. It is the product of years of hard work, and it is very similar to the CARA bill that already passed the Senate with no Democratic opposition. Now is the time to finalize it, as the nearly 200 groups that fight this epidemic in our States are advocating, because this issue is just too important to be caught up in partisan politics.

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



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