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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.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.

Gracious Father, fill our Senators with Your truth and peace. Let Your truth bring them freedom from anxiety, fear, pride, timidity, and sin. Let Your peace guard their hearts, reminding them of the power of Your sovereignty and grace. As they have opportunity, empower them to do good for all people. Thank You for bestowing such love upon us that we can be called Your children. Lord, use us for Your glory as You keep us on the path You have selected for our lives.

We pray in Your great 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. LANKFORD). The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand appointments were made during the adjournment of the Senate. I ask that they be stated for the record.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the majority leader, pursuant to Public Law 105-292, as amended by Public Law 106-55, Public Law 107-228, and Public Law 112-75, appoints the following individual to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: Clifford D. May of Maryland.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 114-140, the appointment of the following individuals to serve as members of the Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission: Kathleen B. Rice of Indiana (data minimization/personal-identifiable information expert), Robert J. Shea of Virginia (data expert with experience in administering programs), and Kenneth R. Troske of Kentucky (academic researcher/data expert).

ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I welcome everyone back from what I hope was a productive State work period. I am sure I speak for all of us when I say that traveling to our States and meeting with those we represent is one of the best parts of this job. It is also one of the most important. That is because it allows us to hear different perspectives on critical issues and reminds us of the real difference good policy can make in the lives of the American people.

From funding the government to supporting our servicemembers and taking action on issues such as Zika, we have a lot to get done in this upcoming work period. I look forward to working with colleagues on these and other important issues in the coming weeks.

As I mentioned, over the State work period, Senators on both sides had opportunities to meet with constituents and talk with them about a number of serious problems facing our country. From combating the Zika virus to addressing an array of national security challenges, Americans such as those I met with back home wanted to know what steps both parties are taking to help.

For our friends across the aisle, that must have been a little bit of a difficult conversation. That is because before the work period, Senate Democrats filibustered funding to combat Zika and to support veterans—not once but twice. They also filibustered funding to provide resources for our servicemembers and national defense priorities. It is hard to explain why, despite their own calls for funding, Senate Democrats decided to block a bill that could help keep pregnant women and babies safer from Zika.

It is also hard to explain why—despite the array of terror attacks we have seen across the world—Senate Democrats decided to block a bill that could help keep the American people safer from threats like ISIL.

Our colleagues across the aisle can point to a series of partisan excuses, but the bottom line is this: There is no good explanation for blocking these public health and national security funding bills.

Over the summer, there were important steps taken to combat the virus. The administration took the guidance of Appropriations Chairmen COCHRAN and ROGERS, and with the advocacy of Members such as Senators BLUNT and RUBIO, HHS shifted funds already available to them to strengthen our defense against the virus.

Aerial spraying also started early in August and has produced positive results. The CDC Director has said he has been “impressed by the effectiveness” of the spraying, noting the “substantial reduction in the number of mosquitoes” in the transmission areas, but

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



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