



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2017

No. 11

Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DAN SULLIVAN, a Senator from the State of Alaska.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, our souls long for You, for we find strength and joy in Your presence. Increase our faith and teach us to trust You even during life's storms.

Today we have witnessed the peaceful transition of power, and we are grateful for this great land. Guide our lawmakers. May they find strength and joy in Your presence. Lord, give them the wisdom to claim Your promise that You will never leave or forsake them and that nothing can separate them from Your love. Empower them to seek in every undertaking to know Your will, daily claiming the promise of Your wisdom. Keep them without stumbling or slipping, as You continue to do for them more than they can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 20, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable DAN SULLIVAN, a Senator from the State of Alaska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SULLIVAN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

INAUGURATION AND CABINET NOMINEES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in November's election, the people called for a new direction, a change from the last 8 years. Today, we took a meaningful step toward that new direction as we inaugurated a new President of the United States.

I think it is important for all Americans—regardless of party—to remember the significance of inauguration day. As we celebrate our Nation's rich electoral tradition, we can begin to move our country forward together.

It is always an honor to participate in the historical transition of power and the ceremonies surrounding it. Today was certainly no exception. On behalf of the Senate, I wish to express our gratitude to each individual, from law enforcement personnel to Inaugural Committee staff, to congressional staff of volunteers whose efforts made this event a success.

I wish to again congratulate President Trump and Vice President PENCE on today's inauguration. We are eager to work with you and the administration in advancing policies that can improve the lives of the American people.

Today marks a new beginning. We are faced with many new opportunities. We are faced with some new challenges too. I will have more to say on that in the coming days. For now, the Senate remains hard at work as we move forward with the confirmation process on President Trump's nominees. We will have an opportunity to confirm some today.

It is imperative to proceed with confirmations without delay, especially when it comes to key national and economic security needs. I urge colleagues to remember that we worked with the administration of former President Obama after he was first inaugurated. We confirmed seven—seven—members of his Cabinet on the day he took office and nearly the entire Cabinet was filled within 2 weeks.

I wish to say, parenthetically, there is a lot the minority can do at the very beginning by refusing to give consent to drag this out, and that is what apparently is occurring here. The nominations we are not doing are not even controversial.

I would hope the feeling around here would be at least on day one to have some level of cooperation. We should work in the same spirit with the current administration and put the rest of President Trump's team in place as soon as possible. Specifically, it is important that we confirm General Mattis and General Kelly to their crucial positions as the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security.

That is not enough. We live in dangerous times. As the Democratic leader noted earlier just today, "We face threats foreign and domestic." It is critical for the President to have a full national security team today, day one. That includes, in particular, the Director of the CIA. It makes no sense 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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