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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, a Senator from the State of West Virginia.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Rabbi Barry Block, leader of the Congregation B'nai Israel in Little Rock, AR.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Divine Source of Blessing, we come before You today to ask Your blessings on the United States Senate and on the 100 men and women who serve our Nation here. Like King Solomon before them, let these Senators lead our Nation with wisdom, with Your Word and our Nation's Constitution constantly guiding them to pursue liberty and justice, opportunity and equality, for every man, woman, and child within our borders, for those who would peacefully seek refuge on our shores, and for each of Your children on Earth. Make them ever mindful of Your command to remember the heart of the stranger—the people most unlike them and the least powerful of voices—for we were all strangers in one Egypt or another. In this age of division, unite these Senators, for only when working together across party lines do they truly represent all Americans.

Temper the majority's resolve with humility. Let the minority manifest an opposition that is as loyal as it is robust. Let all come together to ask Your choicest blessings on the United States of America.

And let us say, 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 31, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, a Senator from the State of West Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. CAPITO thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, Senator COTTON and I would like to welcome Rabbi Barry Block and thank him for delivering the opening prayer to the Senate today. I am proud that he accepted our invitation to lead the Senate with his spiritual guidance.

Rabbi Block is the leader of B'nai Israel—Arkansas's largest Jewish congregation—a position he has held since 2013. I have gotten to know Rabbi Block and his dedication to his congregants through his annual visits to Washington with the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. He has served Reform Judaism as a member of the Board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and chair of its Resolutions and Nominating Committee and as president of the Southwest Association of Reform Rabbis.

Serving as the guest Chaplain is an incredible honor. Today he is joined by his sons Robert and Daniel. He wished to share this experience with his congregants as well. I enjoyed meeting

yesterday with him and his confirmation students to hear about their concerns on a wide variety of social issues. I appreciate his prayer for our country and its leaders.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday the Senate voted to advance President Trump's nominee for Secretary of State. I look forward to confirming him and the rest of the President's slate of well-qualified nominees. We need them to get to work as soon as possible.

We will have more opportunities to advance nominees starting this afternoon, and later tonight, we expect the President to send us another nominee. The President said he will announce his choice for the Supreme Court shortly from a list of about 20 well-qualified Americans. It is a list he shared publicly months ago. As I said yesterday, each of those potential nominees has a distinguished background, whether on the appellate courts or trial courts, whether at the State level or the Federal level.

We look forward to the announcement of this nominee tonight, and we look forward to doing our job to fairly consider that nominee here in the Senate. Our friends across the aisle should treat this President's nominee in the same manner as previous nominees of newly elected Presidents. This is not the time for our friends to embark on another partisan crusade.

We have just been through a contentious election. It is time to bring our country together. It is disappointing

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



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