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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon 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.

Merciful God, enthroned above all other powers, thank You for the opportunity to be called Your children.

Lord, our heart aches because of the pain and pessimism in our world, so use our lawmakers to bring hope where there is despair. Remind our Senators that Your power is far above any conceivable command, authority, or control. Empower them to protect and defend the Constitution of this great land against all enemies foreign and domestic. Our Father, inspire our Senators through the decisions they make to build monuments of courage and moral excellence.

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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will report the unfinished business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rex W. Tillerson, of Texas, to be Secretary of State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the remaining postcloture time will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last night President Trump announced an outstanding nominee for the Supreme Court, Judge Neil Gorsuch of Colorado. While Judge Gorsuch has a significant legacy to live up to as the nominee for the seat left vacant by the loss of Justice Scalia, I am confident his impressive background and long record of service will prepare him well for the task ahead.

Like Justice Scalia, Judge Gorsuch understands the constitutional limits of his authority. He understands that a judge's duty is to apply the law evenhandedly, without bias toward one party or another. He understands that his role as a judge is to interpret the law, not impose his own viewpoint or political leanings.

He has also been recognized from people on both sides of the aisle as a consistent, principled, and fair jurist. Judge Gorsuch has a stellar reputation and a resume to match, with degrees from Harvard and Columbia, a Ph.D. in legal philosophy from Oxford, and just about every honor, award, and scholarship you can possibly imagine.

When he graduated from law school, Judge Gorsuch did not just clerk for one Supreme Court Justice, he clerked for two. They were Justices nominated by Presidents of different political parties—Anthony Kennedy, a Reagan appointee, and Byron White, who was nominated by JFK.

Judge Gorsuch received a unanimously "well qualified" rating by the American Bar Association when he was nominated to his current position on the court of appeals. He was confirmed without any votes in opposition. That is right—not a single Democrat opposed Judge Gorsuch's confirmation, not Senator Barack Obama, not Senator Hillary Clinton, not Senators Joe Biden or Ted Kennedy. In fact, not a single one of the Democrats who still serve with us opposed him, including the ranking member of the Judiciary

Committee, Senator FEINSTEIN, and the Democratic leader himself, Senator SCHUMER. In the coming days, I hope and expect that all Senate colleagues will again give him fair consideration, just as we did for the nominees of newly elected Presidents Clinton and Obama.

This is a judge who is known for deciding cases based on how the law is actually written, not how he wishes it were written, even when it leads to results that conflict with his own political beliefs. He understands that his role as a judge is to interpret the law, not impose his own viewpoint. Here is how Judge Gorsuch himself put it: "A judge who likes every result he reaches is very likely a bad judge, reaching for results he prefers rather than those the law compels."

Some of our colleagues and some others on the left see the role of a judge very differently. In last year's Presidential debate, our former colleague, Secretary Clinton, stated her view that a Supreme Court Justice—now listen to this—ought to look more favorably on certain political constituencies than others; that it was the job of the Supreme Court to "stand on the side" of this group or another over that one. Some of our current colleagues seem to share this view. The assistant Democratic leader said that what is important to him are the political views of a Supreme Court nominee, what or perhaps whom they are going to stand for.

The problem with that approach is that it is great if you happen to be the party in the case whom the judge likes; it is not so great if you are the other guy. Justice Scalia believed this to his very core. He was an eloquent champion of the Constitution who was guided by important principles like applying the law equally to all, giving every litigant a fair shake, and rulings based on the actual meaning of the Constitution and our laws, not what you or your preferred political constituency wished they meant. These principles

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



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