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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.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.

O God, who remains the same when all else fades, thank You for loving and using us for Your glory.

Guide our Senators in the footsteps of those who were willing to risk all for freedom, who transformed dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows.

Lord, uphold our Nation with Your wisdom and might, enabling it to continue to be a city of refuge for those whose hearts yearn for freedom. Keep us all from untimely and self-made cares, as we continue to look to You, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

We pray in Your great 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 bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 2, 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.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 274

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 274) to nullify the effect of the recent executive order that temporarily restricted individuals from certain countries from entering the United States.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I was surprised by a statement my friend the Democratic leader made right here yesterday. I am glad he came back to the floor to correct himself, though. I think we all appreciated the Democratic leader making clear that Republicans did not—let me repeat, did not—insist on 60-vote thresholds for either

of President Obama's two first-term Supreme Court nominees. Did not. We thank the Democratic leader for clearing that up. His statement also reminds us that both of the Supreme Court Justices President Clinton nominated got straight up-or-down votes as well. There is no reason someone like Judge Gorsuch, who has received widespread acclaim from both sides of the aisle, should be treated differently now.

When he was nominated to his current seat on the court of appeals, Judge Gorsuch received the American Bar Association's highest possible rating—unanimously “well qualified.” At his confirmation hearing, no one had a single negative word to say about him—not a single negative word. At his confirmation vote, no one cast a negative vote against him—not then-Senator Obama, not then-Senators Clinton, Biden, or Kennedy, and not my good friend Senator SCHUMER, either. Judge Gorsuch was confirmed in exceptionally fast time for a court of appeals nominee—just 2 months. So you have to wonder, if this nominee was so non-controversial in 2006 that a rollcall vote was not even required, what could possibly have changed since to justify threats of extraordinary treatment now? What has happened in the last 10 years? If the Democratic leader or anyone else in his conference did not raise a concern in committee or cast a single negative vote then, let alone even ask for a rollcall vote, what could possibly justify these so-called grave concerns—grave concerns—he claims to have now?

Professor Laurence Tribe, President Obama's law school mentor, called Judge Gorsuch a “brilliant, terrific guy who would do the Court's work with distinction.” This is Laurence Tribe, the President's constitutional law professor, one of the best-known liberal professors in the country.

Neal Katyal, President Obama's top Supreme Court lawyer, lauded Judge

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



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