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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

God of wonder, beyond all majesty, You are worthy of our praise. Today, on this Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, give us the wisdom to reflect on our mortality and to examine our lives. Use our Senators as ambassadors of peace, reconciliation, and justice. May they work to remove malice, envy, revenge, deception, and bitterness.

Lord, inspire them with Your presence until their faith in You is visible and contagious. May they bear witness to Your love even when their motivations are misunderstood by their detractors. Give them the gifts of integrity and authenticity in their relationships with You and with one another.

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. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I think we were all really pleased last night to hear the President's unifying message. It was refreshing for everyone

after such a difficult election season. It was great to see even my friend the Democratic leader occasionally applauding the President last night. It is a reminder that we are all in this together.

Yesterday, I laid out my hopes for his address to Congress. I said that the middle class is ready for a new direction after 8 years of disappointments. I said that we all knew what needed to get done, too—issues like simplifying taxes to create more jobs, reforming regulations to get the economy moving, and repealing and replacing ObamaCare to bring relief to the middle class. It was great to hear the President touch on each of those issues last night.

It was also great to hear him talk about his outstanding nominee to the Supreme Court, Judge Neil Gorsuch—a judge who has earned widespread acclaim and who will be a worthy successor to Justice Scalia on the High Court.

Last night President Trump talked about a new spirit of optimism in our country. He talked about repositioning us for success, both at home and in a dangerous world. He talked about growing opportunity, better jobs, and a thriving middle class. Then, he actually put forward policies that could get us there. What a change from the last 8 years.

He also outlined some of the actions he has already taken to move these priorities forward. For instance, he took action yesterday to send the so-called waters of the United States rule back to the drawing board. He demonstrated that there are realistic ways to protect our Nation's waterways without excessive and duplicative regulations that infringe on the property rights of individuals.

Let me again commend him for protecting the middle class from yet another regulation based more on ideology than fact. It is just the type of thing Americans are so tired of—left-

wing regulations spun as one thing, but that really do another; left-leaning laws that purport to help the middle class, but that actually hurt middle-class families.

A great example of that is ObamaCare. Americans were promised that costs would go down, but, of course, they went up. Americans were promised more choice, but they got less. Americans were promised that they could keep their plans, but that was a broken promise as well.

No wonder Americans were so tired of what they have seen over the last 8 years. They are ready for something entirely new. They are ready to start believing in the future again. The President made clear last night that he is ready to work with Congress on policies that can actually move us forward. He will find many partners in Congress excited to get those things accomplished.

We share his commitment on other issues he outlined too. We agree that our children deserve better than failing schools. We agree that our veterans deserve better than failing bureaucracy. We agree that our brothers and mothers and friends and neighbors deserve better than the scourge of heroin and prescription opioid abuse.

In an era of divided government, Congress took what action we could on those issues. It was often significant action, and we are all proud of it. But we now have a chance to achieve even more. So, of course, we are excited about the opportunity to improve the lives of the men and women who sent us here. That is why we all signed up for this job in the first place.

I am not just talking about Republicans. I know our Democratic friends have different ideas than us on many of these things. I know the far left is pressuring them to burn the place down because it can't accept the results of last year's election. But everyone knows that won't get us anywhere at all.

Let's remember that we have a historic opportunity before us. We can

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



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