



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017

No. 49

Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DAVID PERDUE, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, empower us today to trust You more fully and to accept our responsibility to bring peace to our Nation. Let that peace begin in our individual lives, creating an oasis of concord in an arid and truculent world.

May our Senators bring the music of Your unity to their work, finding creative solutions to intractable problems. Lord, whisper to them words of instruction to help them find wisdom for these challenging days. May they shoulder the responsibilities that come with the privilege of freedom.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 21, 2017.

To the Senate:

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

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

REPEALING AND REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night in my home State of Kentucky, the President called for an end to ObamaCare as Congress continues working to repeal this disastrous law and replace it with patient-centered solutions.

In Kentucky, just like across the country, costs are spiking, choices are dwindling, and insurance markets are edging closer and closer to collapse. Listen to this wife and small business owner who lives in Shelby County. She wrote to my office about her problems with ObamaCare. Here is what she said:

I have seen little or no success where ObamaCare is concerned. [T]he current insurance available is causing working class Americans to choose between paying their bills and getting needed medical care. . . . We need help.

Kentuckians deserve better than ObamaCare. The American people deserve relief from ObamaCare. The law is failing right in front of us. It will continue to get worse unless we act. So we have to act. This week the House will continue working to advance ObamaCare repeal-and-replace legislation. The House has already done some great work on the bill, and I look forward to taking it up in the Senate soon. We will have an amendment process here in the Senate. At the end of that process, we will send a bill to the one person who can sign it into law, and that is the President of the United States.

But the legislation before the House isn't our only tool to help stabilize the

healthcare marketplace. It is one prong of a three-part strategy.

The second prong is the administration continuing to use its broad authority to bring relief. Officials like the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tom Price, and the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Seema Verma, are already working to bring relief to stabilize health markets that ObamaCare has rattled.

The third prong is further legislation to reform the healthcare market and make it more competitive for consumers. Taken together, these three prongs aim to restore power to the States and move more healthcare decisions out of Washington and back to the States. They also represent the best way to bring relief to Americans who continue to suffer under ObamaCare. The American people deserve better than this failing law. We promised we would repeal and replace it for four straight elections. We are working to fulfill that commitment right now.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. MCCONNELL. On another matter, Mr. President, yesterday Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch came before the Judiciary Committee for the first day of his confirmation hearing. In his opening statement, Judge Gorsuch showed why so many lawyers and judges strongly support his nomination as a thoughtful and fairminded judge who understands the particular role of the Federal courts in our Republic and who has discharged his judicial office accordingly.

Last week, two of his former colleagues on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals added their voices to this growing chorus. The endorsement of him was published in the Washington Post. Judge Gorsuch's hearing continues today with Senators on the committee asking him questions. As they

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S1857