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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.

Eternal God, the fountain of every blessing, we praise You for Your loving kindness and tender mercies. We are astounded by Your wonderful works to the children of humanity. Lord, we are incomplete without You. Fill our thirst for the knowledge of the sacred with Your Divine wisdom.

Today, inspire our lawmakers to do Your will. May they bring love where there is hate, light where there is darkness, and hope where there is despair. Lord, use them to transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows and to bring harmony from disharmony. May they rejoice because of the blessing of sins forgiven, striving to glorify You in all they do.

And Lord, stay close to those affected by the bombing in Manchester, England.

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. SASSE). The majority leader is recognized.

MANCHESTER ATTACK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, before I say anything else this morning, I

want to say this: What we saw in Manchester last night almost defies description. It was, in the words of Prime Minister May, a “callous terror attack” that stood out “for its appalling, sickening cowardice, deliberately targeting innocent, defenseless children and young people, who should have been enjoying one of the most memorable nights of their lives.”

Although we will continue to learn more about what happened, this much is very clear: Many have died, many more have been injured, and, as the Prime Minister told us, many of them were children. It is hard to imagine the pain the families of these victims must be feeling today. On behalf of the Senate and our country, let me express our heartfelt condolences to the victims, their families, and to the British people, who have been our friends and allies through many challenges.

The Senate also recognizes the many first responders, medical professionals, and citizens who stepped in to provide help.

As I speak, I know that the intelligence professionals from both of our countries are already working to discover whether this was the result of an individual attacker or directed by ISIL. In either case, the people of America will stand with our allies and provide any assistance we possibly can.

THE PRESIDENT’S BUDGET AND TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as colleagues know, it is once again the time of the year when Congress gets to work putting together the next budget. One of the initial steps in the process is typically for the President to send up a blueprint of his own laying out his priorities, as Members continue to work through conversations here as well.

The President’s budget is being released this morning, and here are a few things we should know about it already: It builds on the progress made

earlier this month on defense, prioritizing more of the resources our servicemembers need. It builds on progress made earlier this month on border security, calling for investing in more of the infrastructure and technology our law enforcement officers actually need. And, unlike any of President Obama’s budget blueprints, this one actually achieves balance.

The provisions I mentioned are encouraging to see. I am sure they will serve as guideposts for Chairman ENZI and the Budget Committee as they move forward on this matter.

I also appreciate the President’s commitment to slowing the growth of mandatory spending, which, if left unaddressed, could eventually limit our ability to invest in nearly anything else as the debt—and the interest we have to pay on it—increases and crowds out spending on other major priorities.

This Thursday, Treasury Secretary Mnuchin will testify in front of the Finance Committee on the budget blueprint and, with it, the administration’s interest in tax reform. I know we are all eager to learn more from him and look forward to working with the administration to make our Tax Code simpler and fairer for the American people and American businesses.

Over the years, our tax system has grown only more complex and more punitive, putting both individuals and employers at a disadvantage, while also inadvertently incentivizing American companies and jobs to leave this country to go overseas. It is evident that we need serious reforms to our Tax Code, the type that will help families keep more of their hard-earned money, while also helping businesses put more Americans to work.

By implementing tax reform, we can again encourage investment in our country, allowing American businesses to expand, hire more workers, improve wages, and offer better benefits. In turn, families will have access to more

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



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