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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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, we bless Your Holy Name. Lead us safely to the refuge of Your choosing, for You desire to give us a future and a hope.

Today, give our Senators the power to do Your will, as they realize more fully that they are Your servants. May they seek Your best for our Nation, repeatedly soliciting Your guidance and following Your leading. Lord, inspire them to not merely give a handout but a hand up, so that people can maximize their possibilities for the glory of Your Name. Give our lawmakers the perseverance and faith to remain true to duty, striving always to please You.

We pray in Your sacred 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Bush nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of John Kenneth Bush, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER
The majority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, ObamaCare was imposed on our country 7 long years ago. It has been hurting the people we represent ever since. Families were supposed to spend less on healthcare costs. They actually paid more. Families were supposed to have more healthcare choices. They ended up with fewer, sometimes none at all.

Worse still, for many years, we had an administration that often waived away the concerns of middle-class families who were hurting. Today, we thankfully have an administration that has chosen instead to listen and agrees with us that Americans deserve a lot better.

I appreciate the efforts of the administration at every step of the process to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare. The President, the Vice President, Secretary Price, Administrator Verma, so many others—we thank them for all the work they have done so far. We look forward to continuing these collaborative efforts when we travel to the White House later today because we have a very important task before us.

As I announced last evening, after consulting with both the White House

and our Members, we have decided to hold a vote to open debate on ObamaCare repeal early next week. The ObamaCare repeal legislation will ensure a stable 2-year transition period, which will allow us to wipe the slate clean and start over with real patient-centered healthcare reform. This is the same legislation that a majority of the Senate voted to send to the President in 2015. Now we thankfully have a President in office who will sign it, so we should send it to him.

Mr. President, today the Senate will vote to move forward on the nomination of John Bush, of Kentucky, to serve as a judge on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

As I said when I introduced Mr. Bush to the Judiciary Committee, I am pleased to join the bipartisan chorus of voices supporting his nomination. More than 100 lawyers and law professors from around the country have written in support of his nomination. Nearly one-third of those supporters are Democrats. They laud Mr. Bush's "excellence, professionalism, and leadership in the legal profession." They also note his "capacity to approach issues with an open mind and to respectfully consider the viewpoints of others."

In addition, some of his supporters from across the ideological spectrum and from around the country who have known Mr. Bush for decades have written separately to underscore their support for his nomination. They are confident he understands the role of a judge, which is to fairly consider the arguments of both sides in a case and then to decide that case based on the law and nothing else. Indeed, it is precisely because of his firm belief in the rule of law that they strongly support his nomination, despite the fact that he and they may hold different political and policy views.

As an illustration, I think we can all agree it is not common for current or former leaders of Planned Parenthood

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



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