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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19, 2017, at 12 p.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the State of Kentucky.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, today we praise You with our whole heart. You continue to exceed our expectations with Your bountiful blessings and tender mercies.

Inspire our lawmakers to remember Your generosity to them and this land we love. In these days of stress and strain, continue to be the shepherd who will guide them to Your desired destination.

Lord, thank You for forgiving our sins, healing our sickness, filling our lives with good things, and surrounding us with Your love. Continue to be a celestial parent to our Nation and world, sustaining us all with Your tender compassion and mighty power. God of mercy and grace, transform our dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows.

We pray in Your marvelous 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 18, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

THE BUDGET AND TAX REFORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it goes without saying that the Obama years were not easy for America's middle class. Many of the men and women we represent felt forgotten over the last decade. They found themselves stuck in a stumbling economy without the opportunity to get ahead, looking on as paychecks stagnated, jobs moved overseas, and government spent far beyond its means while middle-class belts tightened.

In my State and in so many more around the country, these are the problems that faced many families and communities over the last 10 years, and they are the concerns at the heart of the comprehensive budget that the Senate just voted to proceed to yesterday. This budget is a serious plan to put our country on a more responsible fiscal path and also to set us on a course for a more fulsome economy that lifts up the middle class.

On the fiscal side, it provides a path to balance with serious reductions to the growth of Federal spending, complying fully with previous spending caps while also providing a way to increase defense resources in the event that a bipartisan agreement on those caps can be reached.

On the economic side, it clears the way for committees to continue their critical work to spur steady economic growth while providing legislative tools to advance tax reform—the single most important action we can take today to help our economy reach its full potential.

As we all know, our archaic Tax Code is a significant roadblock standing in the way of America's economic future. It holds back families and small businesses. It makes it harder for those who are not well-connected elites to succeed. It even incentivizes companies to send jobs and investments overseas. That is really, clearly wrong.

In today's increasingly competitive global economy, we cannot afford a tax code that forces American workers to compete against foreign competitors with one hand tied behind their backs,

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



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