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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, our Father, help our lawmakers this day to do Your work faithfully and well. Prepare them to be sober-minded and filled with Your Spirit, accomplishing tasks that receive Heaven's approval. Lord, keep them from deviating from integrity as they strive to ensure that their conduct rightly represents You. May they live lives of holiness and goodness, being as kind to others as they would wish them to be to them.

Lord, prepare us all to stand before You in peace without spot or blemish. As we pursue Your peace on Earth, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

We pray in Your Holy 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.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Republican Senate is continuing its important work on behalf of the American people. We are moving forward on legislative priorities that will benefit hard-working families throughout the

country. We are also continuing to confirm President Trump's nominees throughout the Federal Government.

Last week, we continued our momentum with the confirmation of well-qualified and talented individuals to serve in the Federal judiciary. This week, the Senate is considering multiple nominations to important agencies. Yesterday, we confirmed officials to the Department of Defense and to the Department of Justice. Soon, they will get to work for the American people.

Next, the Senate will vote to confirm Peter Robb as the general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board. As I said yesterday, Mr. Robb's experience in employment law will help return the NLRB to its role as an impartial arbiter of labor disputes instead of a political cudgel for union bosses and leftwing special interests, as it was under the Obama administration.

We will then turn to another qualified individual who will help undo some of the damage of the Obama administration. William Wehrum, President Trump's nominee to be the Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, will put his experience to good use for our Nation.

The Office of Air and Radiation is one of the most important parts of the EPA. Unfortunately, under the previous administration, it was also one of the offices with the most significant overreach. This one office was responsible for 95 percent of the annual regulatory burdens that the EPA forced onto our economy, according to one report, reportedly costing the economy at least \$41 billion—this one Agency.

So this is an office in desperate need of new leadership from an individual who understands how to implement clean air policies in a balanced way rather than with extreme regulatory overreach. Mr. Wehrum is the right person for the job. With more than three decades of experience in environmental policy, he understands the

issues before the EPA and how to address them. He even worked in this particular office before serving as Acting Administrator from 2005 to 2007.

Mr. Wehrum has earned support from many different corners. His former boss at the EPA, Jeff Holmstead, said that "there is no better person" to fill this position. The EPA's Deputy Administrator from 2005 to 2009, Marcus Peacock, said that "Wehrum's understanding of the Clean Air Act may be second to none." Even the Natural Resources Defense Council—not exactly a rightwing organization—had this to say about this nominee's previous experience at the EPA, noting that he "achieve[d] important air pollution reductions."

"Wehrum, Holmstead, and the Bush EPA," the NRDC further wrote, "deserve credit for these substantial public health and air quality achievements."

Nominees like Mr. Wehrum will continue the work of this EPA to undo the damage of the Obama administration's overreach in a reasonable manner. For instance, Obama's Office of Air and Radiation was responsible for the administration's dubious energy regulatory scheme, which threatened to punish coal families and ship middle-class jobs overseas.

When Administrator Scott Pruitt came to Kentucky last month, he announced the official withdrawal of that rule. Unlike the previous leadership of the EPA, Administrator Pruitt actually cared enough to come to my home State and hear directly from the men and women impacted by the Agency's regulations. He is someone who will work with us to protect our environment and save Kentucky families from harmful regulations. Mr. Wehrum will work with Administrator Pruitt to help continue this trend at the EPA. I look forward to the Senate advancing his nomination.

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



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