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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JONI ERNST, a Senator from the State of Iowa.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us this day. Radiate Your hope and power through our lawmakers, creating in their hearts an expectation of Your best for them, our Nation, and our world. May they face their challenges with total confidence in the triumph of Your unfolding providence.

Lord, give our Senators the wisdom to seek ways to work together to find creative solutions to the crucial issues of our time. As they seek to serve Your purposes for their lives in this generation, may they remember the sacrifices of those who fought and died for the American dream.

Lord, change and decay surround us, but You are the same yesterday, today, and forever.

We praise You and 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 4, 2017.

To the Senate:

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

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. ERNST thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Nielsen nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Kirstjen Nielsen, of Virginia, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, today the Senate will continue to fulfill its important responsibility to confirm critical nominees for President Trump's administration. We will do that by voting to advance the nomination of Kirstjen Nielsen, the President's choice to serve as Secretary of Homeland Security.

As my colleagues know, this is an incredibly important position within our

government. With responsibilities ranging from cybersecurity, to protecting our borders, to the continued recovery efforts of the recent natural disasters, the Department of Homeland Security requires strong leadership to get the job done. Ms. Nielsen is a qualified candidate with the talent and experience to succeed. As Chief of Staff to the previous DHS Secretary, Gen. John Kelly, she understands the daily operations of the Department and shares our goals for its future.

In addition, her previous tenure with the Department makes her an ideal candidate to be ready to lead the agency on day one.

Ms. Nielsen is an experienced professional who will help lead the Department as it faces constantly evolving threats. I look forward to advancing her nomination later today, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Ms. Nielsen for this critical national security post.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING BILL

Madam President, on another matter, this week Congress will consider short-term funding legislation to provide resources to address many important issues facing our country. The House recently released its legislative text to fund the government through December 22. I look forward to our colleagues' consideration of that measure.

This bill—one without any controversial policy riders—will continue government funding and give the House and Senate time to complete their work on a long-term solution. It will keep the government open and functional, and it includes critical resources for our national defense and to give States certainty to continue the Children's Health Insurance Program while the bipartisan work on CHIP reauthorization continues.

Congressional leaders continue to work with the administration on a long-term funding proposal to help agencies accomplish their goals and to plan for the future.

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



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