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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROY BLUNT, a Senator from the State of Missouri.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, thank You for Your mighty love. Today, empower our Senators to pass the test You permit them to experience. Give them the wisdom to believe that You will not permit them to be tested beyond their ability to prevail. Lord, provide them with a path of escape from life's vicissitudes. Help them to strive to be faithful servants of Your Kingdom, thereby leaving behind a legacy that will bless generations yet unborn. Use them for Your glory. And, Lord, sustain those who are dealing with the Parkland, FL, school shooting.

We pray in Your sovereign 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 15, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable ROY BLUNT, a Senator from the State of Missouri, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUNT 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.

BROADER OPTIONS FOR AMERICANS ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2579, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2579) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the premium tax credit with respect to unsubsidized COBRA continuation coverage.

Pending:

Grassley amendment No. 1959, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for TOOMEY/CRUZ) amendment No. 1948 (to amendment No. 1959), to ensure that State and local law enforcement may cooperate with Federal officials to protect our communities from violent criminals and suspected terrorists who are illegally present in the United States.

Schumer modified amendment No. 1958 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1959), of a perfecting nature.

Durbin (for COONS/MCCAIN) amendment No. 1955 (to amendment No. 1958), to provide relief from removal and adjustment of status of certain individuals who are long-term United States residents and who entered the United

States before reaching the age of 18, improve border security, foster United States engagement in Central America.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

PARKLAND, FLORIDA, SCHOOL SHOOTING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to begin this morning by sharing the shock and sorrow that all of us in this body felt as we learned of yesterday's shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL. To say that such brutal, pointless violence is unconscionable is an understatement. Schools should be places where children can learn, and faculty and staff can work without fear of violence.

My colleagues from Florida will carry home the prayers of the whole Senate for victims and their families, for the community of Parkland, and for the first responders who bravely charged into harm's way on behalf of others.

For the information of all Senators, the Senate will observe a moment of silence at 12 noon.

Now, Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, the entire week has been set aside, as I assured it would be, for votes on the DACA issue, border security, and other issues pertaining to the subject of immigration. At this point, we should be wrapping up a lively week of debate, amendments, and numerous votes, but that is not what has happened. Instead, we are here on Thursday morning and have yet to vote on a single amendment—not one amendment all week on what was offered: an open debate.

Remember, our Democratic friends wanted this debate. They actually shut down the Federal Government for 300 million Americans, unnecessarily, to guarantee that we could have this debate and at this particular time—this week.

They have spent months insisting that DACA is a top priority for them

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



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