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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Almighty God, the sovereign Lord of nations, empower our lawmakers to be as faithful to others as You have been to them. May they be willing to show patience in dealing with the shortcomings of others in the same way that You have shown them mercy and long-suffering. Lord, help them to seek to respect the beliefs and ideas of others, being tolerant even to those with whom they may disagree. Give them the wisdom to refuse to do to others what they would not want done to themselves.

Lord, we commit this day to You, totally desiring to work for Your glory.

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. YOUNG). The majority leader is recognized.

CONGRATULATING KENTUCKY COLLEGE BASKETBALL TEAMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, there is a simple reason nearly every Kentuckian looks forward to March—college basketball. I would like to take a moment to recognize several teams that are already making the State proud by winning their conference tournaments.

This weekend, the women of the University of Louisville won their first-ever ACC tournament title. Finishing the regular season with a record of 29 to 2, the Cardinals are currently ranked third in the Nation. Led by ACC Coach of the Year Jeff Walz and ACC Player of the Year Asia Durr, these talented women are looking to add yet another title.

So are the Murray State Racers. Its men's team won the Ohio Valley Conference championship and earned its first NCAA tournament appearance since 2012. It will look to build on the longest winning streak in the Nation.

Also in Louisville, the Bellarmine Knights men's team earned its second straight conference championship and a two-seed in the NCAA Division II tournament.

At Thomas More College, both the men's and women's teams are celebrating conference championships which earned them spots in the NCAA Division III tournaments.

Lindsey Wilson College won its conference title and is headed back to the NAIA Division I tournament for the first time since advancing to the Fab Four in 2013.

The Union College men's team clinched its fifth consecutive conference title. The Kentucky Christian Lady Knights took home the Mideast Region title as well.

I congratulate all of these conference-winning Kentucky teams, their coaches, and, of course, their dedicated fans.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, we will vote on the nominations of three more talented individuals today whom the President has asked to serve as Federal district judges: Karen Scholer for the Northern District of Texas, Tilman Self for the Middle District of Georgia, and Terry Doughty for the Western District of

Louisiana. These are three excellent nominees, and I encourage all of our colleagues to vote in support of each of them.

TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, it has been 73 days since President Trump signed historic tax reform into law.

It feels as though it has been longer than that because, practically every day, another major national employer announces a new commitment to invest in American workers because of tax reform. Every day, we hear about more local businesses realizing new savings and putting it toward equipment, expansion, and employees. Every day, we hear about how bonuses, rising wages, expanded benefits, and lower taxes are giving middle-class families a whole lot more breathing room. Yet, every day, we are reminded that some of our friends across the aisle are still desperately trying to minimize this good news. Democratic leaders have tried to say that these new jobs, raises, bonuses, and business expansions amount to no more than "crumbs."

I leave the final verdict to the hard-working families across the country, including the many Kentuckians from whom I hear. In the meantime, the economic data are painting quite an optimistic picture.

Last week, the Labor Department announced that weekly jobless claims had reached a 48-year low. Let me repeat that. Fewer Americans are filing for unemployment today than at any time since 1969. The labor market is tightening; employers are competing for talent; and workers and their families are coming out on top.

In January, Americans' real disposable income rose more quickly than it had since April of 2015. That is the biggest jump in spending money available to American families, accounting for tax rates and inflation, in nearly 3

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



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