



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2018

No. 68

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

Almighty God, who made the light to shine in the darkness, shine now in our hearts. Forgive us for our transgressions in thoughts, words, and deeds, as You cleanse us from all sin.

We thank You for Your many blessings, for music and laughter and poetry and color.

Lord, strengthen our Senators. Provide them with help in times of need, power for moments of weakness, and hope for the years to come. Lift our lawmakers above suspicion and fears so that they will be Your ambassadors of peace to our Nation and world.

We pray in Your mighty 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. HELLER). The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS AND THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this week we confirmed yet another well-qualified nominee to the Federal bench. Now Kyle Duncan of Louisiana can get to work serving on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. His qualifica-

tions are truly impressive, but his sterling reputation among colleagues and peers was an even greater testament to Mr. Duncan's fitness. I am glad that the Fifth Circuit will benefit from his expertise.

Speaking of well-qualified nominees, the Senate will vote today on the President's choice for Secretary of State. We will consider an outstanding nominee. Fortunately, we have the votes, and later today we will confirm Mike Pompeo as our Nation's 70th Secretary of State.

We have been discussing Director Pompeo's abundant qualifications all week. In a little over a year, the Senate has had two opportunities to assess his considerable qualifications.

Last January, a bipartisan supermajority of us saw fit to confirm him as CIA Director, and his performance in that role—exemplary by all accounts—has given us even more compelling cause to confirm him to serve as our chief diplomat.

He has earned the trust and the confidence of the Commander in Chief by providing top-notch counsel on critical issues and helping to lead ongoing efforts to lay the groundwork for negotiations aimed at denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. Along the way, he deepened his reputation for fairness and discernment.

I am glad President Trump has nominated this distinguished leader to be America's chief diplomat, and I am glad a bipartisan majority of Senators will vote to confirm him today.

It is just too bad that Director Pompeo's confirmation process has offered such a prime example of the historic partisan obstruction that my colleagues across the aisle are visiting on the Senate. All fair observers agree that Mike is up to the job. Here is how the Washington Post—not known as a bastion of Republican thinking—titled their editorial, simply: "Confirm Mike Pompeo."

But despite all this, Democrats on the Foreign Relations Committee al-

most took the unprecedented step of voting him out with an unfavorable recommendation. That attempt to play politics with our Nation's security fortunately failed. But even so, according to the Senate Historian, he became just the second Secretary of State nominee in recent memory to clear a committee by a margin of only one vote. The only other time that has happened in all of the Senate's history was also at the hands of Senate Democrats during the Trump administration. Once they got here on the floor, they were also the only two Secretary of State nominees in history who needed cloture to receive confirmation votes.

Let me say that again. From the founding of the Republic until 2017, the Senate never required cloture to confirm a Secretary of State. Now we are at two, both in this administration. I guess Senate Democrats are in a history-making mood, because over the past 15 months, they have embarked on a partisan campaign to block, obstruct, and delay President Trump's nominees that is, quite simply, without precedent in American history.

Let's put things in perspective. In the first 2 years of the last 6 Presidencies combined—the first 2 years of the last 6 Presidencies combined—the Senate subjected nominees to a total of 24 cloture votes during the last 6 Presidencies during the first 2 years—24 cloture votes.

Add up President Carter's first 2 years, President Reagan's first 2 years, and so on, through Presidents Bush, Clinton, Bush, and Obama and there are 24 total cloture votes on nominees.

For President Trump? There are 88 and counting, just 15 months into his term. By the end of the day, it will be 90—90 cloture votes on nominees. This is partisan obstruction elevated to an art form, and every one of us has seen it firsthand.

It is not just high-profile nominations. Scores of unobjectionable choices for all kinds of posts have languished on the Senate calendar. It took

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S2447