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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, Sustainer of humanity, thank You for faithfully providing for all of our needs. When we have trusted Your guidance, You have consistently ordered our steps, doing for us more than we can ask or imagine.

Today, give our lawmakers a generous portion of Your wisdom. Remind them that Your wisdom is pure, peace-loving, considerate, humble, merciful, and impartial. Provide our Senators with power to carry out their responsibilities in a way that honors You.

Lord, as Memorial Day approaches, we praise You for all of the sacrifices made for this land we love.

We 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, May 24, 2018.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. HELLER 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 proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Jelena McWilliams, of Ohio, to be Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term of five years; and Jelena McWilliams, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term of six years.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we are in the midst of quite a productive week in the Senate. Yesterday, this body did its part in fulfilling an important promise to our Nation's veterans. We passed the VA MISSION Act by a wide, bipartisan margin.

Having already passed the House, this truly landmark bill will now head

to the White House where the President will soon sign it into law.

It will bring more options and greater flexibility to veterans who have spent years driving long distances to the nearest VA care facility, only to face long lines and waiting lists when they got there.

It will bring more peace of mind for veterans of all eras and their families who have faced uncertainty and limitations as their needs for care have evolved.

This legislation continues, expands, and improves the successful Veterans Choice Program that has already helped millions of veterans nationwide, including more than 23,000 Kentuckians last year alone.

Thanks to the stalwart leadership of Chairman ISAKSON and the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the hard-and-fast time and distance thresholds that kept too many veterans out of the Choice Program will soon be gone.

The providers we trust to provide top-notch care for our heroes will have clearer guidelines for prescribing opioids and more tools to attract and retain experienced professionals.

I have heard from Kentucky veterans exactly what this bill will mean to them. One wrote: "Kentucky disabled veterans greatly appreciate Congress is finally taking action to correct deficiencies in the Caregiver Program."

Another explained that the legislation "strikes the right balance to make sure we strengthen the VA system and provide veterans with the best care possible."

I thank my friend Chairman ISAKSON once more on this achievement. I am proud the Senate stepped up to the plate and showed America's veterans that, on our watch, a promise made is a promise kept.

What is more, we have already confirmed two executive branch nominees and will process two more before the end of the week. First up is Jelena McWilliams, President Trump's well-

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



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