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Senate

The Senate met at 10:02 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God, Sovereign over us all, thank You for healing our hearts, minds, and bodies when we turn to You. Lord, we are grateful that You desire for us to prosper and be in physical health even as our souls prosper.

Guard and guide our lawmakers so that their work will enable us to live in peace and justice with one another. Lord, use them to bring order and calm to our vulnerable Nation and world. As they seek to do Your will, may our Senators bring beauty from ashes, clarity from confusion, and harmony from discord. Fill them with the power of Your Holy Spirit, that they may rightfully represent You.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 6, 2018.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COTTON 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 resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Annemarie Carney Axon, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

HEALTHCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday the majority leader announced that the Senate would remain in session during much of the planned August recess. President Trump tweeted: "Great. Maybe the Democrats will finally get something done other than their acceptance of high crime and high taxes." As usual, the President's tweet makes little sense given that Republicans control both Houses of Con-

gress. But I agree with the President on one thing: Canceling the recess is a great opportunity to get something done. In fact, I have a suggestion for what Congress should do. How about this, Mr. President? Why don't we get something done on the issue that numerous polls say is the No. 1 priority of Americans—healthcare.

We Democrats—our entire caucus—believe this previously unscheduled session time could be put to good use to finally help Americans secure affordable healthcare that the President and congressional Republicans have thus far failed to deliver. Before being sworn in, President Trump promised to deliver healthcare that was "far less expensive and far better." Those are his words. But since he has taken office, President Trump has completely dropped the ball on healthcare. Instead of shoring up our healthcare system and driving down costs, President Trump and Republicans have sabotaged our healthcare system and driven up costs.

Yesterday, Maine and Pennsylvania joined a growing list of States that will see higher healthcare rates thanks to the policies of the Trump administration and congressional Republicans. In States such as Virginia, Maryland, New York, and Washington, rate increases are in double digits. One PPO plan in Maryland requested a rate increase of 91 percent. And when you ask these CEOs of companies why their rates are going up, many of them cite Trump administration policies and congressional Republican policies.

Again, the No. 1 issue affecting Americans is the high cost of healthcare. My Republican colleagues are busy touting tax breaks. If you are very wealthy, you got a big break. If you are a middle-class person, far too often, your increase in your premiums exceeds your tax break.

Let's do something to put more money—net more money—in the pockets of working class people. Let's spend

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



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