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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Eternal Lord God, today give our lawmakers zeal with knowledge that they will order their priorities for Your glory. Remind them to strive to bring deliverance to captives, the recovery of sight to the morally blind, and freedom to the downtrodden. As our Senators make plans, give them faith to know that Your purposes will prevail. As they cultivate reverence for You, bless them with life, security, and peace. May they remember that You are able to do immeasurably, abundantly above all that they can ask or imagine according to Your power working in and through them.

We pray in Your strong 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 (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The majority leader is recognized.

ENERGY AND WATER APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, one of the top goals for the Senate this year was to recover a regular appropriations process. It has been a long time since the system worked as intended.

The spending agreement we passed in March achieved several critical objectives. It broke the arbitrary limits on funding for our Armed Forces. It delivered the largest year-on-year increase in resources for our troops in more than a decade. It provided record levels of veterans funding, with increased oversight and modernization. It secured major resources for infrastructure improvements. It took steps to prevent school violence. It scaled up research, treatment, and prevention funding to fight opioid addiction. It was a product of bipartisan, bicameral negotiations with the White House.

But while the spending agreement achieved a lot, it wasn't anybody's best case scenario. No Senator on either side of the aisle was thrilled with the process, nor was the President, nor were the American people.

We all agreed that we owe Americans a more functional process for allocating their hard-earned money. So here in the Senate, we made it a top bipartisan priority to bring some regular order back into the process.

Led by Chairman SHELBY, Ranking Member LEAHY, and all the subcommittee leadership, our Appropriations Committee has engaged in precisely the kind of thorough, considered committee work that ought to define the appropriations process. Thanks to their hard work, the full Senate can now take up this package, which includes appropriations for Energy and Water Development, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and the legislative branch. We will be considering it on the floor this week.

Keeping families and communities safe, defending our Nation, and upgrading our economic foundation, the Energy and Water components in this legislation address each of these national priorities. For example, they provide for critical improvements in the safety, security, and readiness of our Nation's nuclear arsenal. Today, as the Nation enters a period of renewed glob-

al competition among great powers, it is vital that we maintain a robust and well-maintained nuclear deterrent. This legislation puts forward the funds to continue safeguarding our stockpile and prepare the Nation for existing and future nuclear threats.

It also includes record funding for the Department of Energy's Office of Science for research into subjects like new energy technologies and advanced computing. There are also funds for fossil fuel research, particularly for coal carbon capture.

In addition to our energy future, the legislation bolsters infrastructure initiatives. It provides ample support for the future of America's water resources. It directs nearly \$7 billion to the Army Corps of Engineers for maintaining our ports and inland waterways, protecting our shores, and reducing the damage caused by flooding.

These funds will keep us on track to meet national priorities, but I can also testify to the impact this legislation will have on communities across the country, including in my home State of Kentucky. Earlier this year I asked Secretary Perry to take a visit with me to the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant in western Kentucky. I was glad he took me up on the offer. At the plant, Secretary Perry noted that we "have a moral responsibility" to properly decommission the site. The legislation before us is an important step to fulfill that responsibility to the community and to the thousand-plus workers dedicated to environmental cleanup.

This legislation also provides funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission to help deliver infrastructure improvements to distressed counties in Kentucky and the region. It funds important civil works projects like the Olmsted Locks and Dam and the Kentucky Lock. These are critical to the free flow of commerce along Kentucky's 1,900-plus miles of inland waterways and the 13,000 maritime jobs they support.

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



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