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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 God, who has been the hope and joy of many generations, thank You for giving us the power to seek You. We praise You for Your promise that those who keep on seeking will find what they seek. Inspire our lawmakers to seek Your wisdom in order to be guided by Your loving providence.

Lord, give them a clearer vision of Your truth, a great faith in Your might, and a deeper assurance of Your love. Teach them to labor and not to ask for any reward except that of knowing they are doing Your will.

We pray in Your loving 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Andrew S. Oldham, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week the Senate continues to confirm impressive nominees whom President Trump has asked to serve our country. We have confirmed two Assistant Secretaries to the Department of Education, Scott Stump and James Blew. We have confirmed a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, Randal Quarles. Now we will turn to the judiciary and consider nominees to the Fifth Circuit and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

First is Andrew Oldham of Texas, the President's choice for the Fifth Circuit. Mr. Oldham has impressed the legal community in his years of public service, most recently as general counsel to the Governor of Texas.

Mr. Oldham has degrees from the University of Virginia, Cambridge, and Harvard Law. He clerked on both the DC Circuit Court and the Supreme Court. He carries the highest possible rating from the American Bar Association, "unanimously well-qualified."

He comes highly recommended by peers and colleagues from across the political spectrum. Judith Zaffirini is a Texas State senator. She is a Democrat. She wrote the Judiciary Committee to support Mr. Oldham's nomination "confidently, enthusiastically, and without reservation." She and the nominee have worked together on a number of important subjects. Through them all, she explains, "Mr. Oldham reflected the ideal qualities of a judge . . . open-minded, fair . . . thoughtful and analytical."

Lisa Blatt is a skilled litigator who argues frequently before the Supreme Court. She is also a Democrat. She wrote the committee too. Her letter describes Mr. Oldham as "a great listener" with "a brilliant legal mind, [and] a wonderful sense of humor and collegiality."

Her conclusion? He would "make a superb judge."

What about Mr. Oldham's own words? If confirmed, he explained to our colleagues during his hearing, he will "uphold the rights of all litigants—big or little—equally, and apply the law to all fairly."

He understands his responsibility, clearly. I look forward to confirming this nominee, and I urge each of our colleagues to join me.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. President, on another matter, it has been a year and a half since Republican majorities took their seats in Congress and a Republican President was sworn in. In 2016, the American people made it clear it was time to try something new. They were tired of a so-called recovery that focused overwhelmingly on big, wealthy metropolitan areas. They had seen enough of tax hikes and top-down regulations that held their communities back. They turned to Republicans to deliver a pro-growth, pro-opportunity agenda to create better conditions for working families, job creators, and entrepreneurs to rise together.

Eighteen months later, the results could not be clearer. Today, more people say it is a good time to find a job than at almost any point since the turn of the millennium. U.S. manufacturers are more confident than ever about the future of their businesses.

Here is a story from yesterday's Financial Times: "US retail sales rise for fifth straight month in June." This is a good sign for Americans all across the board. It shows our economy is healthy. It shows that families feel they have enough breathing room to

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



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