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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

O God, You are our God. We can stay composed even in a storm because of Your presence. We need You and stay thirsty for You, for Your power and glory uplift us.

Give our lawmakers the gift of Your steadfast love, blessing them beyond all that they can ask or imagine. May they praise Your Name each day. As they depend on You, empower them to confront life's challenges and hardships, knowing that they are never alone. Lord, satisfy their souls with good things, transforming the mundane into the meaningful. Purify their hearts, revealing to them Your plans for the prosperity of our Nation and world.

We pray in Your loving 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, July 25, 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I spoke yesterday about the bipartisan cooperation that has made it possible for us to return to a regular appropriations process. Collaboration got the four measures we are now considering through the subcommittee and full committee process, thanks to the efforts of Chairman SHELBY, Senator LEAHY, and the subcommittee leaders, Senators MURKOWSKI, COLLINS, HOEVEN, and LANKFORD.

On the floor, bipartisanship let us turn to legislation by consent and kick off the amendment process with several votes yesterday. If we can keep it up, we will soon take four more big steps toward our goal of funding the Federal Government the right way and avoiding another omnibus.

Yesterday, I mentioned that the legislation before us addresses two pressing national needs: rebuilding America's infrastructure and bolstering the fight against opioids. But that is far from the whole story. These measures cover about one-eighth of the total discretionary spending for next year. They fund a long list of key services that Americans depend on every day—everything from food safety inspections to child nutrition programs, to the Forest Service and national parks. Communities in all 50 States are connected to this legislation.

Here are a few of the provisions that will be particular cause for celebration in my home State of Kentucky: \$37 billion toward rural development, including support for rural businesses, and loans and grants to improve rural infrastructure for electricity, telephone, and broadband internet in communities in Kentucky and all across the country; another \$1 billion in grants to help communities invest in highways, bridges, and other infrastructure projects, with a guarantee that 30 percent of this funding would go into rural areas; more funding for the Abandoned Mine Land Pilot Program, which helps communities reclaim abandoned coal mines and put that land to better use; more funding and a sharper Federal focus on controlling the evasive Asian carp that threaten local prosperity and water safety in Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley in Western Kentucky; and more help for the Kentuckians who battle the scourge of opioids every day.

The legislation funds the FDA's efforts to intercept illegal drugs, the DEA's program for high-intensity trafficking areas, and increased training for first responders.

It also contains a provision I secured directing the Department of Housing and Urban Development to encourage more access to transitional housing opportunities for individuals recovering from substance abuse disorder.

I could go on. The ways the bill before us would assist families and communities across Kentucky are practically countless, and the same is true for every State in our country.

That is why every Member understands the importance of appropriations. Funding the Federal Government—matching resources with urgent challenges—is one of Congress's most important responsibilities. I am proud of the appropriations process that is underway, and I am especially proud of all of the ways the resulting legislation will deliver for the American people.

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



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