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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, August 3, 2018, at 10 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2018

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.

Eternal Lord God, our refuge and strength, stay close to our Senators. As they labor for liberty, give them the grace of Your presence. Assist them in their work so that their thoughts, words, and deeds will be acceptable to You. Give them pure hearts, devoted to You and ever seeking Your glory. May they not tire in well-doing, knowing that a wonderful harvest is certain if they persevere. Lord, inspire them to press on with today's duties with hope in their hearts.

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, August 1, 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 LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for more than a week, the Senate has carefully considered a set of four appropriations bills.

Together, they will account for about one-eighth of the discretionary spending for the next fiscal year. They allocate funds for a variety of pressing needs in communities around the country, and they represent four more steps toward the goal this Senate has set to fund the government through regular appropriations and to steer clear of another omnibus.

A lot of attention has rightly been paid to huge priorities where this legislation will bring major progress: our mission to renew America's infrastructure and the ongoing fight against opioid addiction and abuse.

Both are urgent challenges. In one survey last year, 81 percent of Americans said the opioid epidemic is either a major problem or a full-blown emergency, and more than half said infrastructure investment was a "very important" or "extremely important" priority. These are two priorities we share throughout this Congress—both parties, both Houses, and with the President.

Here are just a few of the provisions in this legislation: billions of dollars of investment in rural communities for everything from electric and telephone infrastructure to water infrastructure, to broadband internet, to small business loans; a \$10 billion overall increase from 2017 for infrastructure needs; and tens of millions for opioid prevention, including grants for distance learning and telemedicine so rural America is better equipped to strike back against the scourge of addiction.

Of course, infrastructure and fighting opioids are only part of what these bills encompass.

They will fully fund the Federal Government's efforts in agriculture, transportation, housing and urban development, the interior, environment, financial services, and general government. That includes essential routine services, from the Forest Service to food safety inspections. It includes many targeted programs that have an outsized impact on local communities.

My fellow Kentuckians and I are glad this legislation will help us expand rural internet access, invest in new highways and bridges, reclaim abandoned mines, and contain the invasive

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



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