



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2018

No. 188

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.

Lord, through all generations You have been the source of our hope and strength. We are astounded by the majesty of Your sovereignty, for a thousand years for You are like a few hours. Today, inspire our lawmakers to think Your thoughts and follow Your precepts, seeking always to be receptive to Your guidance. May they strive to reach agreement on critical issues rather than simply to win debates. As they march to the drumbeat of Your leading, strengthen them with Your powerful presence. May they trust You to bring unity within their diversity.

We pray in Your great 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.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this week, the Senate has taken important steps to fulfill our advise-and-consent responsibility on the President's nominees. We have ended unnecessary delays that kept well-qualified individuals from filling important posts at the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce and confirmed both of them.

TRIBUTE TO DEAN HELLER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, on an entirely different matter, I am sorry to say it is time to begin offering thanks and farewells to Members whose Senate service will conclude at the end of the 115th Congress.

Today, I would like to begin with our friend, the senior Senator from Nevada. It doesn't feel like much of an exaggeration to say that DEAN HELLER may have been destined for public service. I don't just mean his eagerness to serve or his outgoing personality. There were other signs. For example, one of the stops on his childhood paper route in Carson City was the Governor's mansion itself. Talk about early civic involvement.

At every step of the way, from successful businessman to his local and statewide races, all the way here to the Capitol, DEAN earned the respect of his neighbors and constituents by following the hard-working example set by his parents. His mother worked as a cook in a school cafeteria. His father was an auto mechanic who raced stock cars on the side. Their son grew up to be the only sitting Senator I would trust to replace my transmission.

When most politicians use phrases like "rolling up their sleeves" and "getting their hands dirty," they are usually referring to things like late-night negotiating or taking tough votes—in other words, more talking. Not DEAN HELLER, he means it literally. As DEAN likes to say, here in Washington, during the week, he works for the people of Nevada, but at home, on the weekends, there he works for his wife Lynne on the ranch they keep up together.

But let it not be said that even in the midst of hard labor, DEAN isn't capable of multitasking. After all, sometimes official duties just can't wait. I have it on good authority that on one occasion Dean had to field a surprise phone call from President Obama on his cell while standing right in the middle of a ditch.

Another time, he took a call from President Trump and talked business right there in the aisle of a home improvement store. Something about this image seems just right—not talking, not posturing, doing. That is DEAN HELLER; isn't it?

He didn't come to Washington to court praise for lofty rhetoric or to become a TV star. He came here to do. In just 7 years, DEAN has authored or helped to introduce 100 pieces of legislation that are now law.

Perhaps first and foremost, he has built a reputation as one of the Senate's chief advocates for our veterans. DEAN shares his home State with more than 200,000 men and women who have served our Nation, including one he calls "Dad."

Keeping the promise of top-notch VA services across Nevada's widespread rural communities is no small task. The facilities in Reno, in particular, weren't always up to the job, but day in and day out, DEAN has made it his mission to right the ship. As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, he has fought to expand access to care, contributing key provisions to the VA MISSION Act and spearheading the 21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act. It is a legacy that is already making a difference for our veterans.

But these are hardly the only victories DEAN won for Nevada and for our Nation. He came to the Senate in 2011, representing a State that had been hit hard by the great recession and was trying hard to regain its footing. Nevada communities faced ballooning foreclosure rates and persistent unemployment. Fortunately, their new Senator was intent on hooking up the economic jumper cables and getting things humming once more.

DEAN has seized opportunities to champion an economic agenda that puts workers and job creators back in the driver's seat. He was a driving force behind the once-in-a-generation tax reform passed last December to put more

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



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