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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, who rules the raging of the seas, we praise You that we continue to be sustained by Your goodness and mercies. We are grateful for each heartbeat we receive as a gift from Your bounty. Help us to so live that we will never forget our accountability to You.

Lord, bless our Senators, enlighten and illuminate them that they may cultivate an experiential relationship with You, delighting to follow Your precepts. Touch their lips, that they may speak words that unite and bring hope. Give them hearts that are willing to serve. Strengthen them when tempted and guide them when they are perplexed.

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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. McCONNELL. First, for the information of all of our colleagues, later

this morning I will introduce a continuing resolution that will ensure continuous funding to the Federal Government. The measure will provide the resources necessary to continue normal operations through February 8.

Let's review why this step was necessary.

Even in the face of a great need to secure the border and following good-faith efforts by the President's team, our Democratic colleagues rejected an extremely reasonable offer yesterday. It would have cleared the remaining appropriation bills, which had received bipartisan support in committee, and provided an additional \$1 billion to tackle a variety of urgent border security priorities.

I am sorry that my Democratic colleagues couldn't put their partisanship aside and show the same good faith and flexibility that the President has shown in order to provide the resources our Nation needs to secure the integrity of our borders as well as the safety of American families, but this seems to be the reality of our political moment. It seems like political spite, for the President may be winning out over sensible policy—even sensible policies that are more modest than border security allocations that many Democrats themselves have supported in the very recent past.

Faced with this intransigence—with Democrats' failure to take our borders seriously—Republicans will continue to fulfill our duty to govern. That is why we will soon take up a simple measure that will continue government funding into February, so that we can continue this vital debate after the new Congress has convened, because—make no mistake—there will be important unfinished business in front of us, and we owe it to the American people to finally tackle it.

Just last week, U.S. Customs and Border Commissioner Kevin McAleenan told our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee that the United

States faces a border security and humanitarian crisis—a border security and humanitarian crisis.

These are some of the facts. In the past year alone, we saw a 30-percent increase in apprehensions by CBP, including nearly 6,700 apprehensions of individuals with criminal histories and a 50-percent increase in apprehensions of known gang members. We have seen a 75-percent spike in methamphetamine seizures since fiscal 2015. So it is quite obvious that shoring up our borders is an urgent need for our national security—no question about it.

Secure borders are what the American people expect and they deserve. That is why it continues to be a major focus of President Trump and his administration. Already the President's approach to border security is yielding undeniable results. In each of four CBP sectors where physical borders have been improved or expanded—El Paso, Yuma, Tucson, and San Diego—illegal traffic has dropped by at least 90 percent.

While you wouldn't know it from listening to the far-left special interests, this administration's focus on border security actually follows similar commonsense efforts that used to be a bipartisan consensus.

It used to be a bipartisan consensus. In 2006, for example, the Secure Fence Act, which is designed to strengthen physical security measures at the border, received the support of no fewer than 26 of our Democratic colleagues, including the current Democratic leader, along with Senators FEINSTEIN, CARPER, NELSON, STABENOW, WYDEN, and Obama.

In 2010, President Obama signed a bill to increase the CBP's physical presence down at the border. It passed the Senate by unanimous consent, by the way.

So let's not pretend there is some bright-line principle that separates the billions of dollars that our Democratic colleagues were willing and eager to spend on border security in the recent

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



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