



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2019

No. 3

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Merciful God, enthroned far above all other powers, we need You to exercise Your might for our Nation during this challenging season. As we wrestle with the stalemate of this partial government shutdown, inspire our lawmakers to do what is best for our Nation and world. Remind them that Your power is far above any conceivable command, authority, or control. Help them to appreciate their accountability to You, as You guide them to contribute to unity and finding common ground. Be near to those who are the collateral damage of this impasse, supporting them with Your wisdom, power, mercy, and grace.

We pray in Your sovereign 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 (Mr. HOEVEN). The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 28, H.R. 21, AND H.J. RES. 1

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there are three bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is correct.

The clerk will report the bills by title for the second time en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 28) to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 21) making appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 1) making further continuing appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2019, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar en bloc.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for years America's vital interests in the Middle East have been jeopardized by regional chaos. The security of our ally Israel continues to be challenged by the long reach of the Iranian regime and its affiliates. In Syria, the Assad regime has made its own nation a graveyard for hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, and the resulting chaos continues to provide Iran and Russia opportunities to expand their malign influence throughout the region. That is why the Senate is going to vote later today to take up pressing legislation that tackles all of this head on.

The bill at hand would reaffirm the United States' commitment to Israel's security and authorize military assistance, cooperative missile defense, and loan guarantees. It would counter an aggressive and hostile attempt to delegitimize the State of Israel through economic boycotts. It would also reauthorize efforts to strengthen defense cooperation with our ally Jor-

dan, as its people and government grapple with the security and humanitarian ramifications of the Syrian crisis.

Importantly, the legislation also includes the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act. This provision would hold accountable individuals responsible for the senseless evils of the Assad regime and impose severe penalties on the entities that support them.

We will vote later today on whether or not Members of this body believe these issues should be addressed. It is my sincere hope that the Senate will approve these bipartisan proposals and send the strong message of support that our friends and partners in the Middle East deserve.

During the last Congress there was broad agreement on both sides of the aisle on the need for action. I expected today's action to be a big bipartisan vote, not some partisan showdown, but over the last few days something seems to have happened. The Democratic leader and several of his colleagues have stood up and said they want to block the Senate from even considering this legislation—never mind that it includes legislation cosponsored by the Senate Democrats last Congress and never mind that Senate Democrats mentioned the Syria crisis literally dozens of times last month here on the Senate floor.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in spite of all of that, some Democrats have now threatened to block us from even taking this legislation up later today. We would have to ask why. It is because we are 18 days into the partial government shutdown caused by Democrats' total unwillingness to negotiate with the White House over border security.

Democrat intransigence has made sure that a quarter of the Federal Government has been shut down for more

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S35