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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:

O God, our Father, we thank You for setting eternity in our hearts. You are the ultimate source of peace and knowledge, presiding over our universe with the majesty of Your power.

Today, we present ourselves to You with the humble request that You would move mightily in the hearts of our legislators. Lord, lead them toward the path of unity, empowering them to accomplish Your work on Earth.

God, we thank You for the freedoms that You have given us and ask that through our Senators these liberties will flourish. And, Lord, please bring an end to this partial government shutdown.

We pray in Your mighty 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. HAWLEY). The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, although three-quarters of the government is funded and fully operational, important Federal functions continue to be unduly affected, and hundreds of thousands of Federal workers have now missed paychecks.

By now, everyone in America understands the basic faultlines of this disagreement. The Speaker of the House has decided that opposing President Trump comes before the security of our borders.

The President has asked for a reasonable new investment, \$5.7 billion—about one-tenth of 1 percent of Federal spending—for the same kinds of border security that prominent Democrats actually used to brag about supporting, for the very same kind of reinforced steel fencing that the Obama administration bragged about building, and for precisely the kinds of barriers that the men and women of law enforcement there on the ground insist are vital for their mission.

It is for precisely the same kind of physical border security in which a number of my Democratic colleagues here in the Senate were perfectly happy to vote to invest billions of dollars just as recently as last Congress. The 2017 funding measure that passed the Senate with 47 Democratic votes included upgraded border fencing; that was in 2017, just this past Congress—last year. And 40 Democrats voted for the bipartisan spending deal that was cleared just this past March. It included more than \$1.5 billion for border barriers. Then, of course, the Appropriations subcommittee and full committee approved another \$1.6 billion for border security in a bipartisan vote just this last June, and 10 of 15 committee Democrats voted to report the final package to the full Senate. Those are billions of dollars for physical border security, winning Democratic votes just last year.

Well, that was before we had a new Speaker of the House. That was before Speaker PELOSI and her far-left base decided that the politics of obstruction would come before commonsense policymaking.

Here is how serious the Speaker is about ending the impasse and getting the government reopened: She now

proudly boasts that she would allow exactly \$1—\$1—for border barriers.

There was bipartisan support in the Congress for billions of dollars of physical barriers at the border before Representative PELOSI was Speaker. Now congressional Democrats support just \$1—\$1—for border barriers since she became Speaker. You have to ask yourself, what is the reason?

Earlier this month, Speaker PELOSI declared that the concept of any physical wall on our southern barrier was “an immorality”—an immorality.

“A wall is an immorality.” That is what Speaker PELOSI said. Look, that is not a serious statement. It would be laugh-out-loud material if hundreds of thousands of Federal workers weren’t going without pay because the Speaker has decided this absurdity is now her party’s official position.

Immoral? Was it immoral for Democrats to vote for the Secure Fence Act in 2006? Was it immoral for President Obama’s administration to proudly build the same kinds of steel slat barriers that President Trump now wants more of? Is Speaker PELOSI calling sitting Democrats immoral because they voted to invest billions in border security over the past few years alone?

I would like to see how this new philosophical opposition to the existence of walls plays out in practice. Shouldn’t the Speaker introduce a bill to destroy the walls and fencing that already exist if they are immoral?

Or maybe this actually isn’t a new, principled stand by Democrats. Maybe this is all one big political game—no negotiations, no collaboration. It is political game playing.

Consider the latest tactic by my Democratic colleagues. They have said that the President just needs to drop his request and agree to the Democrats’ plan to reopen the government, and then—and then—they will talk about border security—except they couldn’t even keep up that act either.

When President Trump and Speaker PELOSI met last week, the President

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



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