



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019

No. 28

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

Almighty God, our refuge and strength, Your Kingdom cannot be shaken. We praise You that more things are wrought by prayer than we can imagine. We are grateful for Your invitation to ask and receive, to seek and find, and to knock for doors to open.

May this prayer that opens today's session be a springboard for our lawmakers to communicate with You throughout the day. May they pause repeatedly during their challenging world to ask You for wisdom and guidance. Lord, empower the members of their staffs and all who labor for liberty to harness prayer power continuously.

We pray in Your powerful 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. DAINES). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 464

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the bill for a second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 464) to require the treatment of a lapse in appropriations as a mitigating condition when assessing financial considerations for security clearances, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday Chairman SHELBY, Ranking Member LEAHY, and their House counterparts continued finalizing their legislative proposal to fund the government. Their negotiated solution would wrap up this year's appropriations and avoid another partial government shutdown.

As our colleagues hammer out the final details, I would like to thank them again for their cooperative, bipartisan efforts that have brought us to this point. The agreement reached on Monday was achieved because the conference committee set aside far-left poison pills and utterly absurd demands. None of these radical non-starters was allowed to torpedo the process.

Notwithstanding weeks of over-the-top rhetoric from Speaker PELOSI, the agreement did not cave to the far-left demand that no more than a single dollar go toward new barriers on the southern border—no, indeed, it provides well over a billion such dollars.

The negotiators also prevented last-minute efforts to hamstringing the U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement with an unprecedented statutory limit on their ability to detain criminal aliens in the interior of our country.

Instead, here is what their agreement does provide. It provides another significant downpayment on the President's plan to secure our Nation's borders with new physical barriers and keep American communities safe. It provides nearly \$1.4 billion for new barriers in the Border Patrol's highest priority areas—enough to build nearly twice as many miles as were funded last year. It gives ICE the capacity and the flexibility to continue responding to surges in illegal immigration. It continues to provide the President with appropriate reprogramming authority, so he can direct additional funding toward urgent homeland security priorities should circumstances require. Of course, in addition to all this, the legislation will wrap up all our outstanding regular appropriations bills and get the entire Federal Government funded the right way.

It goes without saying that neither side is getting everything it wants. That is the way it goes in divided government. If the text of the bill reflects the principles agreed to on Monday, it won't be a perfect deal, but it will be a good deal.

I hope that our colleagues will complete the process of turning these principles into legislation soon and final text that can become law before this Friday's deadline.

We can't let any unrelated, cynical, partisan plays get in the way of finishing this important process. I understand, for example, that Speaker PELOSI and House Democrats are apparently objecting, believe it or not, to a modest extension of the Violence Against Women Act. They want this authority to expire on Friday.

Republicans believe that we should follow standard procedure and extend

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



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