



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2019

No. 36

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.

Precious Lord, take our hands. Lead us forward, and help us to stand.

We praise You for the gifts and talents You have given our Senators. Continue to bless them with influence that can make a difference. Lord, give them the wisdom to cut through the complex issues and discover solutions to the challenging problems that threaten our freedom. Remind them to be good stewards of the abilities You have so generously given them. Prepare their hearts to respond to You with gratitude as they strive to live for Your glory.

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. CRAMER). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael J. Desmond, of California, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate confirmed the 31st new circuit judge since January of 2017. Eric Miller came to the Senate for our consideration with a stellar resume and a sterling legal reputation. We had every indication he would interpret our Nation's laws and Constitution as they are actually written. This is exactly the kind of judge the American people deserve to sit on our Nation's courts of appeals. That is why the Senate will continue to make judicial nominations a top priority.

This week, however, we need to make more progress on the backlog of important executive branch nominees whom Democrats' delaying tactics and obstruction have left literally languishing on the Senate calendar.

The first is Michael Desmond, the President's choice to serve as Chief Counsel of the IRS. Mr. Desmond has put his legal expertise to work through years of public service, including at the Department of Justice Tax Division and at the Department of the Treasury. He has an impressive private sector background as well.

So listen to this: In the last Congress, the Finance Committee recommended Mr. Desmond to the full Senate by a vote of 25 to 2. That was last August. Yet this noncontroversial nominee never got a floor vote and had to be sent back to the White House. Well, Mr. Desmond was renominated. Earlier this month, our colleagues on the Finance Committee reported him favorably yet again—26 to 2.

I am sorry my Democratic colleagues required us to file cloture on this thoroughly noncontroversial nominee. It is a good example of the unreasonable tactics that have, sadly, become their standing operating procedure in many cases, but I am glad we voted to advance the nomination yesterday, and I urge everyone to join me in voting to confirm him soon.

THE GREEN NEW DEAL

Mr. President, on another matter, the Environment and Public Works Committee, led by Chairman BARRASSO, is meeting today to consider legislation that would help reduce, capture, and find productive uses for carbon dioxide emissions. It is an important subject and deserves a serious approach, but, as we all know, some on the far left have recently offered other ideas on this subject. That is right—the much heralded Green New Deal. Nothing says forward-thinking and fresh ideas quite like borrowing the name of an 80-plus-year-old policy program and just adding the color “green.”

So what is this thing all about? That turns out to be an interesting question. It depends on whom you ask. The Democrats who authored it say it is a massive reorganization and government takeover of our Nation's economy and our culture. Some have argued it is the only way to stop the world from ending in about a decade.

This was interesting news, even to many of their fellow Democrats. Our colleague Senator DURBIN reacted this way:

I have read it, and I have reread it, and I asked [Senator] Ed Markey: “What in the heck is this?”

That was the assistant Democratic leader.

But it looks like, one way or the other, the Democratic Party as a whole is eager to get behind this great idea.

So what is in it? Here are just a few of the hits in the 16-page resolution the Senate will soon be voting on.

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S1497