



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2019

No. 41

## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

Eternal Father, strong to save, empower our lawmakers to serve You today, to solve problems, to remove impediments, and to glorify You. Give them Your higher wisdom as they seek You, the source of their strength.

Lord, surround them with the shield of Your Divine favor so that no weapon formed against them will prosper.

Almighty God, provide our Senators strength for the adventures of these hours, and may Your truth and love fill their hearts and find expression in their daily living.

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.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The majority leader is recognized.

### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1271 AND H.R. 1381

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk due a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the measures by title for the second time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1271) to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a pilot

program instituting a clinical observation program for pre-med students preparing to attend medical school.

A bill (H.R. 1381) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to take actions necessary to ensure that certain individuals may update the burn pit registry with a registered individual's cause of death, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the measures on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceeding en bloc.

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

### ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, before I begin, I spoke yesterday about the evil of anti-Semitism and the recent disturbing invocation of anti-Semitic stereotypes by a Member of the House Democratic Conference. I took for granted, as a result, that the House Democrats would at least—at least—make good on their plans to symbolically condemn anti-Semitism.

Even as I called for the House Democrats to do more and pass the substantive foreign policy legislation the Senate sent them weeks ago, I at least assumed a few pages of symbolism was not too much to ask for, but alas, I spoke too soon. The House has put off consideration of a resolution to condemn anti-Semitism. Apparently, even nonbinding symbolism—this is all they were going to do—is too controversial within their own caucus. Let me say that again. Apparently, within the Speaker's new far-left Democratic majority, even a symbolic—symbolic—resolution condemning anti-Semitism seems to be a bridge too far.

Well, I expect I and other Members will have more to say on this subject, but for today I would let this speak for itself.

### JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Now on another matter, already this week the Senate has confirmed two more well qualified judicial nominees. Soon, Allison Rushing and Chad Readler will take their respective seats on the Fourth and Sixth Circuit Courts of Appeals, and later today the Senate will vote on confirmation of Eric Murphy, also to the Sixth Circuit. Together, these nominees bring decades of legal experience, prestigious clerkships, and the recognition of their peers. They will be charged with upholding the Constitution and the rule of law, and each is well equipped to do exactly that.

Now, my colleagues need no reminder of Senate Democrats' historic obstruction of nominations over the past 2 years. Under this administration, 135 nominations have required a cloture vote—135 nominations have required a cloture vote—and five times more were required during the first 2 years than in the same period of the last six administrations combined—combined.

The final nomination we will consider this week captures what I am talking about perfectly. John Fleming was nominated by the President to serve as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development on June 20 of last year. This is an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Mr. Fleming has an impressive record. When the Environment and Public Works Committee first considered his nomination last summer, a significant bipartisan majority voted to favorably report his nomination. This is an Assistant Secretary of Commerce out of committee on a bipartisan basis last summer, but partisan obstruction ran out the clock. The nomination was sent back to the President at the end of the Congress.

So earlier this year Mr. Fleming was resubmitted, returned to the same committee, and was favorably reported by the same bipartisan margin. But the obstruction still wasn't finished. Here

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S1717