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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:

Let us pray.

O Lord God, the almighty and the all-wise, Your judgments and ways are past finding out.

Bless our Senators with strength sufficient for today's challenges, illuminating their paths with Your light. May they walk in the way of integrity and sacrifice. Lord, let Your power purify their thoughts as Your truth guides their words. Teach them to cheerfully do Your will, surrounding them with the shield of Your providential love. Use them to fulfill Your purposes for our Nation and humanity.

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. HAWLEY). 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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Bridget S. Bade, of Arizona, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

MIDWESTERN FLOODS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to share a message from Iowa's heartland.

As you know, millions of Americans in the middle of the country are experiencing catastrophic flooding. My home State of Iowa and our neighbors in Nebraska are particularly hard hit, and it will affect others downriver of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers.

I want to thank the Trump administration for its swift response on Saturday to approve the expedited requests for a major disaster declaration made by Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds Thursday evening. The flooding has caused tremendous damage, impacting more than two-thirds of Iowa's 99 counties. The Federal disaster proclamation will trigger emergency assistance to 56 of those counties so far. Those would be the counties in blue on the map here.

Governor Reynolds' team has been in the trenches, working hand in hand with local officials and county emergency coordinators. They estimated damages so far across our entire State to be \$1.6 billion. The damages estimated for agriculture are \$214 million; damages to homes, \$481 million; and levee repairs, \$525 million.

By all accounts and every possible metric, the damages and devastation are overwhelming. Yet, at the very same time, the legendary mythology of America's heartland and its people is rooted in truth. The road to recovery will be long, grueling, and at times gruesome, but I am confident that the grit and resilience of Iowans and their fellow midwesterners will prevail.

Over the last week, we have heard remarkable stories of neighbor helping

neighbor and neighbors helping total strangers. Residents of all ages and differing abilities rubbed elbows to bag sand to save a water treatment facility in their small town. First responders and Good Samaritans rescued people stranded in their homes. Farmers moved their neighbor's grain and livestock to higher ground. Volunteers rolled up their sleeves to serve hot meals and deliver water. Generous Americans across our country opened their wallets to donate money, food, water, hygiene products, and medical supplies. Iowa farmers who were not wiped out by the floods are sending truckloads of much needed hay to livestock producers and ranchers in Nebraska.

These stories offer a glimmer of sunshine in the darkest hours of the 2019 floods. You might say that we are experiencing an unwelcome twist of March Madness along the Missouri River. Despite being mired in muck and mud, it is reassuring to see the full-court press and gritty resilience of midwesterners.

Make no mistake—the catastrophic damages to private property, farmland, Main Street businesses, public utilities, and critical infrastructure, including wells, roads, bridges, and railways, have extended beyond the capability of local and State government.

Aerial footage of our State makes entire communities and farmsteads look like an island surrounded by an ocean. You can see some of that here in this photo that was taken just last week. You see here a small community along the Missouri River. This is the town of Pacific Junction, which is located in the southwestern corner of the State in Mills County. Its entire population was forced to evacuate. As you can see from this photo, the rooftops of homes appear to be floating in the muddy waters of a Monopoly board.

I ask my colleagues here in the Senate and I ask Americans listening at home to put yourselves in the shoes of those evacuated from their homes.

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



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