



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2019

No. 57

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.

O God, who has been our help in ages past and our hope for years to come, keep our lawmakers under the canopy of Your care. We do not ask You to separate them from life's stresses and strains but to keep them by Your grace amid sunshine and shadow.

Lord, shelter them in their coming in, in their going out, and in their daily work, that they may be Your instruments to advance Your Kingdom. May they call You during turbulent times, claiming Your promise to deliver them. Encompass them with the everlasting arms of Your love and grace that never fail.

We pray in Your strong 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 (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

IMPROVING PROCEDURES FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF NOMINATIONS IN THE SENATE—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. Res. 50, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 50) improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

H.R. 268

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I would like to speak for 1 minute.

Senate Democrats yesterday blocked a bill that provides much needed funds for Puerto Rico's nutrition program, also, aid for the 2018 hurricanes and wildfires and, thirdly, assistance to Midwest States in the midst of a flood crisis. That includes, at least, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and maybe other States.

Now, the people who voted against it say it was because they care about Puerto Rico. The bill they blocked takes care of the urgent funding shortfalls there in that Commonwealth. Playing politics with disaster aid does a disservice to the people of Puerto Rico and the people of States like Iowa who are suffering right now from these floods.

Why would these Senators want to come to campaign in Iowa when they don't show sympathy for Iowans suffering from the floods with the vote they cast last night?

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

H.R. 268

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, last night the Senate had an opportunity to pass an important package of disaster relief funding for communities all across our country. Unfortunately, it didn't happen. Our Democratic colleagues voted down the efforts of Chairman SHELBY and Senator PERDUE to put together a comprehensive package, and it remains unfinished business.

As recently as 1 month ago, some congressional Democrats had expressed a clear commitment to immediate, bipartisan action on disaster relief, and the package considered yesterday represented a long list of priorities from actually both sides of the aisle—the only such list that had the President's explicit support.

It would have helped local schools, hospitals, and transportation infrastructure get back up and running, farmers and ranchers recoup losses, and our Nation's military restore readiness at bases and installations in harm's way. It would have been an immediate and significant step forward for the coastal communities of Florida and the Carolinas that are still picking up the pieces after a devastating hurricane season and for the western communities, as well, besieged by wildfires, for the families in Puerto Rico who rely on nutrition assistance that is dwindling, for those in the path of last month's tornadoes in Alabama and Georgia, and for large swathes of the heartland still grappling with floodwaters.

So I am disappointed that political games carried the day yesterday, but I assure the American people that our work on this subject is far from finished.

NOMINATIONS

Madam President, on another matter, 217 days—217 days—is how long has elapsed between President Trump's sending the Senate his nomination for a Federal Railroad Administrator and

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



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