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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.

Sovereign Lord, our help in ages past and our hope for years to come, we magnify Your Name. Lord, we sense that our battles are not simply with flesh and blood, but we war against principalities and powers. Thank You for providing us with spiritual weapons for our warfare. Forgive us when we chase the temporary and flee from the permanent. Inspire us to capture our thoughts and actions, making them subject to Your will.

Lord, give our lawmakers today an awareness of the complexity of the warfare between good and evil. Speak to our Senators when they call to You for guidance. Remind them that truth crushed to Earth will rise again.

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 (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). 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 proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of William Cooper, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Energy.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the Senate is in the midst of considering several more well-qualified nominees for service in the executive branch and on our Nation's Federal courts. We are doing so in a more reasonable, efficient manner—more in line with this body's tradition—thanks to the modest reform the Senate passed just a few weeks ago.

Until recently, our colleagues across the aisle had succeeded in subjecting even the least controversial nominees to day after day of so-called debate.

Countless hours of valuable floor time were spent on individuals who passed through committees of jurisdiction without any opposition and for individuals whose final confirmation votes frequently cleared 90 votes, but now the Senate has begun to clear the backlog and put more public servants to work on behalf of the American people.

Last evening we voted to advance the nomination of William Cooper of Maryland to serve as general counsel at the Department of Energy. Mr. Cooper's nomination first arrived in the Senate 9 months ago. It has twice been reported favorably by our colleagues on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Mr. Cooper of Florida has

waited even longer to begin his service as Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, and the story is not much different for the jurists waiting to finally be confirmed to Federal district courts either.

So I look forward to the swift consideration of this week's slate of nominees, and I would urge each of my colleagues to join me in voting for their confirmation.

HEALTHCARE

On another matter, lest there be any doubt that my Democratic colleagues here in the Congress are serious about their party's radical left turn, the House Rules Committee is actually holding a hearing today on their proposal to outlaw private health insurance and force every American into a new government-run system.

As I have said, this grand scheme ought to be called Medicare for None. Democrats want to drain the popular program that seniors have relied on for more than 50 years and slap its name on a brand-new, untried, untested government-run system, and this thing they have cooked up would become the only option—the only option—available to American families.

Democrats are so confident that Americans will love their one-size-fits-all government plan that they feel the need to ban the private sector from competing with it.

This is a fantasy pulled from the farthest corners of the left, but now leading Democrats are proudly embracing it.

Here is the chairman of the House Rules Committee: "It's a serious proposal that deserves serious consideration."

Well, it certainly is a serious proposal for more than 180 million Americans who would be unceremoniously kicked off of their private insurance plans. It certainly is a serious proposal for the tens of millions of Americans who paid into Medicare so it would actually be there now when they needed

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



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