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## 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, the source of our hopes and dreams, You are the stable influence that gives us peace in a sometimes chaotic world. We praise You for surrounding us with the shield of Your favor and love.

Lord, continue to guide our lawmakers as they trust You to direct their steps. Remind them that You will not withhold good things from the upright. Use them to illuminate the darkness of faulty thinking and to make our Nation and world a better place to live. Sanctify their thoughts as they daily expose themselves to the wisdom and consolation of Your holy Word.

Lord, as we commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day, increase our faith in the power of Your loving providence.

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.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The majority leader is recognized.

### NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday the Senate voted to confirm Andrew Saul of New York to serve as

Commissioner of Social Security and voted to advance several more highly qualified nominees.

Today we will vote to confirm three other executive branch nominees to important posts at the Departments of State and Interior and at the CFTC, and we will advance three more judicial nominees to fill seats on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia and the Court of Federal Claims.

So the Senate continues to clear the backlog left by more than 2 years of systematic delays and obstruction that extended even to nominees with major bipartisan support—impressive, unobjectionable individuals who had spent months and, in some cases, well over a year on the Executive Calendar were finally granted straightforward votes. The modest rules change the Senate adopted this spring is already making a change.

In 48 session days, from January through April, we were able to confirm just 23 nominees. But in the 20 days immediately following the modest reform, we confirmed 45, about twice as many in less than half the time, and, of course, the number of confirmations has continued to climb in the weeks since then. We need to get these folks on the job for the sake of the country. The President—any President—should be able to stand up a government. The American people deserve to be governed by the government they voted for.

Many of the jobs that have been needlessly held open are not typically the highest profile positions, but they are still hugely important. As I said yesterday, until we confirm David Schenker later today, his confirmation to hold the top Middle East job at the State Department will have been held up for more than a year. This is the Middle East position at the State Department. Yet, as the cloture vote indicated, this qualified nominee carries overwhelming support. The nomination

has been held by Democrats for political purposes. It had nothing to do with the nominee or his qualifications for the position. Given the crisis ranging from Libya to Yemen and almost everywhere in between, it is past time to have an Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs confirmed and on the job.

Later today we will also confirm Susan Combs to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Interior. Her non-controversial nomination has been pending in the Senate since July. Listen to this: since July of 2017—2 years, 700 days, just shy of 2 years. But starting tomorrow, she will finally be on the job.

These are the kinds of nominees who once would have moved swiftly through the Senate and certainly by voice vote. I wish we could rediscover that tradition, but one way or another, we will continue to make progress.

### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, in addition to nominations, there are a number of other important items that Congress ought to be able to tackle in the next several weeks. As I have mentioned several times, we need continued negotiations in the Senate, the House, and the White House toward a bipartisan government funding agreement to set up the appropriations process. We will also need to complete a National Defense Authorization Act to address critical national security challenges, rebuild our military's readiness, and modernize our Armed Forces to address the growing challenges posed by great-power competitors like Russia and China.

The headlines remain filled with the unacceptable, unsustainable security crisis and humanitarian crisis down on our southern border. By now, I am confident that every Member of Congress has heard the breathtaking numbers. We have all heard the chaos analyzed 1,000 different ways.

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



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What we haven't seen is any appetite on the Democratic side for actually getting an outcome. We haven't seen the Democrats put aside their reflexive opposition to anything—anything—the President requests and face the facts.

So allow me to repeat some of those facts yet again. We are all hoping they will sink in some time soon. One week ago this morning, border agents encountered the largest group of people attempting an illegal crossing that they have ever, ever seen. They apprehended more than 1,000 individuals—the largest group ever.

For consecutive months now, the men and women who guard our border have apprehended more than 100,000 people—100,000. That is each month—100,000 a month. We are talking about numbers not seen for more than a decade. And, as we all know, in particular, the amount of families and children are consistently record-breaking as well.

The officials whom we trust to protect our borders—not to mention feed, clothe, and house these individuals—have been crying out for months that their Agencies are stretched literally to the breaking point. One processing center that was designed to hold 125 is said to hold 900—900. The Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement has predicted that the program for unaccompanied children may exhaust all of its funding this month—this month—and need to reduce operations.

Here is one newspaper reporting on testimony from the head of the Border Patrol:

The flood of migrants has overwhelmed Border Patrol stations and other Federal facilities, forcing immigration agents to release migrants directly into U.S. border communities with only the hope that they will appear for their immigration court hearings.

So this funding crisis is directly weakening our border security and national security. It is directly worsening the conditions for these men, women, and children, and the authorities are pleading for our help.

I dare say there are not many occasions when the editorial board of the New York Times has chosen to side with the Trump administration, but this crisis is so bad and the next step is so obvious that it has united President Trump, Republicans here in Congress, and the New York Times editorial page. I doubt if we will see that again.

Here was the title of their editorial about a month ago: "Congress, Give Trump His Border Money." They described:

A humanitarian crisis of overcrowding, disease, and chaos. . . . As resources are strained and the system buckles, the misery grows.

They published that editorial while we were finalizing the disaster funding legislation. There was no reason why the funds to alleviate the humanitarian crisis at the border should not have been included in that bill, and yet my friend, the Democratic leader, came to the floor multiple times late last month to call the issue of border funding "extraneous."

Addressing the security crisis and humanitarian crisis is not extraneous. It is essential. Migrants are experiencing overcrowded and underequipped facilities. Our law enforcement humanitarian professionals are crying out for help.

Look, I understand our Democratic colleagues find it extremely difficult to put partisanship aside and work with the President the American people elected. I think the whole country sees very clearly that Democrats in Congress seem to prefer picking fights with this President to actually getting much done. Their partisan spite must not prolong this misery any longer. As long as Democrats continue to drag their feet on this crisis, as long as they keep slow-walking funding that everyone from President Trump to the New York Times sees is necessary, then, my colleagues across the aisle will continue to own the consequences. It is on them.

I hope my Democratic colleagues will allow this legislation to move forward—no more poison-pill policy riders, no more political posturing. It is way past time for action.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, last week, a man submitted his 2-weeks' notice to his place of employment in Virginia Beach before going there and shooting 12 people and injuring 4 others. He unloaded dozens of rounds indiscriminately. In addition to having two handguns, he had extended ammunition magazines and a suppressor to muffle the sound of gunfire.

This was the 100th mass shooting in America, coming on the 100th day of the year. This has become a regular part of life in the United States of America—individuals walking into churches and shopping malls and schools and places of employment and shooting indiscriminately such that dozens of innocent lives are lost. In most cases, the same kinds of weapons are used—semiautomatic rifles, extended magazines—weapons or components of weapons that are banned in other countries and that were banned in this country for a period of time because they were believed to have been so dangerous such that they should have been in the exclusive province of the military and law enforcement.

#### REMEMBERING RYAN KEITH COX

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, Ryan Keith Cox was 50 years old when he was

shot and killed on May 31. He was known for his soft-spoken nature and his powerful singing voice in his church choir, and he was constantly affecting those around him with small but meaningful gestures of kindness.

The day that he was killed in Virginia Beach, a close coworker of Ryan's, Christi Dewar, was with him when the shooting started. Ryan told Christi and other colleagues to barricade themselves in the break room. Christi implored Keith to join them in the break room, but he said to her "I have to go check on the other ones." Keith left and was soon shot by the gunman as he was assisting other coworkers in reaching safety.

Christi said:

Every time I was upset, [Ryan] would give me a [big] hug. When I was upset about something, he knew exactly what to say to make you smile. He's the type of person who you know would lay down his life for someone, just like he did.

Bishop Williams of Faith World Ministries in Norfolk said that he had known Keith and his family for years. They were close, a very loving family, and had just been "leaders in the church world," Bishop Williams said.

Ryan Keith Cox was 50 years old when he was shot in Virginia Beach.

#### REMEMBERING JOSHUA HARDY

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, Joshua Hardy was 2 years older. He was 52 years old. He had been working for 4½ years as an engineer and technician for the city of Virginia Beach. He was raised in Hampton Roads. He came from a really big family, and he was described by his friends and his family as being incredibly caring, especially about kids. He didn't have any children of his own, but he often watched over his nieces and nephews.

One of his nieces, Tasha, remembered that he was around a lot. "He cared about me and all of my cousins," she said. "He was like a father figure to me because my dad wasn't around."

In 2011, Joshua actually published a book, called the "ABC Book on Protecting Yourself from Strangers."

The people he worked with remember being so impressed that Joshua had gone above and beyond the call. One of his colleagues in the engineering department, Larry Knight, gave a copy of the book to his daughter and his grandson. He remembers Joshua as just always having a smile on the job:

Joshua was one of the nicest men you would ever care to meet. He was funny and kindhearted. [He] would do anything for you.

#### REMEMBERING LAQUITA BROWN

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, LaQuita Brown was 39 years old. She was a public servant from Chesapeake, VA. She had worked in the public works department for more than 4 years. She was a right-of-way agent. Her friends called her "Ms. Worldwide" because she loved to travel. She had