



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2019

No. 99

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable THOM TILLIS, a Senator from the State of North Carolina.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of our silent tears, You have put gladness in our hearts. Give our lawmakers such reverence for You that their words and actions will honor You. In Your presence, may they cultivate humility to acknowledge their needs, trust to ask You for help, and wisdom to obey Your commands. Walk with them throughout this day, reminding them that there is no purity without vigilance, no learning without effort, and no mastery without discipline.

Lord, inspire them to pay the price required to glorify Your Name. Strengthen their resolve to choose the right and refuse the wrong.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 13, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable THOM TILLIS, a Senator from the State of North Carolina, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TILLIS thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this week the Senate has been remarkably productive in confirming more of the President's well-qualified nominees. We have confirmed nine newly minted judges to fill vacancies on the Federal bench.

Today we will turn to the executive branch and confirm David Stilwell to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Edward Crawford to serve as Ambassador to Ireland.

Remember, earlier this spring, we put in place a modest reform to Senate rules so we could consider these uncontroversial, lower level nominations at a more reasonable pace. That had been the Senate's normal tradition until very recently, and so we restored it.

At the time, I recall my friends across the aisle insisting that the majority would use these more efficient procedures to push through all kinds of polarizing and controversial people. That is what they argued—if we made this modest rule change, we would be pushing through all these polarizing and controversial people.

Well, here are a few of the rollcall votes the Senate has taken on nominations this week: 91 to 5, 62 to 34, 77 to 19, 85 to 11. Yesterday afternoon, on a procedural vote for Mr. Stilwell, it was 93 to 4. A pretty controversial bunch.

So virtually all of us can remember a time when nominations of this sort would have passed the Senate on a voice vote. These days, Democrats are making us file cloture and spend floor time on each, but at least our new Senate rules are helping us get these thoroughly bipartisan nominees through at a more efficient pace.

ARMS SALES

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, on another matter, later today the Senate will vote on two resolutions that would undermine U.S. influence and credibility in the Middle East and ultimately make the region a more dangerous place. Some of our colleagues seek to block arms sales to two of the closest partners of the United States in the region—Bahrain and Qatar.

These resolutions are misguided. They would make the United States a less reliable partner, weaken the influence we have with our friends, and open the door to other more unscrupulous powers like Russia and China.

There is this small matter that neither of these resolutions would even solve the problem that seems to have motivated them. I understand many Members of this body are genuinely concerned about some of the actions of our Saudi partners in Yemen. Fortunately, the Senate has repeatedly expressed these concerns directly

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



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