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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.

Mighty God, hear our prayers, search our hearts, and know our thoughts.

Keep our lawmakers on Your path, inspiring them to walk with integrity. Hear and answer their prayers, saving them with Your might. Lord, preserve our Senators as the apple of Your eye, ordering their steps and bringing them to Your desired destination.

We love You, Lord, for You are our strength.

And, Lord, we thank You for the life and service of retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ANTI-COUNTERFEITING CONSUMER EDUCATION AND AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in honor of Anti-Counterfeiting Consumer Education and Awareness Month, I wish to highlight the problem of counterfeits sold online.

Counterfeiters are increasingly turning to e-commerce to sell all of their

fakes. In the past, I have advocated for increased education and awareness efforts because I believe these efforts and education are critical tools in our country's arsenal against counterfeits.

I encourage our Customs and Border Protection to identify ways to increase information sharing with their private industry partners. This is one way we can prevent the sale of fakes and keep consumers safe.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING JOHN PAUL STEVENS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, first, this morning, the Senate recognizes the death of a distinguished American. We received word last night that the remarkable life of former Associate Justice John Paul Stevens had come to a close at the age of 99.

Justice Stevens served for 34 years on the Nation's highest Court. You didn't have to agree with his constitutional philosophy to admire his obvious intelligence or the universal reports about his kindness and collegiality or the passionate patriotism he was proud to wear on his sleeve. No question, this was a quintessential public servant of the "greatest generation."

A son of Chicago who enlisted in the Navy the day before Pearl Harbor and went on to earn a Bronze Star for his work in cracking the coded messages of Imperial Japan, there was just something about Justice Stevens that told you this man lived life to the fullest. At age 12, he was there to see Babe Ruth's "called shot" at Wrigley Field. At age 99, just this year, he published a memoir that was subtitled "Reflections on My First 94 Years." In between, alongside his time on the Court,

he found time to weigh in on Shakespeare scholarship on the side.

So the Senate joins the Nation in appreciating this American life fully lived, and our condolences are with the Stevens family on this sad day.

NOMINATION OF MARK T. ESPER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, our colleagues on the Armed Services Committee heard testimony from Dr. Mark Esper, the Senate-confirmed Secretary of the Army and President Trump's nominee for Secretary of Defense. They examined his extensive record of military and public service and discussed the variety of challenges the next Secretary will face. By the end, I believe anybody impartial would have to have come away impressed by Dr. Esper's mastery, intelligence, and thoroughness.

Of course, it is not exactly surprising that a decorated combat veteran and distinguished scholar would convey expertise and calm under pressure. For those of us who knew him during his service as national security adviser to the former majority leader, Bill Frist, those qualities are familiar.

You could hardly invent better qualifications for the top job at the Pentagon than Mark Esper's: a graduate of West Point, advanced degrees from the Harvard Kennedy School and George Washington University, courageous service with the 101st Airborne in the Gulf war, service at the Defense Department, a successful career in the private sector.

Every step of the way, he earned respect and admiration. That includes high praise from DOD leaders of the last administration, the Obama administration. They say that Dr. Esper "works hard, he's smart, he's dedicated." He has "all the qualifications."

Our colleagues at the hearing saw an exceptionally well-qualified nominee. In fact, as my friend the junior Senator from Virginia has put it, they saw a

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



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