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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the author and finisher of our faith, we rejoice in the privileges You have strewn on our path. Give us the courage to use our opportunities to serve You and country. May our lawmakers strive to stand for right though the heavens fall. Remind them that evil prospers when good people do nothing. May our Senators also use the gift of intercessory prayer to unlock Your storehouse of blessings so desperately needed in our Nation and world. In hours of hardship, provide them with Your peace. Lord, give our legislators the wisdom that enables them to hasten the coming of Your Kingdom of justice and peace.

We pray in Your sovereign 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 25, 2019.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today we expect the House of Representatives will pass the 2-year government funding agreement the Trump administration and Speaker PELOSI announced earlier this week. I stand with the President, who has publicly expressed his support for the agreement on several occasions. I am grateful to the members of his administration who led the negotiations: Secretary Mnuchin, Acting Chief of Staff Mulvaney, and Acting OMB Director Vought.

Considering the circumstances of divided government, this is a good deal. After the House approves it today with bipartisan support, I expect the Senate to do the same next week. Here is why it is a good deal: It achieves the No. 1 goal on the Republican side of the aisle of providing for the common defense and continuing our progress in rebuilding the Armed Forces of the United States and modernizing them so they can continue to keep Americans safe and project power for years to come. This has been a top shared priority for this Republican Senate and this Republican White House for 2½ years.

Pentagon leaders need stable, reliable, and sufficient resources. The greatest military on Earth should not drift in uncertainty. Our servicemem-

bers deserve better than a string of funding crises and continuing resolutions. Our commanders need predictable resources and sufficient resources to lay the foundations for the future of our national defense.

Servicemembers deserve to deploy armed with state-of-the-art training and cutting-edge equipment; their families deserve the best support services the Nation can offer; and the Nation as a whole deserves the global presence that is up to snuff and competitive with the leaps forward in which our adversaries have invested heavily.

That is why we have delivered historic increases in resources for modernization and DOD reforms—to ensure the U.S. military is strong and agile enough to confront a growing number of threats to America and our interests. That is why just a few months ago we authorized the largest year-on-year increase in defense funding in more than a decade. This funding agreement is the next step forward in that process.

Every Member of this body knows the threats we face are serious and getting more serious: the resurgence of great power competition with nations like Russia and China; the destabilization of influence of state-sponsored terror and regional aggression from bad actors such as Iran; and the testing of historic alliances.

Amidst the growing international chaos, the preeminent obligation of the U.S. government is to provide for the common defense. This agreement prioritizes that commitment to the safety and the security of the American people.

A nation that understands these threats and takes them seriously makes serious investments in the readiness of its own defenses today and the modernization that will preserve their strength into the future.

For years, we have seen China extend its strategic reach, testing the waters of the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

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



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