



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2019

No. 129

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.

Eternal God, who provides us with strength for life's journey, today, empower our Senators with an extraordinary measure of grace to accomplish Your purposes. As they work under the duress of time and pressures from diverse interests, inspire them to strive to live with integrity, making ethical decisions that honor You.

Lord, be with their staff members who run the offices and provide the data needed for responsible decisions. Be also with those who process the mountains of business in and out of cloakrooms. Lord, sustain those who transcribe the debates for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Bless those who monitor parliamentary order, schedules, and voting records. Protect those who provide security at the doors, on the floors, and on the streets. And, Lord, bless our pages. Strengthen all who are a part of the Senate's support system, surrounding them with Your protection and favor.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for 1 minute in morning business.

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

NATIONAL WHISTLEBLOWER APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I want to take our Nation and my colleagues back to the Revolutionary War.

More than 240 years ago, sailors aboard the warship *Warren* disclosed significant misconduct by the commander of the Continental Navy. The Congress then recognized these brave whistleblowers' valuable contribution to our brandnew Republic because, on this day—today—in 1778, Congress passed this resolution, saying: "It is the duty of all persons in the service of the United States . . . to give the earliest information to Congress or other proper authority of any misconduct, frauds, or misdemeanors committed by any offices or persons in the service of these states."

That is the beginning of the government recognizing whistleblowers as valuable patriots.

Following in their footsteps, this Senate has also unanimously agreed to designate today as National Whistleblower Appreciation Day.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the Senate has a lot of important business to attend to before we adjourn for the August State work period.

As a reminder to all of our colleagues, here is our considerable to-do list for this week: Later this morning, we will vote to confirm two more of President Trump's impressive nominees for district courts: Michael Liburdi for the District of Arizona and Peter Welte for the District of North Dakota.

They are just the first two in a significant group of judges—19 in all—that the Senate needs to process before we wrap up the week. We can't head home without making another big dent in the backlog of qualified district judge nominees whom partisan obstruction has already kept waiting entirely too long.

In addition, the Senate is not going anywhere until we confirm two impressive nominees to executive branch positions that play a vital role in U.S. foreign policy and national security. Ambassador Kelly Craft is President Trump's excellent choice to serve as our Ambassador to the United Nations. David Norquist is his pick for Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Needless to say, these are troubling times in a troubled world. We need to get both of these highly capable public servants on the job this week.

Finally, we must also pass the bipartisan government funding agreement that President Trump's negotiating team worked out with Speaker PELOSI. Given the realities of divided government, it is a strong deal that achieves my Republican colleagues' and my No. 1 priority: continuing to invest seriously in rebuilding the readiness of our Armed Forces and modernizing them to meet the challenges of today.

The Trump administration has negotiated their way to a major win on defense. The House has passed the compromise legislation. The President is ready and waiting to sign it.

Once the Senate passes it later this week, he can sign it into law, taking funding crises and long-term continuing resolutions off the table, and pave Congress's path toward a regular appropriations process that will provide the resources our military commanders and our servicemembers need to keep us safe.

I urge all of my colleagues to join President Trump in support of this legislation when we vote on it later this week.

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



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TRIBUTE TO KATHRYN WEEDEN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on one final matter, as Senate majority leader, it is my honor this morning to acknowledge a truly remarkable legacy of service to the Senate and really to the Nation.

Next month, the Senate Page School will say goodbye to its beloved principal. After 26 years heading up this unique institution, our very own Mrs. Kathryn Weeden is starting a new chapter as a very deserving retiree.

For more than a quarter century, Principal Weeden has been a constant anchor in a place where rotation and change are par for the course.

The Page School, as we know, welcomes a new class of high-achieving young people from all across the country every semester. These students' experience is most famous for the fast-paced, hands-on exposure to the inner workings of American government it involves, but in the early mornings and late evenings, when they are not delivering bill text around the Capitol, assisting Members on the floor, or engaged in any number of tasks that help this place actually run, they are also dealing with the academic rigors of the 11th grade.

There are 30 teenagers at a time living, studying, and working full time on Capitol Hill. Needless to say, keeping this unique arrangement running smoothly is less than an ordinary job—even a full-time one—and more like a life's mission. By all accounts, it is a mission Principal Weeden has executed with constant competence, total professionalism, and the utmost grace.

Now, if I had to guess, a large share of that grace was spent in 5 a.m. meetings most mornings. That is typically when she would first encounter what I am sure were the most chipper and alert 16- and 17-year-olds around. While the hundreds of pages who have worked, studied, and grown under Principal Weeden's watch may not miss their early morning math class, they sure will miss her. They are left with lasting memories of her attentive mentorship and compassion.

Among recent graduates of the Page Program, some of whom I have been proud to sponsor through my own office, the conclusion is clear: Principal Weeden is simply the best.

They remember the way she would make time for weekly one-on-one meetings to check up on their progress and talk about their future goals. They remember the way she radiated excitement leading the school in assembling care packages for servicemembers deployed overseas. They remember her knack for reassuring words and for helping them put the daily stresses of high school in perspective.

Inevitably, after 26 years, Principal Weeden's legacy is counted in the flood of letters sharing stories like these following the news of her retirement, but it is also measured in her commitment to transform the Page School as a top-notch academic institution.

It is thanks to her no-nonsense leadership that this unique program has earned and maintained accreditation, that its rigors have earned the attention and respect of prestigious universities, and that it continues to attract talented and passionate educators to carry on in her example.

Unsurprisingly, the colleagues and faculty whom Ms. Weeden has mentored and supervised are no less enthusiastic in their praise than her former students. Talking to them about their departing boss, you hear words like disciplined, nurturing, and patriotic. You are painted a picture that looks something like a Mother Superior, a no-nonsense administrator, an exacting leader, and a true friend all in one.

Being entrusted with the care, feeding, education, and maturation of so many young men and women over so many years would be an accomplishment no matter where Principal Weeden had worked, but to do all that at the Senate Page School means something even more. To a special degree, her legacy will have helped, formed, and shaped America's civic future for the better.

Because she gave of herself so generously to a special class of young people—those who are so interested in our American Government that they just had to come see it firsthand—today, the Senate celebrates this outstanding legacy and warmly congratulates Principal Weeden on such a tremendous accomplishment. We thank her for all she has done, and we wish her nothing but happiness in the years that lie ahead.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the Senate has just a few more days this week to pass legislation to lift the budget caps and extend the debt ceiling before the summer State work period. As the minority leader, I don't have control over the schedule here on the floor, much to my dismay. So I am left to ask my friend, the majority leader, who does control the floor schedule: Why don't we vote on the caps deal today?

Four congressional leaders and the White House reached an agreement 2 weeks ago. The President supports it. The House has already passed it. Secretary Mnuchin has said we need this

legislation urgently before the State work period because he can't guarantee that we will not hit the debt ceiling before Congress reconvenes. The majority leader spoke about the importance of moving the budget agreement back in mid-May. Now the clock is ticking.

I make clear to the leader and to all of my friends on the other side of the aisle, as well as all Americans: Democrats are ready to vote on the House bill today so it can get to the President's desk and we can avoid even a glimmer of default.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on another matter, last week former Special Counsel Mueller testified that Russian interference in our democracy "wasn't a single attempt. They're doing it as we sit here and they expect to do it in the next campaign."

The Russians, he said, interfered in the last election and are trying to interfere again. Mueller said: "Much more needs to be done in order to protect against these intrusions, not just by the Russians but by others as well."

It was not just Mueller who said these things or agreed with these ideas and sentiments. FBI Director Wray, appointed by President Trump, has shared similar sentiments. Departing DNI Director Coats—lifelong Republican, former member of this body, well respected by all, and appointed by President Trump—has repeatedly warned about the threat posed by Russia. The Senate Intelligence Committee, chaired by a Republican, Senator BARR, did the same.

It is with these facts as the backdrop—the testimony of prominent Republicans, allies of President Trump and friends and allies of our colleagues here—that Democrats have been pushing for election security—so far, to little avail. Leader MCCONNELL and the Republican majority have not allowed a single election security bill to reach the floor of the Senate. We haven't had a single bill open for amendment all year.

So, last week, understandably frustrated at the lack of progress, Democrats asked unanimous consent to pass House legislation to safeguard our elections. Leader MCCONNELL blocked that request saying yesterday: "I am not going to let Democrats and their water-carriers in the media use Russia's attack on our democracy as a Trojan horse for partisan wish list items."

"Partisan wish list items"—really? What are these items on our partisan wish list, you might ask? Using paper ballots—that is partisan? Using paper ballots is widely agreed upon as a reform to protect our elections from manipulation. Does Leader MCCONNELL object to paper ballots? Does Leader MCCONNELL believe paper ballots are partisan? They are part of our elections, whoever wins.

How about this one: We want the postelection audits to make sure the