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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.

Precious Lord, spirit of light and life, Your mercies endure forever.

Guide our lawmakers through the turbulent waters of division and pessimism to Your safe harbor of unity and hope. Keep their hearts clean, their spirits courageous, and their minds clear.

Bless our Nation with Your continued presence as You empower our Senators to be servants for peace and freedom in this world of human need.

And, Lord, we again thank You for the life and legacy of Representative Elijah Cummings.

We pray in Your great 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 assistant bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, October 24, 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.

### NOMINATION OF JUSTIN REED WALKER

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, later today, the Senate will have the opportunity to confirm another brilliant nominee to the Federal judiciary. In this case, I am proud to say this new lifetime judge will be another fine Kentuckian.

For those of us who know Justin Walker and have seen his work up close, it is clear that President Trump made an outstanding choice to be a district judge for the Western District of Kentucky.

Mr. Walker has sharpened his legal skills at the highest levels, including premier clerkships to then-Judge Brett Kavanaugh of the DC circuit and former Justice Anthony Kennedy.

As a prominent attorney and law professor, he has earned the respect of his peers in the legal world and of the community that he will serve on the bench.

For his students, Mr. Walker has been a mentor who helps push them to fulfill their potential in the classroom and throughout their legal careers.

His thoughtful and deliberate approach fit the mold of a Federal judge who—imagine this—will uphold the laws and the Constitution as they are actually written, not as he might wish them to be.

So I am confident Mr. Walker will serve our Commonwealth and the coun-

try extremely well as a district judge. I look forward to voting to confirm him, and I certainly urge my colleagues to join me.

### OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, too many times I have had to come to the floor to speak about the pain inflicted on families and entire communities by opioid addiction and substance abuse.

It is a crisis present in every ZIP Code, one that has wrecked lives throughout our country.

My home State of Kentucky has been hit particularly hard, but I am relieved to say that we are seeing at least a glimmer of hope on the horizon.

This past summer brought news of the first nationwide decrease—decrease—in overdose fatalities in almost three decades. Kentucky saw a nearly 15-percent drop. After so much suffering, this is an indication that the tide may be starting to turn.

The result has been hard-won, after years of coordinated efforts between States, localities, and Washington. It has been a nationwide response, and we in Congress, along with the Trump administration, have been focused on doing our part.

Today marks the 1-year anniversary of one key part of our ongoing efforts. One year ago today, President Trump signed into law our landmark opioid legislation that will hopefully spare more families from the pain of addiction.

This legislation included work from 5 different committees and 70 Senators. Thanks to Chairman LAMAR ALEXANDER and so many of our colleagues, this significant package focused on providing innovative solutions, promoting long-term recovery, and empowering local leaders and first responders out on the frontlines.

A little more than a year ago, it passed the Senate with overwhelming

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



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bipartisan support. I am proud that two of my own bills were included in that package. The Protecting Moms and Infant Act safeguards of the addiction crisis from its heartbreaking consequences, and the CAREER Act addresses the major role that stable employment plays in long-term recovery. It encourages treatment facilities to form partnerships with local businesses and short-term housing facilities to “hand up” to those who need it.

We are proud of what we accomplished a year ago, and I am proud that my Kentucky colleague, Representative ANDY BARR, is leading the push for the CAREER Act’s companion legislation over in the House.

But we know all too well that, unfortunately, this work is far, far from finished. That is why, this very week, the Senate is moving forward \$25 million more for the CAREER Act’s transitional housing pilot program in the domestic appropriations we are advancing here on the floor.

The work will not stop there. This fight has been one of my top priorities since I became majority leader. We have put cutting-edge tools into the hands of healthcare professionals and first responders who face this crisis every single day.

In my State alone, I helped secure an unprecedented \$200 million to address the urgent crisis facing Kentuckians—a funding increase of more than 400 percent on this issue for Kentucky since I became majority leader.

We have committed to a comprehensive strategy of prevention, treatment, and enforcement efforts. At my invitation, the White House drug czar, Jim Carroll, saw some of Kentucky’s innovative leadership firsthand when he visited this past April. We have pushed the boundaries of research to find new ways to treat addiction and help families escape its painful consequences.

Earlier this month I joined Secretary Azar, NIH Director Collins, and an all-star research team at the University of Kentucky to celebrate the largest Federal grant in the University of Kentucky’s history. These new resources will fuel UK’s bold commitment to cutting overdose deaths by 40 percent in 16 counties over the coming 3 years. I was proud to help secure those funds.

Kentucky is proud that we are leading the national response, but I know my colleagues each have their own inspiring stories of how States are fighting back.

As I said, the work is far from over, but today we take a moment to celebrate the progress of the past year. To help mark this anniversary, the First Lady of the United States joined us here in the Senate yesterday.

I am proud to stand with her and the Trump administration and my colleagues in this body as we recommit ourselves to this effort.

#### SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, this anniversary also reminds us of

how many urgent issues are crying out for substantive, bipartisan, bicameral cooperation for the good of the American people.

I am talking about funding our Armed Forces and the Department of Defense, just as both sides agreed to do back in the summer when we signed on to a bipartisan, bicameral budget agreement that Democrats have lately sort of wandered away from—just wandered right away from it.

I am talking about passing the USMCA, the most consequential update to North American trade policy in a generation, which Speaker PELOSI has put on ice in order to move Democrats’ impeachment obsession to the front burner, despite the fact that there are 176,000 new American jobs on the line if we pass the USMCA.

The needs of the American people have not been put on pause just because Washington Democrats have decided it doesn’t suit them to get along with the White House.

My friends in Democratic leadership insist over and over that their focus on undoing the 2016 election will not keep them from the substantive legislation that American families need. Well, our Armed Forces are still waiting for their funding; our workers and small businesses are still waiting on their new trade agreement.

Our Senate Democratic colleagues have enough time to push partisan resolutions, such as their effort yesterday to enact a new tax cut—listen to this—their effort yesterday to enact a new tax cut for wealthy people in blue States, like New York and New Jersey, at the expense of working families everywhere else.

But so far we have seen little—little—indication that they are really ready to put our differences aside and come to the table on significant bipartisan subjects that can actually become law.

I worry that something like the landmark opioid package that we are celebrating today would not have moved through the Congress today, just one year later. I worry it would have been another victim of Democrats’ decision to avoid working with Republicans and the White House on basically anything, to keep all of their focus trained on impeachment.

I hope I am mistaken. I hope we make real progress soon. The American people are waiting on us.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Justin Reed Walker, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

#### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, over the past few weeks, the House of Representatives has continued to hear testimony as part of its impeachment inquiry, which stems from allegations that President Trump pressured a foreign leader to investigate a domestic political rival. These allegations were deemed “credible” and an “urgent concern” by the inspector general of the intelligence community, who is a Trump appointee. That is how this all started, not with some Democrat stirring the pot but with a Trump appointee, a very well-respected man, saying that these allegations were credible and urgent.

The public record—the public record—shows that the White House delayed more than \$391 million in crucial security assistance to Ukraine to help the country stave off Russian aggression. In a memorandum of the President’s phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky, released by the White House itself, the President requested Ukraine undertake investigations that would benefit him politically.

Only a few days ago, as we all know, the Chief of Staff to the President, Mick Mulvaney, admitted publicly that the administration held up security assistance for the same political reasons. Mr. Mulvaney, of course, later attempted to retract his comments, but his original statements were quite clear, and I would say that anyone who is not biased believed the original.

The White House continues to claim that fighting corruption in Ukraine was its only intent, but that is belied by the fact that it has proposed massive cuts to the State Department’s budget to fight corruption around the world. On the one hand they say we