



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2019

No. 173

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.

Most High God, Your steadfast love endures throughout the generations. Your faithfulness sustains the seasons of our earthly pilgrimage. You are worthy of our praise.

Infuse our lawmakers with reverential awe, as they remember You are the one constituent they absolutely must please. Because of You, they live and move and breathe and have their being. Although they may plan, You alone decide what will or will not prevail. May our Senators make You their refuge, their shelter in the time of storms.

And Lord, we thank You for the inspiration of a stupendous World Series.

We pray in Your glorious 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 speak as in morning business for 90 seconds.

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today is Halloween. This may sound a little "candy corny," but this Iowan wants to talk about the scary prices of prescription drugs.

Since January, I have joined with bipartisan forces to drive a stake in the

heart of ghoulish price-gouging. Senator WYDEN and I are working to shut down the pranks poisoning the drug supply chain. We need our fellow lawmakers to step up and nail the coffin shut on monstrous drug price increases.

One example that can't masquerade as a next-generation drug is the 500-percent increase for insulin, which helps Americans with diabetes regulate blood sugar. This medicine was discovered 100 years ago, about the time the first horror movie debuted. There is no rhyme or reason for the terrifying price hikes spooking Americans.

The real horror story this Halloween is what is preventing Congress from doing its job. Big Pharma is spending a frightening amount of money to kill drug-pricing reforms.

Let's fix the real injustice haunting the American people, which is sticker shock at the pharmacy counter. Every Senator can be a superhero for Halloween. All you have to do is join us to dig a grave for batty prescription drug prices. Ending Big Pharma's pricing tricks would be a real treat for Americans.

I yield the floor.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONGRATULATING THE WASHINGTON NATIONALS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, to lead off, I would certainly be remiss not to congratulate the 2019 World Series champions, the Washington Nationals. This year, our national pastime came down to a dramatic finish. The Nationals and the Astros traded

blows right up until the final innings of game seven.

For the first time ever, the away team won all seven games of the series. And now Stephen Strasburg, Max Scherzer, Anthony Rendon, Juan Soto, and the rest of the 2019 Nationals are bringing a World Series trophy here to the Nation's Capital for the first time since 1924. Back then, of course, the home team was officially the Washington Senators, although still often called the Nationals. That is a distinguished name for a team.

This squad has to be hands-down the most athletic, most resilient, most team-spirited bunch of ballplayers certainly this city has ever had. These remarkable players; their manager, Dave Martinez; the Nationals' front office; and the team's owners, the Lerner family—and I particularly want to mention Ted Lerner, the patriarch, who is 94 years old. Many people thought he might not be around to see the Washington Nationals' first championship, but he was. He is a great owner, a great friend of the city, and it was fun to see him after the game revel in this great accomplishment. They achieved, actually, a small miracle. For a couple of weeks, they gave us something that all of Washington, DC, could unite around—a miracle indeed. It is something we can use around here these days. Congratulations to the champions.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, later today we are going to vote on something that should not be controversial: funding for our national defense, for supporting servicemembers and their families, for sustaining American global leadership and strategic edge. This vital priority is not something that can take a back seat to partisan dysfunction.

Our men and women in uniform don't get to go on sabbatical while they wait

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



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for Congress to get its act together. They have to stay vigilant, remain in harm's way, and stay at their posts.

Our military commanders don't get to put critical overseas operations on pause until Washington does its job. Their objectives loom large whether or not we give them a predictable planning foundation.

Russia, China, and Iran will certainly not take a water break if uncertainty leaves our Nation flat-footed. They will keep growing their defense spending and seeking to expand their influence.

I had hoped our Democratic friends would be able to put impeachment aside long enough to at least fund the Department of Defense. We had heard public pronouncements from Speaker PELOSI and my colleague the Democratic leader that they intended to work with us on substantial legislation. If anything qualifies as substantial legislation, it is this. It meets the Pentagon's request for targeted investments in the U.S. military of the future. There are new resources for expanded missile defense capabilities, trauma training, fleet maintenance, and key partnerships with allies around the world.

But, alas, the Democratic leader announced at a press conference Tuesday that he plans to filibuster the annual funding for our Armed Forces. This would put our colleagues across the aisle in quite an unusual position. The same Democrats who have recently rediscovered hawkish-sounding positions on Syria and the Middle East are really going to filibuster \$745 million for the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund, for Iraq and for Syria, and filibuster all the other broader funding of our Armed Forces? Really? The same Democrats whose latest effort to impeach the President hinges on delayed military assistance to Ukraine are themselves—themselves—going to filibuster funding for the exact same program, the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative? Really? It looks like it. The Democratic Party is too busy impeaching President Trump for supposedly slow-walking assistance for Ukraine to fund the exact same program themselves?

These are political gymnastics performed at an Olympic level—at an Olympic level. The core message here is hard to miss: Our Democratic colleagues have a priority list. Picking fights with the White House is priority No. 1. And our men and women in uniform fall somewhat further down.

It does not have to be this way. Even in a time as politically charged as an impeachment inquiry, it doesn't have to be this way. Back in 1998, just days before the Republican House began its impeachment inquiry into President Clinton, the House and the Senate passed a regular appropriations bill.

Then, some weeks later, even after the inquiry was underway, both Chambers were still able to pass more bills to address the fundamental business of funding the government, and President

Clinton signed it into law during the impeachment.

So if Democrats follow through on their threat to filibuster the Defense funding later today, they will frankly be making even the 1998 impeachment period look like a clinic—a clinic—in bipartisan cooperation.

A Democratic filibuster of Defense funding is not the vote the military families and military installations in their home States deserve. It is not the vote our commanders deserve, and it is not the vote our national security deserves.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, on a related matter, speaking of past precedent, I understand this morning House Democrats will finally cast their first impeachment vote on an impeachment resolution, which I understand they are afraid to actually call an impeachment resolution.

As I mentioned yesterday, Democrats' draft does not even come close to restoring the kinds of customary due process rights and protections that past impeachment inquiries included, either for President Trump or for their own Republican colleagues in the minority.

Here is what their resolution announced today. This is basically what it says: "No due process now . . . but maybe some later . . . if we feel like it." It says: "No due process now . . . but maybe some later . . . if we feel like it." This is not a fair way to treat any American, and it certainly is no way to conduct something as grave as an impeachment process, which seeks to overturn the American people's choice in a democratic election.

I hope the House of Representatives sees the light and steps away from their unfair and arbitrary process.

TURKEY AND SYRIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, on another matter, many of us have been concerned for some time about the trajectory of our strategically important NATO ally Turkey under the leadership of President Erdogan.

Despite the hopes of the Obama administration and others that he would be a model of Islamic democracy, Erdogan has instead used democracy to work toward undemocratic ends. Freedom of the press, secularism, and human rights have suffered under his rule, while corruption has flourished. Opposition to Erdogan is growing, but the political space for Turks to express their opposition is shrinking.

Obviously, in recent days, our concerns have centered on Turkey's incursion into northeast Syria. We are angry about the damage Turkey has caused for our local Kurdish partners in Syria.

I have spoken at length about my concerns on Turkey's incursion and my

opposition to withdrawing U.S. forces from Syria, but I believe we need to be guided by our strategic interests, not emotions, as we seek to contain the damage of Turkey's incursion, peel Ankara away from Moscow, and encourage better behavior at home and abroad by Erdogan's government.

I hope we will carefully consider all of our options to achieve these important objectives and carefully examine whether a broad mandatory sanctions bill is really the best solution.

We should think carefully about what specific effect we want sanctions to have, how Turkey will respond to them, and how Russia or others may exploit growing tensions between Washington and Ankara.

Before targeting an economy that is highly integrated with Europe's economy, we should seek a better understanding of the specific economic impact that broad sanctions will have on the global economy, on our European partners, and on American workers and job creators. We should reflect on whether we would be better off working in concert with European allies to shape Turkey's behavior versus abruptly forcing European companies to cut ties with Turkey through the threat of sanctions.

Before using these kinds of policy tools—the kinds we use against Iran and North Korea—against a democracy of 80 million people, we should consider the political impact that blunt sanctions will have on the Turkish people. Will sanctions rally them to our cause or to Erdogan's? Would more targeted sanctions perhaps avoid some of these unintended consequences? These are just some of the critical questions I hope our committees of jurisdiction and the administration are able to examine before we act.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, on one final matter, I have spoken at length in recent weeks about the protests in Hong Kong and the situation in Syria. I would like to close today by recognizing other important developments in the Middle East that, regrettably, haven't received much attention.

Massive protests are underway in Lebanon and Iraq. Millions have taken to the streets to demand more responsive, more transparent, and less sectarian governance, and an end to rampant corruption. By all accounts, these protests are cross-sectarian, directed at an entire class of political leaders who have behaved undemocratically and unethically.

The protests are also directed at Iran. The Islamic Republic has long sought, through proxies like Hezbollah and Iraqi militias, to undermine the sovereignty of Lebanon and Iraq. Now even Shiite communities that have typically been heavily influenced by Iran are demanding politicians represent their interests instead of Tehran's interests.