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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.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, Your truth endures forever. Make us conscious of our shortcomings, limitations, and liabilities.

Lord, guide our lawmakers. Give them the humility to depend on Your leading and to receive the gift of Your grace for daily living. Create in them joy in service, courage in danger, and enthusiasm in glorifying You in our Nation and world. Inspire them to be people who will stand for right though the Heavens fall.

We pray in Your sovereign 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. HAWLEY). The Senator from Iowa.

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

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

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the minority leader is so committed to his campaign rhetoric, calling the Senate a political graveyard, that he is killing the House-passed appropriations package that funds our national defense and pays our troops.

Leader MCCONNELL has twice moved to take up the House bill that funds

the Pentagon, as well as the Departments of State, Health and Human Services, Energy, Education, and others, but the majority leader has been constantly blocked by the Democrats.

The minority leader claims to be shocked and outraged that the Senate isn't taking up partisan messaging bills from the House when it is very normal for both Houses not to take up every bill passed by the other Chamber. That doesn't apply to appropriations, however, because one thing is very certain: We have to fund the government, and those bills absolutely have to come up and be passed by both Houses.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for weeks now, almost daily, I have spoken about the need to get our appropriations process back on track and the need for bipartisan agreement to fund the Federal Government and, particularly, to provide our military commanders with the resources and stability they need.

That kind of smooth process was exactly what Congress was on track for just a few months ago. Leaders in both parties, in both Houses, and at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue signed onto a deal that set top-line funding levels and ruled out obstacles like poi-

son pills. Alas, as I have discussed at length, policy riders crept back into the process, and our discussions stalled. As a result, here we are again—behind schedule.

We need to get results on appropriations before the end of the year. So, while the House and the Senate continue negotiations on setting the allocations, we need to buy more time. The House and the Senate need to pass a continuing resolution to fund the government through December 20 and allow these talks to continue. The Senate can't originate this funding bill, but we will wait to receive legislation from the House and then vote on it before we head back to our home States.

This is what we need: a CR, as clean as possible, through December 20 to enable more progress on appropriations before the end of this year. A clean CR through December 20 would pass the Senate, and the White House has indicated that President Trump would sign it. Let me say that again. The administration indicates the President is willing and ready to sign a clean CR through December 20 so that we can finish our work.

This is our opportunity to get a bipartisan process back on track. First, with bipartisan, bicameral cooperation, we can safely fund the Federal Government through mid-December so talks can continue. Then, with more cooperation, we can reach agreement on allocations and pass as many of the 12 appropriations bills as possible before the end of the year.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now, on another matter, while we wait on the House, the Senate will take the opportunity to consider three more of President Trump's well-qualified nominees to the Federal bench and the diplomatic corps.

Later today, we will vote to advance the nomination of Justice Robert

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



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