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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.

Mighty God, we thank You for all the marvelous things You have already done for our Nation and world. Marvelous are Your works. We are grateful for the beauty of the Earth and the glories of the skies. We praise You for the love that surrounds us and for Your mercies that are new each day.

Lord, guide our Senators. May they continue to look to You as their helper, defender, and friend. Inspire them to always trust in Your unfailing love as they depend on You to do for them what they can't accomplish with their strength alone.

We pray in Your merciful 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.

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Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I and my friend Senator WYDEN released an updated version of our bipartisan Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act. This bill will now deliver even more savings for seniors and Americans with

disabilities. When I say "more," it will be more than the bill that was voted out of the Senate Committee on Finance on a 19-to-9 vote during the last week of July. The bill will also help pay for critical health programs. Billions of dollars saved in out-of-pocket costs are also a result of the bill and billions of dollars allocated for healthcare programs that tens of millions of Americans rely upon.

What I just said will be accomplished all without spending a dime more of taxpayer dollars. That is because Big Pharma, our pharmaceutical industry of the United States, will finally be held accountable. Taxpayers shouldn't be put on the hook for unlimited subsidies from the Federal Treasury to big companies that make billions in profits.

I don't often quote the Washington Post about legislation I put in, but the Washington Post recently wrote that our bill was the "drug pricing bill with the best chances of passing Congress."

Over the weekend, President Trump applauded the work my friend Senator WYDEN and I have done to improve our bipartisan legislation. The President was very supportive of it even before we made these changes. That is because, in the Congress of the United States today, it is the only significant bipartisan legislation that exists to address the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs.

The Senate must demonstrate courage and finally pass this very important bill because very few Members of Congress can miss the cry of their citizens that drug pricing is too high, and they expect Congress to do something about it. This bill answers that cry and should soon get a vote.

I yield the floor.

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. 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.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as the end of the year approaches and the House Democratic majority continues to pour its time and attention into impeaching the President, a number of key legislative items remain outstanding.

For weeks, my Republican colleagues have been pleading with our Democratic friends in Congress to put aside their impeachment obsession long enough to complete some basic work for the American people.

We have explained that American families cannot afford for Washington Democrats to obsess over impeachment and obstruct the things we absolutely have to do.

So I am pleased that the last several days have brought at least some initial conversations that sanity and progress may be breaking through. We are still a long way from the finish line, but this week begins on a cautiously optimistic note. It appears that Democrats' willingness to block these basic governing items may be finally giving way.

The National Defense Authorization Act is our annual must-pass vehicle laying out Congress's plan for addressing military funding and meeting the needs of our servicemembers. It is a responsibility that this body has discharged in a bipartisan manner every year, without fail, for 58 years.

That is why it was so disheartening that Democratic leadership in both the

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



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