



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2019

No. 198

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARSHA BLACKBURN, a Senator from the State of Tennessee.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we are reminded at this time of year of the greatness of Your gift to us in sending Your Son. Use us as instruments for His glory. Because of our faith in You, make us bold as lions in these turbulent times.

May our lawmakers work together to protect and defend our Constitution, realizing, as iron sharpens iron, so friends sharpen friends. Lord, make our Senators grateful for the fires in our Nation's history that have tested their commitment to freedom, providing them with opportunities to become profiles of courage, serving their generation with faithfulness.

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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 11, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MARSHA BLACKBURN, a Senator from the State of Tennessee, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. BLACKBURN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Lawrence VanDyke, of Nevada, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following the disposition of H.R. 2333, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the VanDyke nomination; further, that the postcloture time on the VanDyke nomination expire at 4:15 p.m. today and the Senate vote on the confirmation of the nomination; further, if confirmed, that the motion to reconsider be con-

sidered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; further, that following the disposition of the VanDyke nomination and notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the Senate vote on the motions to invoke cloture on the Sullivan, Hahn, and Skipwith nominations in the order listed; finally, that if cloture is invoked on the Sullivan, Hahn, and Skipwith nominations, the confirmation votes occur at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, on Thursday, December 12.

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

SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, it is no secret that Washington Democrats have been itching to impeach President Trump since the moment he took the oath of office. Remember the Washington Post's headline on Inauguration Day in 2017: "The campaign to impeach President Trump has begun." That was the Washington Post's headline on Inauguration Day in 2017.

Just a few months later, in April of 2017, one leading House Democrat had already made up her mind. She declared she would "fight every day until he's impeached." As an aside, this same senior Democrat is one of the committee chairwomen whom Speaker PELOSI asked to help lead the impeachment process. She was literally standing at the Speaker's shoulder as she announced yesterday that she will bring two articles of impeachment up for a vote. Yet she had had her mind made up more than 2 years ago, long before this supposedly fair inquiry. This is sort of emblematic of their whole process.

House Democrats announced yesterday that they will rush ahead and prepare to send the Senate articles of impeachment based on the least thorough and most unfair impeachment inquiry

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



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