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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

Strong Deliverer, our shelter in the time of storms, we acknowledge today that You are God and we are not. You don't disappoint those who trust in You, for You are our fortress and bulwark.

Lord, show our Senators Your ways and teach them to walk in Your path of integrity.

Through the seasons of our Nation's history, You have been patient and merciful. Mighty God, be true to Your name. Fulfill Your purposes for our Nation and world.

We pray in Your Holy 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute.

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Last night, in the State of the Union Address, President Trump called on Congress to put bipartisan legislation to lower prescription drug prices on his desk and that he would sign it.

Here are the facts. The House is controlled by Democrats. The Senate requires bipartisanship to get any legislation done. There are only a couple of months left before the campaign season will likely impede anything from being accomplished in this Congress. So the time to act is right now.

I am calling on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get off the sidelines and to work with me and Senator WYDEN, as President Trump already is, to heed the call to action that he gave us last night and pass the Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act. It is the only significant bipartisan bill in town. President Trump, the AARP, and the libertarian Cato think tank, to name just a few people involved, have all endorsed the bill.

If you are serious about fulfilling promises to lower drug costs, my office door is open, as Senator WYDEN's door is open. It is time for the Senate to act and to deliver for the American people. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, as Senators, our decisions build the foundation for future generations. I want those generations to know that I stood here on the floor of this Chamber fighting for equal justice under law. I stood here to defend our Senate's responsibility to provide a fair trial with witnesses and documents. I stood here to say that when our President invites and pressures a foreign government to smear a political opponent and corrupt the integrity of our 2020 Presidential election, he must be removed from office.

As a number of my Republican colleagues have confessed, the House managers have proven their case. President Trump did sanction a corrupt conspiracy to smear a political opponent, former Vice President Joe Biden. President Trump assigned Rudy Giuliani, his personal lawyer, to accomplish that goal by arranging sham investigations by the Government of Ukraine. President Trump advanced his corrupt scheme by instructing the three amigos—Ambassador Volker, Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, and Ambassador Gordon Sondland—to work with Rudy for this goal. President Trump did use the resources of America, including an Oval Office meeting and security assistance to pressure Ukraine, which was at war with Russia, to participate in this corrupt conspiracy. The facts are clear.

But do President Trump's acts rise to the level the Framers envisioned for removal of a President, or are they, as some colleagues in this Chamber have said, simply "inappropriate," but not "impeachable"? With respect to those colleagues, "inappropriate" is lying to the public; "inappropriate" is shunning our allies or failing to put your personal assets into a blind trust or encouraging foreign governments to patronize your properties. That is something you might call "inappropriate," but that word does not begin to encompass President Trump's actions in this case—a corrupt conspiracy comprising a fundamental assault on our Constitution.

This conspiracy is far worse than Watergate. Watergate was about a break-in to spy on the Democratic National Committee—bad, yes; wrong, definitely. But Watergate didn't involve soliciting foreign interference to destroy the integrity of an election. It didn't involve an effort to smear a political opponent. Watergate did not involve an across-the-board blockade of access by Congress to witnesses and documents.

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



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