



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 166

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2020

No. 28

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.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open and all desires known, we put our trust in You.

Today, abide with our lawmakers. Teach them to speak the right words at the right time. Make their speech like precious gold set in silver. May they seek to persuade with patient and gentle words. Lord, give them the wisdom to be friends of that which is eternal and abiding. Fill them with reverence for the transcendent as You induce them to ascribe all good things to You.

We pray in Your gracious 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 for 1 minute as in morning business.

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, our colleague Senator MARTHA MCSALLY, of Arizona, announced her support yesterday for the bipartisan Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act. I like to refer to it as the Grassley-Wyden prescription drug bill, reducing prices. Senator MCSALLY and I

worked together on several parts of the bill. Her Arizonans should know that Senator MCSALLY's leadership is making all the difference in moving this bill forward. I thank her for her co-sponsorship.

President Trump, Vice President PENCE, and nearly a dozen Senate Republicans have, so far, endorsed this bill. Several other Senate Republicans will soon announce their support as well. I expect to introduce an updated version in the coming weeks.

I am confident that, if this bill were to be brought up for a vote, it would pass overwhelmingly. Let's not miss an opportunity then to deliver real progress for Americans. This always shows up—in other words, drug pricing legislation—as one of the three, four, or five top issues of the upcoming election.

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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, with the impeachment trial behind us, the Senate can now get back to the business of the American people.

As the President laid out in his bold speech last Tuesday, the state of our Union is strong. Over the past 3 years, a combination of major Republican policy victories and important bipartisan achievements have helped to cre-

ate a historic economic moment for working Americans and middle-class families.

Unemployment remains right around its lowest point in half a century. The percentage of Americans aged 25 to 54 who have jobs is the highest it has been in 20 years. The market for American workers is hot, and it is pulling people off of the sidelines. As the New York Times recently explained, "Employers are hiring candidates with disabilities, criminal records and other barriers to employment, and are offering perks to attract workers." No wonder the percentage of Americans who say they are financially better off now than they were a year ago just hit a 44-year high.

We have finally seen a drop in opioid deaths. In my home State of Kentucky, we recently saw the largest decrease in fatal drug overdoses in a decade. We are rebuilding and modernizing the world's greatest military, and we are continuing to renew our Federal judiciary with thoroughly qualified men and women who understand that a judge's job is to interpret our laws and our Constitution as they were actually written.

There is plenty more for the Senate to do to keep up this momentum for the American people, so we are glad to get back to business.

We will start this week by confirming more of President Trump's well-qualified nominees to lifetime judicial appointments. The first up is Judge Andrew Brasher, of Alabama, to serve on the Eleventh Circuit. Judge Brasher currently serves on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama. He is a Harvard Law graduate who previously clerked on the Eleventh Circuit, excelled in private practice, and found his way into public service as solicitor general for his home State. In that role, he was recognized by the National Association of Attorneys General for his legal writing, and his nomination earned a unanimous "well-qualified" rating from the ABA.

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



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