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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.

God of might and mercy, thank You for providing our lawmakers with opportunities for courageous and noble service. Inspire them to labor for Your glory in all they think, say, and do. Illuminate their minds with the light of Your divine precepts.

Lord, equip our Senators for their tasks that they may be physically fit, mentally alert, morally straight, and spiritually strong. Create in them the life of purity, honesty, and altruism that contributes solutions to the problems they face.

May they work with perseverance and magnanimity for the new and better day toward which Your divine intentions guide them.

We pray in Your faithful 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. TILLIS). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask permission to speak in morning business for 1 minute.

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

RECOGNIZING IOWA STAFF

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to recognize what my staff in Iowa does because I can't be in Iowa all the time. I am in Washington, DC, for long periods of time.

This is my 40th year holding Q&A in each of Iowa's 99 counties. My regional staff is also committed to holding meetings across Iowa. My Iowa staff serves as my eyes and ears when I am working in Washington, DC. That is why they host mobile office hours in every county and attended roughly 1,400 meetings across the State last year.

My regional directors tour hospitals, businesses, and childcare centers. They meet with disaster victims, government officials, and senior citizens. They attend ribbon cuttings, community forums, and legislative discussions.

Serving Iowans is my top priority. I urge Iowans to contact any of my six offices across the State if I can be of assistance on Federal matters.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the continued spread of the coronavirus—COVID-19—has the world on notice.

Here in the United States, we are fortunate not to be facing an immediate crisis.

In response to early reports of the outbreak, the administration began monitoring efforts and enacted commonsense travel restrictions to help blunt and delay the spread of the virus here in our country.

Obviously, as our public health experts remind us, a nation of nearly 4 million square miles and more than 300

million people cannot be hermetically sealed off from the rest of the world. There seems to be little question that COVID-19 will eventually cause some degree of disruption here.

The question before us now is how we can help the administration and our professional medical experts continue their efforts to take advantage of this head start. Our task is to make sure these dedicated professionals have what they need to continue preparing in ways that are calm, smart, and effective.

Here in Congress, first and foremost, that means providing additional surge resources for the comprehensive Federal response. It is our job to ensure that funding is not a limiting factor as public health leaders and frontline medical professionals continue getting ready.

That is exactly why, several days ago, the Trump administration submitted an initial request for supplemental funding to begin the conversation. It was exactly the kind of action that many of our Democratic colleagues had been demanding, but as soon as the administration did take action, to the apparent puzzlement of basically everyone, including his fellow Democrats, the Democratic leader began launching partisan political attacks at the White House instead of working together to get this done.

Just days ago, the Democratic leader signed a letter “strongly urging” this kind of funding request, but almost the instant it arrived, he began blasting it as “too little too late,” and our colleague continued to move the goalpost.

His strong views on the necessary amount of funds varied daily. It has been a strange and clumsy effort to override normal, bipartisan appropriations talks before they even happen and replace them with top-down partisan posturing.

Everyone from his fellow Democrats to President Trump have seemed perplexed by the Democratic leader's political game playing. It is not clear to

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



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