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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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anyone why he is prioritizing fighting with the White House over simply letting the appropriators do their work.

I feel confident that the coronavirus does not care about partisan bickering or political news cycles. This new disease is not going to press pause so that Members can engage in performative outrage that gets us further from results rather than closer.

This is our first step in confronting the challenge. The Congress must be prepared to work together across the aisle in a collaborative way and actually get results.

Fortunately, it appears we will have an opportunity to put this cynicism behind us quickly and move forward in a unified way.

Bipartisan discussions are already underway among our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee. I have full confidence that Chairman SHELBY, Senator LEAHY, and our colleagues are fully capable of handling this quite well.

I have faith the committee will carefully consider the right sum to appropriate at this time to ensure our Nation's needs are fully funded. I hope they can work expeditiously so the full Senate would be able to take up the legislation within the next 2 weeks.

And I hope, as we move forward through this challenge, this body can put reflexive partisanship aside and uphold the spirit of cooperation and collaboration that this will require.

TRIBUTE TO LAURA DOVE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now, on an entirely different matter, earlier this week I said paying tribute to departing Senate staff is one of my favorite and least favorite things to do, simultaneously.

So I am especially unhappy to be back at it again today.

There is almost nobody—nobody—in this institution with whom I have worked more closely, or whose counsel I have sought more frequently, over the past 6½ years than Laura Dove.

Few people actually understand how important the Secretaries for the Majority and to the Minority are to this institution. These two officers supervise each side's cloakroom and floor staff. They are sort of like air traffic controllers who help Senators sequence the bills, amendments, and nominations that we vote on. They keep every office apprised of what exactly has happened, is happening, and will happen on the floor.

They serve as in-house procedural experts to each side, advising the leader and the chairmen. And they build close relationships with every Member of their side, trying to ensure the floor schedule reflects everything from Senators' policy priorities to their personal scheduling conflicts.

And while the two Secretaries are doing all this work in parallel with each other, they are also constantly working together. On many daily ques-

tions of process and of timing, their one-on-one relationship is the diplomatic frontline between the two sides of the aisle.

The Senate, as you know, is a consent-based institution. Almost every practicality is made much easier with bipartisan agreement—from scheduling major votes to packaging nominees, to literally turning the lights on every morning. And it is often Laura and her counterpart, Gary, who hammer out those details.

Consider the limitless scope of this job. It is no wonder Laura has made a certain piece of human resources phraseology into her personal mantra and her cloakroom's motto: "Other duties as assigned."

The Secretary for the Majority is essential to the Senate, and so Laura has become essential to all of us.

There cannot be many father-daughter pairs in world history—in world history—who have bonded over parliamentary procedure, but the fact is, it doesn't just seem like the Senate is Laura's natural habitat; she literally grew up in this place.

Laura's father, Bob Dove, started in the Parliamentarian's Office in the 1960s. He kept rising, and in the 1980s and 1990s, he was the Parliamentarian.

Bob was known for a wry saying he would repeat after tough days: "You may love the Senate, but the Senate may not love you back."

Unfortunately, for his family, one of the Senate's love languages turns out to be keeping people here late at night, which meant that the Dove family dinners, orchestrated by Laura's mom, Linda, sometimes happened in the corners of this very building.

The exposure sparked Laura's curiosity. Those family dinners turned into days off from school, spent wandering the halls and trying to imitate the duties of the pages. Then she put on the page uniform herself, and that is how this distinguished decades-long Senate career began: delivering notes, filling water glasses, and studying for math tests in the attic dorms of the Library of Congress.

That was the mid-1980s. Laura debuted in the cloakroom right around the time I debuted as a freshman Senator. Neither of us knew what awaited us.

From the lowest rung to the top of the ladder, Laura threw herself into literally everything. At every step, no task was too insignificant and no challenge was too great. Laura has had a hand in every accomplishment of this institution for nearly a decade. She has played a significant role in literally every single victory of this majority.

Her job performance alone would be stunningly impressive. But what is even more unfathomable is the level of kindness and good cheer she has maintained while doing it. She seems to begin every day with a smile on her face and a show tune on her lips. She treats everybody with the same respect and simple kindness, from the pages

whom she invites over for home-cooked holiday meals to the Senators whose family details she has committed to memory.

She is as happy tutoring junior staff in Senate basics as talking strategy with senior members. No matter how late the floor was open the night before, the same Laura clocked in the next morning, full of joy and maybe a new recipe to share with fellow Senate foodies.

Laura reminds us that the Senate's strength comes from its people. She has embodied this in her professional conduct, fighting to preserve and protect this institution as she helped us navigate through it, and she has embodied this institution in her personal character as well. She treats everybody with such warmth and respect as though this Chamber were our shared second home—and in some cases, it literally has been.

This staffer is so dedicated that she has rung in major milestone birthdays on these very premises, stolen sleep on a couch during overnight sessions—you get the picture.

Few were shocked when Laura's previous attempts to leave the Senate fizzled out after a year or so. I remember being relieved when I got another year, but I suspected she would be back.

But this time is different. In recent months, I know Laura has grown more and more excited to reallocate some time from her second home to her real home, to the family she has built with her husband Dan and their children, Abby and Jake.

Laura loves this body, its rules, its quirks, and its history more than almost anything. I say almost anything. But she loves a family dinner with those three, a glass of Chardonnay, and a game night by the fireplace even more. And as they prepare to send their oldest off to college soon, that time is becoming extra precious.

For us Senators it is hard to imagine what it is going to feel like next week when Laura is not here. I imagine she may feel the same way. But I know this: Those of us who remain will frequently ask ourselves "What would Laura do?" And whether the issue at hand is institutional or strategic or culinary, we will know asking that question will point us in the right direction.

I also know that Laura will be departing with some new wisdom of her own. She will know that, in a rare occurrence, her brilliant father actually got one thing wrong—that funny old saying: "You may love the Senate, but the Senate won't love you back." Well, his daughter will leave knowing that is only half true.

So, Laura, this institution cannot thank you enough, nor can this majority, nor can I. But I feel certain you will never quite be a stranger to the Senate. I don't think you could manage it even if you tried. So we won't say goodbye. We will just conclude with one more piece of Laura lingo she made famous: "Ciao for now."