



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 166

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2020

No. 43

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.

Eternal God, our Father, through these days of Lent, give us a continuous awareness of Your presence.

May each lawmaker remember Your promise to never leave or forsake us. Finding power in Your presence, give our Senators the ability to discover solutions to the problems that confront our Nation and world. May they strive to make a positive difference for all Americans, permitting Your light to illumine the way. Lord, provide our legislators with a new vision of faith and a fresh venture of hope as they seek creative ways to help a troubled world.

We pray in Your powerful 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. LOEFFLER). The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I would ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute as in morning business.

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

IOWA HISTORY MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, this month is Iowa History Month. For Iowa History Month, I will probably give a few 1-minute speeches about the history of Iowa, but today I want to

recognize the role Iowa's veterans have played in our history.

For instance, in the Civil War, Iowa sent over 75,000 soldiers to fight for the Union—the most per capita of any State. I have been saying “the most per capita of any State” because I thought that was the history, but I have heard other States also say the same thing for their States, so I want to be intellectually honest. But I am still proud of those 75,000 Iowans who fought for the Union.

Iowa has kept that tradition of service, and I often have the pleasure of meeting our veterans. Yesterday, I met an Iowa delegation for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I participate in the Library of Congress project called the Veterans History Project. Accordingly, I have had the honor of helping preserve 31 interviews with Iowa veterans as part of the Veterans History Project. That has taken place over just the last 2 years, preserving the oral history of these Iowa veterans. So the Iowa Veterans History Project will have their stories for future generations to ensure that the service and the sacrifices of these Iowans are never forgotten.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, last week I described how Congress could quickly secure supplemental funding to combat the coronavirus. The way to secure these urgently needed resources with speed and certainty was to forgo partisan posturing, forgo micromanagement at the leadership level, and let the bipartisan appropriators do their work.

Since then, Senator SHELBY, Senator LEAHY, and their counterparts in the House have worked on bipartisan, bicameral discussions. Thanks to their good work, we are close. The funding legislation appears to be about at the 5-yard line. I hope to complete the legislation and deliver this funding this week. We are close.

In order to finish up, both sides will need to continue doing what has worked thus far and resist the temptation to impose any last-minute ideological demands. In particular, I have heard that the Democratic leadership may be contemplating a last-minute demand that this funding legislation also test drive some untried, untested, and controversial parts of their Medicare for All proposal that relate to the pricing of new drugs and innovations.

So, look, everyone agrees that the potential diagnostics, therapeutics, or vaccines that might come out of this new funding cannot only be available to the ultrawealthy. We all agree on that. Everyone agrees. We already have longstanding, tried-and-true procedures so the government can buy and distribute new medicines in scenarios like this to ensure accessibility. These mechanisms are already in place. There is no need and this is no time to begin experimenting with ideological proposals that could jeopardize research, development, and innovation. Like I said, the accessibility of treatments or vaccines is a priority for everybody, but before new technologies can be accessible, they obviously have to be available.

This is a moment to empower innovators, to incentivize innovators. It is a time to remove hurdles to innovation, not build new hurdles and create new uncertainty through ideological experimentation.

So I hope these rumors do not prove true. I am optimistic we will be able to close out the remaining questions and process this legislation in short order. This moment calls for collaboration

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



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