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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Senator from South Carolina, the Honorable TIM SCOTT, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, teach us reverential awe. Give us the respect for You and Your purposes that You are due. Bless our leaders. Keep them from evil as You lead them to make a positive impact on our Nation and world.

Lord, rescue them from the inevitable troubles of life, protecting them from harm. As they seek to serve You, fill them with a faith that will not shrink, though oppressed by many foes. May they continually rejoice because of Your promise that no weapon formed against them shall prosper.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for 1 minute in morning business.

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

IOWA HISTORY MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, as all Iowans know, I love history. That brings me to the floor to honor March as Iowa History Month.

Here are some facts about Iowa. Since becoming a State in 1846, Iowa has raised one President—that is Presi-

dent Hoover—and four Nobel laureates, and is home to over 2,000 locations on the National Register of Historic Places.

Our heritage is preserved by Iowans who do their good work through maintaining Iowa's museums and historic sites. I encourage all of my fellow Iowans to help pass on our history to the next generation by taking advantage of the many programs hosted this month by visiting www.iowaculture.gov.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday evening, the President, the Vice President, and their task force offered an extensive public briefing on ongoing efforts to combat this new virus, which has spread from China throughout the world.

As the Director of the CDC explained, officials are now tracking more than 500 cases across our country. Nationwide, the risk to any individual American remains low, but as the Vice President and the experts reminded us, the time is now for all Americans to engage in basic commonsense measures and for Americans at heightened risk to take additional precautions. Detailed recommendations for individuals, families, and employers are available online at coronavirus.gov.

President Trump also announced that in parallel with the public health response, his administration is considering ways to mitigate the impact of the virus on our economy. Senate Republicans look forward to discussing this with Secretary Mnuchin and the President's team so we can all consider the best ways to move forward for the American people. As our government continues to prepare and protect our Nation, I would urge all of my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle in both Chambers, to put reflexive partisanship aside and stay focused on our common work to promote the common good. This virus does not care—does not care—about partisan divisions.

This disease poses a challenge, no question, but our Nation is strong, we are well equipped, and we have overcome far, far greater challenges before. As the Vice President put it yesterday, "We're all in this together."

S. 2657

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, this week, we have the opportunity to pass major legislation to strengthen our domestic energy. Chairman MURKOWSKI, Senator MANCHIN, and the Energy and Natural Resources Committee have assembled a strong, bipartisan bill. I look forward to passing it.

I was disappointed yesterday when the Senate failed to advance the legislation and clear a path toward completing the bill. The committee's product includes about 50 different bills and contributions from nearly three-fourths of the Members of this body, and contrary to the Democratic leader's assertions on the floor, I am certainly not blocking any bipartisan amendment. I have stated right here on the floor that I hope and anticipate that we will vote on amendments this week.

Don't be fooled by the finger-pointing. I am not standing in the way of bipartisan amendments. What is really

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S1641

happening is that the Democratic leader is moving the goalposts. There had been a bipartisan understanding about how to finish this bill, but yesterday the Democratic leader decided to change his tune and demand a vote on something outside the scope of the current debate. I hope we can get past this showmanship, finish this bipartisan legislation, and send it to the House so we can get it on the President's desk. Let's don't squander this real opportunity.

Chairman MURKOWSKI's and Senator MANCHIN's compromise product will help our Nation move toward greater energy security, energy efficiency, and energy affordability for years to come—new support for energy efficiency efforts, new incentives for innovation, new tools to secure our electrical grid, and new ways to strengthen our domestic supply chain for important minerals, and on and on and on.

This Chamber got it right last week when it proceeded to the bill by a vote of 90 to 4. It hasn't suddenly become controversial overnight. Everyone knows there are plenty of outside issues that Senators do not agree on. We should let ourselves agree on what we do agree on. Let me say that again: We should let ourselves agree on what we do agree on and complete this legislation this week.

Let's keep legislating. Let's get this done. The American people deserve it.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, on a final matter, this afternoon all Senators will have the opportunity to attend a briefing on election security from administration experts who tackle the issue every day. The FBI Director; the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security; General Nakasone of the NSA and Cyber Command; the Director of Counterintelligence at the DNI; and a number of other senior leaders will come here to the Capitol to discuss this critical subject.

I look forward to hearing more about the significant and strong steps the Trump administration has taken over the past 3 years to secure our democracy and punch back against the real and varied foreign efforts to interfere. I look forward to hearing more about the unprecedented level of coordination that has connected nonpartisan Federal experts in all 50 States, U.S. territories, thousands of local jurisdictions, and private sector leaders to make sure the unpreparedness and inaction that defined the Obama administration's failures in 2016 was not repeated in 2018 and will not be repeated in 2020 or beyond.

I look forward to hearing about how the record sums of money, hundreds of millions of dollars that Congress has put aside for direct grants so States and local election officials can shore up their systems, are making our democracy safer. I expect I will have more to say following the briefing. I expect

many of our colleagues will, but, beforehand, I would like to say this: The American people have confidence in our democracy, as they should. Just last month, a survey found that more than 70 percent of Americans are confident their State or local government will conduct a fair and accurate election this November. Let me say this again. Just last month, a survey found that more than 70 percent of Americans are confident their State or local government will conduct a fair and accurate election this November, and they should be confident about the resilience of our institutions.

Our Nation is strong. The Trump administration has made huge strides. After 8 years of weakness, this administration's foreign policy has made it clear to our adversaries that the United States of America is not going to be pushed around, but the American people also know we must remain vigilant. As long as Russia and other nations seek to meddle, we need to be ready.

Election security is critically important to our Nation, and it can only be handled right if it is handled with good faith and bipartisanship.

When Washington Democrats use this particular topic as a platform for demonizing the other side or for pushing tangential policy proposals, which the left had sought many years—many years—before 2016, everyone can see right through it. It only signals unseriousness.

So I encourage all my colleagues to attend the bipartisan briefing today, and then let's preserve that bipartisan spirit and that unity. Let's focus on fighting against foreign interference, not fighting each other.

We should not just snap right back into tired, old partisanship. We should not let Putin or anyone else bait Americans into talking down our own democracy or sowing more fear and discord among ourselves than other adversaries could ever hope to do themselves.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 3422

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the bill for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3422) to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish, fund, and provide for the use of amounts in a National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund to address the maintenance backlog of the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land

Management, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Indian Education, and to provide permanent, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. SCHUMER. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

S. 2657

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before I get into the remarks, substance, of coronavirus and H.R. 1, I would like to mention that Leader MCCONNELL did not give the right story when he talked about the Energy bill. I would remind people, 13 Democrats voted for cloture; 15 Republicans opposed cloture. I would remind the leader that it was a Republican, Senator KENNEDY, who led the charge to deny cloture, and it was well known that Democrats simply wanted an amendment on the Kennedy bill—a Republican amendment—wanted an ability to vote. Once again, because Leader MCCONNELL does not allow amendments and debate and, instead, just adds more items to his legislative graveyard, the bill went down. But 13 Democrats voted for cloture. If he had his Republican troops together, he might have been able to pass it anyway. To blame Democrats and say we are moving the goalpost is just a total misstatement of what happened.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on COVID, as our country continues to experience the spread of coronavirus, COVID-19, the effects are beginning to be more acutely felt. First and foremost, our hearts go out to the families of those who have lost loved ones during this illness. Second, our healthcare systems are under tremendous stress, businesses have been forced to cut back, and the virus is already starting to take a toll on the economy. As the impact of the coronavirus spreads, the administration appears to have shifted its focus, holding a press conference yesterday to talk about measures the administration might pursue to calm the markets.