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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 19, 2020, at 10:30 a.m.

Senate

MONDAY, MAY 18, 2020

The Senate met at 3 p.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 Master, the Father of us all, we thank You that, through Your Spirit, You have provided our legislative body with the talents and capabilities to fulfill Your purposes.

May our Senators remember that this body has many parts, each making its distinctive contribution to the success of the whole. As our lawmakers acknowledge and honor the value added by each Member of this body, unite them with faith, civility, courage, and gratitude.

And, Lord, we pray for the first responders and healthcare workers, who stand on the frontlines during this global health crisis.

We pray in Your unifying 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. HAWLEY). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 45 seconds.

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

GRADUATING CLASS OF 2020

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, this time of year is typically spent celebrating students of all ages as they graduate on to their next endeavors. Most graduations have a different look this year due to the pandemic, but the occasion has not lost its significance. Graduations are a time to celebrate the hard work and dedication students put into their educations.

I congratulate all Iowans who are graduating this spring as you begin new chapters in your lives. Barbara and I wish you all more years of continued success.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to hold our Nation on high alert.

More than 1.4 million Americans have been infected; more than 80,000 lives have been tragically lost; and the livelihoods of tens of millions of working families have been turned upside down in what seems like the blink of an eye. Our Nation's healthcare system has not been stressed by contagion on this scale in over a century, and unemployment has not been this high since the Second World War.

A new generation of American heroes—from medical professionals, to lab researchers, to grocery store workers, to custodians and janitors, to community volunteers—has been called up to the frontlines to serve its neighbors and our country. So, for several weeks now, the Senate has counted ourselves among those ranks of essential workers. They are showing up for our country, so we are showing up for them. With respect to the pandemic itself, we are conducting rigorous oversight of the Senate's historic CARES Act rescue package and are helping to plan the pivot toward reopening.

Last week, Chairman ALEXANDER and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions engaged with Dr. Fauci, Dr. Redfield, Admiral Giroir, and other top experts to discuss paths for schools and businesses to reopen, and numbers of our colleagues are joining me and Senator CORNYN in thinking proactively about the issue of legal liability that could crush the recovery on the runway. We need strong legal protections to ensure that our historic recovery efforts are not drained away from healthcare workers, schools, and universities or small businesses in order to line the pockets of trial lawyers.

At the same time, we have kept our eye on the ball on other significant global challenges. Last week, on a bipartisan basis, the Senate reauthorized critical surveillance authorities for our national security professionals. We also made sure to include important new reforms to begin to address the abuses that marred the 2016 election,

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



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