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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 4, 2020, at 10 a.m.

Senate

TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2020

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.

Lord God, have mercy upon our Nation, for the winds of suffering buffet our land. We hear the cries of the voiceless and the anguish of the unheard. We see the criminal actions of those who threaten freedom.

Lord, snatch this Nation, conceived in liberty, from the precipice of its own destruction. Extricate us from traps we have set for ourselves. Remind us that You are a God of justice from whom we borrow our heartbeats.

Arise, mighty God, and make those who defy Your purposes tremble with reverential awe. Hear the prayers of our Senators, and give them wisdom, courage, and integrity for these challenging times.

We pray in Your strong 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, 1 minute for morning business, please.

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING REDUCTION ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, the virus pandemic is disrupting our daily lives in unimaginable ways. The National Institutes of Health is working with a private sector biotech company and has already begun early-stage human trials for a potential vaccine, so there is hope on the horizon. However, the soaring prices of prescription drugs are making lifesaving treatments and cures simply unaffordable for many Americans.

This pandemic made clear two issues: Americans urgently want a cure, and when lifesaving therapies and cures come to the market, Americans must be able to afford them when their providers prescribe them.

My bipartisan Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act is needed now more than ever.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

PROTESTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, last night, the streets of major American cities were again the scene of looting and violent rioting that serves no purpose except to hurt innocent people and undermine peaceful demonstrations.

Every one of us has an obligation to distinguish peaceful protests over the

killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery from the violent riots that continue to see innocent people hurt, businesses and neighborhoods destroyed, and law enforcement officers assaulted. The former is a cherished constitutional right that every single citizen should support, and the latter is an unacceptable scourge that State and local leaders should have ended days ago. So I want to thank Federal, State, and local leaders who are taking seriously their obligation to restore peace, protect the innocent, and stop this senseless violence.

In some places, like my home State of Kentucky and here in Washington, last night was comparatively more calm and safe. But in too many other places, like New York City, it appeared to be open season for lawlessness, looting, and attacking law enforcement for yet another night. And for what? For what? Rioting for the thrill of it? For the chance to steal some expensive items? So people can say they were on social media?

This selfish violence takes us further away from any national healing or forward progress. It does not bring positive change any closer; it simply pushes it further away.

These rioters need to listen to what George Floyd's brother Terrence said in Minneapolis just yesterday. Here is what George Floyd's brother said:

I understand [you all] are upset. I doubt [you're] half as upset as I am. So if I'm not over here blowing up stuff, if I'm not over here messing up my community, then what are [you all] doing?

George Floyd's brother.

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



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[You're] doing nothing. Because that's not going to bring my brother back at all.

So the legitimate and important voices of peaceful protesters will never be heard over the wailing of fire alarms, the smashing of plate-glass windows, and the sirens of ambulances coming for police officers who have been assaulted or shot in the head.

Our Nation is united in horror and opposition to the violent killing of Mr. Floyd. We are united. It is well past time that we also unite on the side of peace in our streets and peace in our communities. We need to unite against these violent rioters, who seek only to aggrandize themselves and further damage a nation that needs healing.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on a totally different matter, obviously and unfortunately, this turmoil is not the only great challenge before us. Lest we forget, the healthcare fight against the worst viral pandemic in a century is still upon us. Our Nation is trying to smartly and safely reopen. Just as small businesses in some cities are sweeping up broken glass, American workers and entrepreneurs across the Nation are trying to rebuild the shattered prosperity our Nation was experiencing just a few months ago. Meanwhile, beyond our shores, our enemies and adversaries would be only too eager to catch the United States with our guard down.

So there is plenty of work before the Senate, and unlike the Democratic House of Representatives, which I understand may next appear here in Washington in about a month—in about a month—the Senate is present and working.

We are continuing to conduct oversight of our historic rescue package, the CARES Act, as it continues taking effect. I expect we will soon consider further bipartisan legislation to help the Paycheck Protection Program—the signature policy from Senators Rubio and Collins that has kept tens of millions of Americans employed—continue to work for our country.

As we pivot toward reopening, the Senate is also working on significant COVID-related legal protection so our Nation's schools, healthcare workers, and employers are not swamped with frivolous lawsuits and taxpayer dollars do not just stimulate the pockets of trial lawyers.

At the same time, critical vacancies remain throughout the Federal Government, and qualified nominees stand ready to fill them. So the Senate will work through two nominees to the Federal district courts and a number of important executive branch positions, including Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities; Deputy Under Secretary of Defense; and the new Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery.

What is more, we also have all the important legislation that needed to

get done before the pandemic arrived in the first place. This month, we will turn to bipartisan legislation led by Senators Gardner and Daines to provide stable support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and lasting stewardship of our natural resources. Their bill will safeguard our Nation's public lands for recreation and conservation and help generations of Americans continue to access and enjoy these treasures.

In the coming weeks, our colleagues on the Armed Services Committee will begin marking up the 60th consecutive, annual National Defense Authorization Act. I know our colleagues need no reminder of how important that task is; neither do our men and women in uniform. The COVID-19 crisis makes it more urgent, not less urgent, that we continue to authorize investments in our servicemembers and their families and in advancing and accelerating our national defense strategy. From honing our competitive edge against would-be rivals on land and sea to expanding our reach in the air and space, achieving our Nation's strategic priorities begins right here this month with the NDAA.

So Congress's to-do list is clear, and the Senate is manning its essential post, working to get the American people's business done.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Victor G. Mercado, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 697.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael Pack, of Maryland, to be Chief Executive Officer of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for the term of three years. (New Position)

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Michael Pack, of Maryland, to be Chief Executive Officer of the Broadcasting Board of Governors. (New Position)

Mitch McConnell, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tim Scott, Marsha Blackburn, Chuck Grassley, Steve Daines, Mike Crapo, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, David Perdue, Martha McSally, John Thune, James M. Inhofe, Kevin Cramer, Ted Cruz.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR (Resumed)

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Mercado nomination.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, 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.

PROTESTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I just finished watching Joe Biden's speech to the Nation. President Trump, watch Joe Biden's speech. That is what real leadership looks like.

Now, it is difficult to express the moment we find ourselves in. Our country has been hit by a strange and contagious disease infecting millions and killing over 100,000 of our people. Our economy was put on ice for several months, shuttering scores of businesses, casting 40 million Americans on the unemployment rolls, and, according to government estimates, taking