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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 Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, thank You for the gift of this day. Open the minds of our lawmakers and give them a vision of the unlimited possibilities available to those who trust You as their guide. May our Senators embrace a humility that seeks first to understand rather than to be understood. Inspire them to seek Your wisdom as You sustain them with Your grace, mercy, and peace. Lord, remind them that You will judge their fruits, productivity, and faithfulness.

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, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute in morning business.

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

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement entered into force on July 1, and I am eager to see the modernized agreement deliver on its promises to spur job growth for American farmers, workers, and businesses, and even help our innovators. Also, at the same time, it will create new opportunities with our North American trading partners.

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement fixes many problems we had for 30 years under NAFTA, and it also creates several new, modern trade provisions for our 21st century economy—things that were negotiated that weren't even thought of 30 years ago when NAFTA was negotiated. However, even with this agreement going into effect and being a tough agreement to negotiate, it isn't going to be simple from here on out. There is plenty of work remaining to ensure the agreement is implemented fully and properly.

I urge the administration to be expeditious in addressing any enforcement issues or noncompliance from our trading partners under the dispute settlement mechanism. I also encourage close consultation between Congress and the administration so we may continue to be successful in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement implementation efforts—allowing Americans to reap the benefits of this agreement.

I raised questions with the administration, but I have no doubt that they are going to be on top of it. I remember President Trump as a candidate, 2015 to 2016, running on a platform to get rid of NAFTA. Trump was elected. By May of his first year in office, Trump started negotiations. They were successful negotiations. NAFTA is now gone. Now USMCA is going into effect.

Trump delivered on his campaign promise. I have no doubt that he will see that the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement is properly implemented.

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, our Nation stands at a crucial midway point in our battle against this terrible virus. The heroism of healthcare professionals, essential workers, and families from coast to coast got our Nation through a springtime like no other. Communities across America put normal life on pause to buy breathing room for our medical system. We essentially had to winterize the world's largest economy for weeks on end and spare our people as much of the resulting pain as possible. The task was historic, and so was the Senate's response. We wrote and passed the CARES Act—the largest rescue package in American history. Our legislation helped pull both our health system and our economy back from the brink. Tens of millions of jobs were saved. The hallways of our hospitals did not become Italy. The Senate's leadership helped the Nation endure the first phase of this, but this crisis is far from over.

The virus that has claimed 140,000 American lives has not gone anywhere. As some places step back toward normalcy, infections are climbing again in hotspots across our country. The start of our economic recovery has been sharp and impressive, but in absolute terms, we still have just begun to pick up the pieces. Our progress so far has been encouraging, but it remains fragile and far from sufficient. I would argue that our country's job now is even more complex than it was back in March.

Now, as then, we need to keep our health system robust, but now, instead of locking down the country to do it, we want to stand up a society that functions somewhat more normally at the same time.

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



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The American people cannot completely stop building their lives until the vaccine is available. The United States of America was not built for a defensive crouch. We need to stand up an educational system and an economy that works for workers and families in the meantime. We need to find the right sort of middle ground—middle ground that is smart and safe but also more sustainable. It is another historic set of challenges and another opportunity for the U.S. Senate to deliver.

For weeks now, I have made it clear that further legislation out of the Senate will be a serious response to the crisis. We will not be wasting the American people's time like the House Democrats, with their multimillion-dollar proposal for high taxes on small businesses, cut taxes for blue-State millionaires, and send diversity detectives into the cannabis industry.

I have said we will start with the facts and develop real, targeted solutions on the subjects that matter most to American families. It turns out that means three things: kids, jobs, and healthcare—kids, jobs, and healthcare.

Surveys show the American people's top priorities for reopening are childcare and K–12 schools. This country wants its kids back in the classroom this fall—learning, exploring, making friends. Their educations depend on it. In some cases, their safety depends on it, and so do the livelihoods of working parents.

The American Academy of Pediatrics stated unambiguously that our goal must be in-person—in-person instruction. But of course, parents, teachers, and doctors all agree it has to be as safe as possible. That is where the Senate comes in.

This majority is preparing legislation that will send \$105 billion so educators have the resources they need to safely reopen. That is more money than the House Democrats set aside for a similar fund, by the way, and that is in addition to support for childcare needs. It is amazing how you can find room to fund serious priorities when you take a pass on the far-left daydreams.

Second, the economic slowdown has hurt millions and millions of Americans. Before this crisis, we had never had 7 million Americans receiving unemployment at the same time. Today, we have 17 million. More than a million people have filed new unemployment claims every single week for more than 4 months now.

The American job market needs another shot of adrenaline. Senate Republicans are laser-focused on getting American workers their jobs back. Our bill takes several specific incentives to hire and retain workers and turn the dials on those policies way up. The legislation will help reimburse for safe workplaces so Main Street can afford the PPE, testing, cleaning, or remodeling to protect workers and entice customers.

The ingenuity and spirit of America's small business isn't possible to over-

state, but they still face a tough road. With the majority of businesses expected to exhaust their initial Paychecks Protection Funding this summer, we will also be proposing a targeted second round of the PPP with a special eye toward hard-hit businesses.

Speaking of building on what worked in the CARES Act, we want another round of direct payments—direct payments to help American families keep driving our national comeback. Helping to create more Americans jobs is an urgent, moral priority, and these are just some of the policies we are discussing that will help that happen.

In addition to kids and jobs, our third major focus is healthcare. The reason is obvious. The reason is obvious. If we lose control of the virus or if research stalls, then everything else will be window dressing.

Our proposal will dedicate even more resources to the fastest race for a new vaccine in human history, along with diagnostics and treatments. Our bill will also protect seniors from a potential spike in premiums. And the Federal Government will continue to support hospitals, providers, and testing.

These are just some of the elements that Senate Republicans are discussing among ourselves and with the administration. There is one more central proposal that ties kids, jobs, and healthcare all together.

As I have said for months, the next recovery package will include strong legal protections for the healthcare workers who save strangers' lives and the schools, colleges, charities, and businesses that want to reopen. The American people will not see their historic recovery gobbled up by trial lawyers who are itching to follow this pandemic with a second epidemic of frivolous lawsuits.

Gross negligence will still be actionable, but we are creating a safe harbor for institutions that make good-faith efforts to follow the guidelines available to them. Doctors and nurses clearly deserve this protection, and school districts, universities, nonprofits, and small businesses will need it, as well, if we want any genuine reopening at all.

The legislation that I have begun to sketch out is neither another CARES Act to float the entire economy nor a typical stimulus bill for a nation that is ready to get back to normal. Our country is in a complex middle ground between those two things. We can't go back to April, and we can't snap our fingers and finish the vaccine overnight. We need to carve out a new normal.

Senate Republicans are continuing to discuss these and other ideas among our conference and with the administration. The majority will be laying down another historic proposal very soon. Here in the Senate, an outcome will require bipartisan discussions.

I do not believe there will be anything in our bill that our Democratic colleagues should not happily support, but we will stand ready and eager to

work together and produce a bipartisan outcome.

As I said yesterday, in March the Senate gave a historic master class in how to pass major bipartisan legislation. The CARES Act, the largest rescue package ever, was drafted by Republicans, promptly negotiated across the aisle with Democrats, and then passed urgently without a single dissenting vote.

Last month, in June, we recorded a master class in how not to make a law. Instead of amending Senator TIM SCOTT's JUSTICE Act, our Democratic colleagues flat-out blocked him. They filibustered the issue of police reform altogether. Well, for the sake of America's kids, jobs, and healthcare, let's hope our Democratic friends bring their bipartisan urgency and good faith to the process and leave the partisan poses behind.

The Senate has led every step of this crisis. We need to rise to the task one more time.

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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 4049, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4049) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Inhofe amendment No. 2301, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Portman) amendment No. 2080 (to amendment No. 2301), to require an element in annual reports on cyber science and technology activities on work with academic consortia on high priority cybersecurity research activities in Department of Defense capabilities.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, our country faces the greatest health threat in 100 years and the greatest economic crisis in 70 years, but here in the Republican-led Senate, you would