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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 Lord, ride into our hearts today and fill us with Your power. Lord, give us such strength that we will face life's difficulties with faith, hope, and love. May our lawmakers so embrace these spiritual attributes that Your Name will be glorified throughout our Nation and world.

As our Senators dedicate their lives to obey Your precepts, direct them to Your desired destination. Lord, give them a faith that will not shrink when at times they cannot see clearly the road ahead. Help them to place their total trust in You.

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. LOEFFLER). 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.

BELARUS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I imagine the people of the United States have been able to follow the demonstrations in Belarus in opposition to the President declaring victory there. Since Aleksandr Lukashenko came to power in Belarus in 1994, he has consolidated power, and, in the

process, suppressed democratic opposition.

So the fact that the Belarus August Presidential election was a sham, as we all know, and he was once again declared to be the winner by a highly implausible margin, should not surprise anyone. However, this time, the Belarusian people have had enough. This time, brutal crackdowns by security forces have not crushed grassroots demands for democracy.

The quest for liberty is embedded in the DNA of the American Republic, so the Americans naturally watch with interest as the people of Belarus continue to demand their God-given rights. The American people stand with the people of Belarus.

I also appreciate very much the strong stance taken by European governments supporting the Belarusian people as the American people have.

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, Republican Senators, like working families all across the country had hoped—hoped—the Senate would be spending this week completing more bipartisan pandemic relief.

We proposed another package with hundreds of billions of dollars to make schools safer for our kids, to help

American workers keep or regain their jobs, and to invest more in testing treatments and finding and distributing a vaccine. But alas, Democrats filibustered it all, apparently intent that working families cannot receive any more relief until election day.

Across the Capitol, Speaker PELOSI's excuses and Goldilocks games are even wearing thin on our fellow Democrats. A few weeks ago, more than 100 House Democrats publicly—publicly—asked Speaker PELOSI to stop blocking action on any coronavirus legislation besides her multitrillion-dollar, far-left wish list. She ignored them. She completely ignored them.

Yesterday, a number of House Democrats tried again. They released a new proposal they had written to some Republicans and pleaded with the Speaker to allow a vote on it. Again, she shot down any notion whatsoever of compromise. Now, bear in mind, the Speaker had explained she will block any compromise for kids, jobs, and healthcare because—because—passing anything short of multiple trillions of dollars would make her look like “a cheap date”—a cheap date.

The money that K–12 schools need, that unemployed workers need, and that we need for the race toward vaccines, Speaker PELOSI is blocking all of it because, apparently, to the San Francisco far left, anything short of multiple trillions of dollars would make her “a cheap date.” So, apparently, for the sake of the Speaker's personal ego, working families continue to suffer with no bipartisan help from Congress.

FILIBUSTERS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, since Democrats are stonewalling pandemic relief, the Senate is using our time to confirm more well-qualified judicial nominees to lifetime positions on the Federal bench. Renewing the Federal judiciary has been a major success over the last 4 years.

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



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Since January 2017, President Trump has nominated, and this Republican Senate has confirmed, 211 article III judges, including 53 circuit judges. That is the second most appellate confirmations of any President in American history at this point in their term.

This isn't a partisan victory. The President has sent us impressive, qualified men and women who understand the radical notion that the job of judge is to actually follow the law—follow the law. It is a victory for our Constitution itself, but, believe me, this progress has not come easy.

Throughout the last 4 years, our Senate Democratic colleagues have visited a historic degree of obstruction upon this President and his efforts to stand up the administration that the American people actually elected.

Senate Democrats have forced us to break more filibusters on nominations since 2017—now listen to this—than had occurred cumulatively in all of Senate history—all of Senate history—before President Trump was sworn in. I am going to say that again.

Senate Democrats have forced us to break more filibusters on nominations since 2017 than had occurred cumulatively in all of Senate history before President Trump was sworn in. They have attempted to filibuster more nominations in the last 3 years than the sum total of all prior Senates—from 1789 through 2016 added together.

What was once a rare roadblock for the most controversial people has now become a daily norm. Before 2017, before this Senate Democratic minority got to work, only 5 percent of all nominations to district courts and circuit courts had been subjected to filibusters. I will say it again.

Before 2017, before this Senate Democratic minority got to work, only 5 percent of all nominations to district courts and circuit courts had been subjected to filibusters. Under President Trump, the number has been 80 percent—80 percent. Our Democratic colleagues even obstruct nominees they don't even oppose. We have taken more than 100 cloture votes on district judges, even though district court nominees from any State with a Democratic Senator could not have even gotten out of committee without Democratic support.

So, to summarize, here is what we are doing this week. We are breaking Democratic filibusters on nominations because Democrats are filibustering coronavirus relief. And let us not forget the cherry on top. Because self-awareness apparently no longer exists, our Democratic colleagues have chosen this very moment to argue that they shouldn't have to play by any of these rules if they ever get power themselves.

President Obama calls the filibuster “a relic of Jim Crow,” even as Senate Democrats use it over and over and over again. Democrats filibustered police reform and filibustered pandemic relief for working families. Some years back, the Democratic leader told the newspaper: “I am the leader of the fili-

buster movement [and] I am proud of it.” That was the Democratic leader.

But now—now—they are saying that if they ever get power, they intend to tear up the rule book to force radicalism on our country. They want to break the rules to pass the kinds of radical, far-left policies that former Vice President Biden has rushed—rushed—to embrace, from abortion to socialism, to cracking down on the Second Amendment.

And that is not all. It is not just about bad policies. They want to go even deeper and hot-wire—hot-wire—our democracy itself. The far left is salivating over the prospect of killing the filibuster in order to pack the Supreme Court, pack the Senate with new States, and tilt the playing field permanently so they can never lose power again.

This is not some rightwing conspiracy theory. These are the signals they are sending publicly right now. This is what the left is saying out there. Maybe this hard-left hypocrisy plays well in a few big coastal cities. Maybe the angry crowds that are pulling down statues of our Founding Fathers want Senators who will pull down government institutions as well. Most Americans see things differently.

E-CIGARETTES

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now, on another matter entirely, a few days ago, the country got something that has been in too short supply in 2020: some really great news—specifically, great news on the subject of public health.

According to the 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey, administered by the FDA and the CDC, the number of American youth using e-cigarettes has dropped by 1.8 million since just last year—1.8 million in 1 year. That means, of course, that 1.8 million fewer young Americans are using e-cigarettes and vaping devices than 1 year ago.

This victory for young Americans' health is no accident. The experts say a number of factors are at play, but one major contributing factor unfolded right here in the Senate a little under a year ago.

Last December, the President signed the Tobacco-Free Youth Act into law. It was a bill I wrote and introduced to stem the tide of what was a rapidly growing health crisis among our Nation's young people. The bipartisan bill I wrote with my good friend TIM KAINE from Virginia and with the help of other colleagues, including Senator TODD YOUNG, raised the minimum age to purchase tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices, from 18 to 21.

This is based on clear-cut science. Public health experts tell us the harmful effects of nicotine are most potent on bodies and brains that are still developing. Nearly 9 out of 10 adult smokers started by the age of 18. So we knew it was time to take action.

I am proud to have led the legislation that took another leap forward in get-

ting nicotine addiction away from our Nation's youth, and by the looks of these data, it has not taken long for our legislation to begin to pay major dividends.

Nearly 2 million fewer teens in Kentucky, Virginia, Indiana, and across the country are having their future put in jeopardy by these products. That is a win, and it has happened largely because the Senate stepped up.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 4582

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4582) to extend, temporarily, daylight saving time, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

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

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 Todd Wallace Robinson, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

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.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in only 48 days, the American people will