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Senate

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 Redeemer, provide our lawmakers with Your grace, mercy, and peace. By Your grace, may they forget the challenges behind them. By Your mercy, may they reach for the opportunities that beckon. By Your peace, may they possess an equanimity of temperament during life's fluctuating intricacies.

Lord, give them a passion for truth and a reluctance to major in minors. Use their exemplary lives to inspire people to live with faith, purpose and power.

Remind us all that though we may plan, You determine what will finally happen.

We pray in Your Great 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 for 1 minute for morning business.

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Although promising vaccines for the coronavirus are on the horizon, it is more important than ever to stop the surge. Countries across the world are seeing cases explode.

It is critical for Iowans to step up their personal responsibilities to stay

safe and healthy for themselves and their loved ones. And that, of course, includes our tireless healthcare professionals—those on the frontlines, working to save lives.

This virus is hitting rural and urban areas alike. No community is immune. I ask every Iowan to continue to do their part to keep their family and neighbors safe: Wash your hands; limit your activity outside your household; social distance; wear a mask.

We are going to get through this together, but we need everyone to do their part.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, once again, this morning brought two different sets of headlines on the pandemic we have been battling for the last 9 months.

On one hand, rates of infection and hospitalization are rising rapidly nationwide. We must all continue taking smart precautions, such as wearing masks and practicing social distancing.

But at the same time, we continue to receive hopeful signs that victory may actually be on the horizon.

This morning, the American biotech firm Moderna and our National Institutes of Health announced that early trials suggest the vaccine they are jointly developing may be both safe and more than 94 percent effective.

This follows Pfizer's similar announcement last week. As former FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb summed it up this morning, "when the full data comes out, we may have two highly effective vaccines against COVID."

If these results hold, we are told the first doses of a vaccine could be admin-

istered to certain vulnerable people as soon as next month, with wider distribution by next spring. This is a remarkable testament to American ingenuity: to bright researchers and brave test participants, to bold commitments from the private sector, and historic support from smart public policy like Operation Warp Speed from the Trump administration and from this Senate.

As Moderna's CEO said this morning, "I want to thank our partners at BARDA and Operation Warp Speed who have been instrumental in accelerating our progress to this point."

Operation Warp Speed spent billions in funding to expedite research and development. It provided a streamlined regulatory environment and prepurchase agreements to reduce risk. It has mobilized the compilation of the basic supplies—things like needles and swabs—that need to travel with the vaccine itself.

We have every indication that this historic public-private partnership is on track to deliver a scientific miracle and help us defeat the virus in the months ahead.

Certainly there is no time to waste. Kentucky just announced our highest ever weekly count of new positive cases. The numbers are troubling in places all across our country. So, for now, our job is to continue doing all we can to stay safe and slow the spread.

MILITARY WITHDRAWAL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on a totally different matter, the last several days have brought renewed speculation about the prospect of rapidly withdrawing all U.S. military forces from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Here in Congress, a small minority in both parties seem to think it is in America's power to unilaterally remove conflicts by simply walking away from them.

Let me say that again. A small minority in both parties seem to think it

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



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