



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 166

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2020

No. 201

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.

Almighty God, who in Your wisdom has so ordered our earthly lives that we must walk by faith and not by sight, increase our trust in Your sovereign care. Remind our lawmakers that no problem is too difficult for You to solve. Lord, give our Senators a faith that triumphs over despair, love that triumphs over hate, and courage that triumphs over faintheartedness. Empower them to be bold participants, rather than timid spectators in meeting the daunting challenges of these times.

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

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

NATIONAL THANKSGIVING TURKEY PARDONING CEREMONY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, like many Iowans, for the first time in my life, I wasn't able to share a meal with my family this Thanksgiving. That doesn't keep me from being thankful for the essential workers of our country who have also missed many

Thanksgiving meals. Still, these essential workers provide and continue to provide for and keep our country safe.

An essential job that often gets overlooked is that of the 86,000 Iowa farm families who produce the food that we consume on Thanksgiving and the 364 days out of the rest of the year. That is why I am proud to see Ron and Susie Kardel from Walcott, IA, get well-deserved recognition this past week. You see, Ron and Susie, along with their two turkeys, Corn and Cob, participated in a time-honored White House tradition. That tradition is the National Thanksgiving Turkey Pardoning Ceremony at the White House. This ceremony helps connect the dots for many Americans, showing them that the food they put on the Thanksgiving table isn't grown in a grocery store.

So I want to thank Ron, Susie, and President Trump for highlighting Iowa agriculture this Thanksgiving. In a year that has been so very difficult for most Americans, it is nice to see traditions like this carried on.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. 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.

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, first, as the Senate reconvenes this afternoon, I am especially happy to welcome back our President pro tempore. Senator GRASSLEY quarantined

and worked from home following his positive COVID test 2 weeks ago. We all predicted that if any Member of this body had the stamina and spirit to kick the virus to the curb, it would certainly be him, and, sure enough, our colleague reports that he experienced no symptoms. His doctors have cleared him to come back to work, and we are sure glad to have him back.

Chairman GRASSLEY had to put his epic streak of consecutive votes temporarily on hold for the sake of other people. Of course, leadership and example-setting are nothing new for the senior Senator from Iowa. I am confident our colleague will pick up exactly where he left off, resuming both his perfect attendance record and the tireless work for Iowans that it represents. We all benefit so very much from his leadership.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate is back in session to finish up 2020. The American people are counting on us to finish strong. We need to reach agreement on Federal Government funding to avoid a lapse in basic programs and services.

We need to finish the annual Defense authorization to shore up the U.S. military's competitive advantage over our adversaries, and we need to continue processing well-qualified nominees for vacancies throughout the government, especially—especially—on the Federal bench.

These are important assignments, but they aren't the only things that Congress should get done before the end of the year. There is no reason—none—why we should not deliver another major pandemic relief package to help the American people through what seem poised to be the last chapters of this battle.

This morning, we got yet another major sign of hope. More data appeared to confirm that the vaccine developed

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



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