



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 Pardon 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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by Moderna is more than 94 percent effective. They are going ahead and asking the FDA for emergency use authorization. Experts are calling this news “absolutely remarkable.” Alongside other promising vaccine developments from Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, and others, there is continued cause to suspect that victory over this pandemic is not far off.

But a huge amount of work remains before us. If Operation Warp Speed remains on this historic trajectory, we need to continue investing in the system that will distribute these vaccines around our country. If we want the small businesses that have already hung on for most of the year to survive a few more months, we need a second round of the job-saving Paycheck Protection Program for the workers at the hardest hit establishments. Some major parts of the historic CARES Act have already run dry, and many others are set to expire at year’s end.

We Republicans have spent months trying to renew important help and provide even more. We have tried to send more than \$100 billion to help schools and welcome students and teachers safely to the classroom. We have tried to implement commonsense legal protections that universities and charities have been clamoring for. We have tried to pass all of this over and over again, but Speaker PELOSI and the Senate Democratic leader have blocked it.

They have been very transparent about all of this with their political strategy—laid it right out there. The Speaker of the House spent the entire summer and the entire autumn literally gambling with the health and welfare of the American people. She gambled that if American families didn’t get any more relief before the election, her party would expand its majority in the House, and Democrats could continue demanding the right to remake all of society along far-left lines in exchange for passing any more COVID relief whatsoever.

But their all-or-nothing obstruction backfired. Democrats did not pick up seats in the House but instead appear to have lost seats. They have not gained any leverage, but instead they have lost leverage. And in the meantime, with the coronavirus surging from coast to coast, the American people have gone entirely—entirely—without any additional aid—even the least controversial, most bipartisan programs—because the Democrats say no. Here is a summary from one news outlet:

Pelosi seems to have overplayed her hand as she held out for \$2 trillion-plus right up until the election. The results of the election, which saw Democrats lose seats in the House, appear to have significantly undercut her position.

By now it is abundantly clear to everyone that the Speaker will not be getting to fundamentally transform American society in a socialist direction in exchange for more bipartisan

relief. The hostage-taking was never going to work.

Now there is only one remaining question for the Speaker and the Democratic leader—just one question: Will they finally—finally—let Congress pass hundreds of billions of dollars of relief on all the subjects where we agree? Or will they continue to insist that either they get their entire ideological wish list or the American people get nothing at all?

Even their fellow Democrats are increasingly seeing this as not a terribly difficult question to answer. For example, over the weekend, Professor Austan Goolsbee, who chaired the Council of Economic Advisers under President Obama, called on Democrats to finally play ball. Here is what he said:

There are a lot of people really hurting. . . . I hope [Congress] can agree on something soon. . . . [I]f they have to accept half a loaf, then they have to accept half a loaf.

Speaker PELOSI’s No. 2, the House Democratic majority leader, feels the same way:

I just hope that we can get agreement. It may not be everything that everybody wants, but at least. . . . some significant relief to people.

Our distinguished Senate colleague from Illinois, the Democratic whip, said the same thing: “[G]et something done that is significant, do what we can achieve now.”

Here is the headline from Newsweek: “Democrats Urge Pelosi to Accept Smaller Stimulus Package to Ensure Relief by End of Year.”

Even the Speaker’s own House Democratic Members are now openly campaigning for our Republican approach. Here is one Democratic Congressman, who nearly lost his reelection after Speaker PELOSI’s stonewalling:

We absolutely have to get something done. . . . Mitch McConnell is talking about a bill we can pass. . . . We should negotiate that to the finish.

That is a House Democrat saying that the Senate Republican proposal is the template that can pass.

Rank-and-file Democrats in both Chambers are telling Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leader to stop stonewalling and move forward with the approach Republicans have been urging for months. The American people need more help, and they need it right now—right now. Democratic leaders have already burned through 3 months—3 months—and they didn’t even get the political results that their cynical strategy was supposed to deliver.

So let’s hope our colleagues at the top of the Democratic Party can finally hear their own Members and stop blocking the commonsense, multihundred-billion-dollar measures that Republicans have been ready to deliver for months.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 761.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Christopher Waller, of Minnesota, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of fourteen years from February 1, 2016.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. 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 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 Christopher Waller, of Minnesota, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of fourteen years from February 1, 2016.

Mitch McConnell, John Thune, Marsha Blackburn, Joni Ernst, Pat Roberts, John Cornyn, Lindsey Graham, Deb Fischer, Tim Scott, Lamar Alexander, Kevin Cramer, Mike Braun, John Hoeven, Mike Crapo, Michael B. Enzi, John Boozman, Thom Tillis.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. 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. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 842.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Liam P. Hardy, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces for the term of fifteen years to expire on the date prescribed by law.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. 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 legislative clerk read as follows: