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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Lord of all creation, thank You for giving us another day.

We come before You again, O Lord, to implore Your blessing upon a nation seeing continually high rates of infection with COVID-19. Our hospitals are near breaking point in the availability of beds for those who are stricken.

Thank You again for those men and women of science who have developed the vaccines now beginning to be distributed. This is a great sign of hope in the midst of so much suffering and fear. Lord, have mercy.

Bless the Members of this House, and of the Senate, as the omnibus and the coronavirus relief bills are presented and considered today. Give them wisdom and generosity; increase their trust that Your people in this Nation will use the assistance coming their way to fuel a struggling economy.

May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to section 4(a) of House Resolution 967, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. JACKSON LEE 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.

COVID VACCINE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I join in the prayer of the Chaplain this morning. I believe it is important to open this day of lifesaving relief with a prayer to ask that our Congress comes together and stands in the face with help on the way to dying Americans from COVID-19, the families of those who have died and those who are on the front lines fighting against this virus.

It is important that we help our schoolchildren with educational dollars and, as well, make sure that the vaccines are going as fast as they can to the sites across America.

I spoke to hospitals in my district, smaller hospitals and community hospitals that are still waiting for their vaccine. We know that they want their frontline medical professionals to keep saving and serving the public.

So this is going to be a historic and important day. We know it is not what we want in complete, but we know we will be working into the new year to be able to respond to the needs of the American people helping our local governments and, as well, making sure that those children who will be returning to school and those teachers, as well, will be protected after they have the opportunity—the teachers, in particular—to have the vaccine. This is a historic day. Let us work together.

RELIEF FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Ms. PELOSI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I associate myself with your comments and those of our Chaplain, Father Conroy, that it is appropriate to start today with a prayer, and every day, but especially a day when we are seeing over

300,000—and the number getting higher—Americans who are dying from the coronavirus.

We have hope because there is a vaccine. We have hope because we have a President who recognizes science and, again, the need for us to distribute the vaccine in the most equitable, fair, and free way. By that President, I mean one who will take office 1 month from now, Joe Biden.

I do want to speak to the bill that will be on the floor shortly. It is a good, bipartisan bill. As different from bills that had been proposed on the Senate side by the Republican leader, it does things that his bill never did, and that is that it addresses the food needs of the American people. Maybe 15 million children are food insecure in our country, and adults as well.

Millions of families are on the verge of eviction, and this legislation addresses the rental needs and the short-term moratorium. We can accept a short-term because we will have a new President during the length of that moratorium to extend it further if necessary.

We also have in the legislation direct payments, which were not in the Republican bill, to America's working families. I would like them to have been bigger, but they are significant, and they will be going out soon.

The President may insist on having his name on the check, but make no mistake, those checks are from the American people. The American people's name should be on that check, no individual, because that is the source of the resources for those checks—tax-paying Americans.

In addition to that, the list goes on of some of the very positive things that are on the bill—quite frankly, some of them did not come to agreement until yesterday—whether we are talking about WRDA, the Water Resources Development Act; a big jobs bill had bipartisan support but some disagreement over language, but by the time

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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