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Senate

The Senate met at noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, You are our shelter from the storm. Keep us from shame.

Lord, You often answer prayers in mysterious ways. As the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are Your thoughts higher than our contemplation.

Inspire our Senators to be so sensitive to Your Spirit that they can recognize Your gentle nudge. Make them glad that You are near.

Lord, equip our lawmakers with wisdom and foresight for these challenging times. May Your peace go with them as they seek to do Your will.

We pray in Your strong 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it is nice to see you back in that position.

Yesterday, Mr. President, we began a new chapter in the history of our Nation. On the same steps stormed by domestic terrorists 2 weeks ago, we held a ceremony to the enduring power of our democracy. It was a symbol to the world that America is back and a mes-

sage to those domestic terrorists that they will never prevail.

Even as the festivities were in full swing, our new President and this new Senate commenced the work of rebuilding our country and healing its wounds. With the stroke of a pen, President Biden started the process of rejoining the United States to the Paris accords. He extended the pause on student loan payments, put an end to the Muslim travel ban, reinstated safeguards for our Nation's Dreamers, and put a halt on the ineffective border wall.

Crucially, President Biden signed a number of orders to refocus the Federal Government's efforts on fighting the coronavirus pandemic. The United States has rejoined the World Health Organization. A mask mandate has been issued for all Federal properties. And President Biden has named a new coronavirus response coordinator to manage vaccine distribution, which is so desperately needed and was such a failure under the Trump administration.

Our country has suffered deeply from the chaotic, lackluster, and incompetent Federal response to COVID-19. As we cross the grim milestone of 400,000—400,000—American fatalities from COVID, the Biden administration is wasting no time in marshaling the resources of the Federal Government into action and today released a national strategy to defeat the pandemic.

What a concept—a President who actually takes the defining crisis of our time seriously. What a change—and how great is the need.

Here in the Senate, the first order of business is to fulfill our constitutional duty to advise and consent on the President's appointments to his Cabinet. Last night, the Senate confirmed the President's selection for the Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines. We appreciate the bipartisan cooperation to get her confirmation done yesterday, and we should continue in that spirit today.

Traditionally, the Senate has confirmed several national security nominees for an incoming administration during their first few days. Even as power changes hands from one administration to the other, the work of keeping our Nation safe must not be paused or be disrupted. Foreign adversaries will seek to exploit this period of transition, and we cannot allow America's military, intelligence, and national security policy to be disrupted by staffing delays.

In 2017, President Trump had his Defense Secretary and Secretary of Homeland Security in place on Inauguration Day. President Biden deserves his national security team in place as soon as possible, as well as key officials in charge of responding to the current health and economic crises. With the cooperation of our Republican colleagues, we can and should confirm the Secretaries of Defense, State, Homeland Security, and Treasury without much delay.

While national security is paramount, I would remind my colleagues that we are in the middle of an economic crisis. The sooner we confirm a Treasury Secretary, the better.

And so, as we begin the process of bringing our country back together, let the first week of this Congress be a collaboration between our two parties to confirm President Biden's Cabinet.

INAUGURAL CEREMONY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Inaugural Ceremony proceedings be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the proceedings of the Inaugural Ceremony were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

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INAUGURAL CEREMONY

Inauguration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., January 20, 2021, 10:33 a.m.

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



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The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark A. Milley, assembled on the President's platform.

Leadership of the United States House of Representatives: Republican whip, the Honorable Stephen Scalise; and majority whip, the Honorable James E. Clyburn, assembled on the President's platform.

Leadership of the United States Senate: President pro tempore emeritus, the Honorable Patrick Leahy, and Mrs. Marcelle Leahy; Democratic whip, the Honorable Dick Durbin, and Ms. Reema Dodin; majority whip, the Honorable John Thune, and Mrs. Kimberley Thune; Democratic leader, the Honorable Charles Schumer, and Mrs. Iris Weinshall Schumer; President pro tempore of the Senate, the Honorable Chuck Grassley, and Ms. Jennifer Heins assembled on the President's platform.

Former Vice President, the Honorable Dan Quayle, assembled on the President's platform.

The 42nd President of the United States, the Honorable William J. Clinton, and the Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton assembled on the President's platform.

The 43rd President of the United States, the Honorable George W. Bush, and Mrs. Laura Bush assembled on the President's platform.

The 44th President of the United States, the Honorable Barack H. Obama, and Mrs. Michelle Obama assembled on the President's platform.

The Chief Justice of the United States, the Honorable John G. Roberts, Jr., and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court assembled on the President's platform.

The children of Vice President-Elect Harris and Mr. Douglas Emhoff, Cole Mackin Emhoff and Ella Rose Emhoff, assembled on the President's platform.

The children of President-Elect Biden, Robert Hunter Biden II and Ashley Blazer Biden and the grandchildren of the President-elect, assembled on the President's platform.

Accompanying the Vice President: The Secretary of the Senate, the Honorable Julie Adams; and Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives, Catherine Szpindor, assembled on the President's platform.

The Vice President of the United States, the Honorable Michael R. Pence, and Mrs. Karen Pence assembled on the President's platform.

Accompanying the Vice President-elect: the Chief of Inaugural Ceremonies, Maria Miller Lohmeyer; the Acting Deputy House Sergeant at Arms, Kevin Grubbs; and the Acting Deputy Senate Sergeant at Arms, U.S. Capitol Police Officer, PFC Eugene O. Goodman, assembled on the President's platform.

The Vice President-elect of the United States, Kamala Devi Harris, and Mr. Douglas Emhoff assembled on the President's platform.

The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: staff representative Alexandra Gourdikian Diccio, accompanying the House Republican leader, the Honorable Kevin McCarthy; staff representative Bridget Brennan, accompanying House majority leader, the Honorable Steny Hoyer, and Ms. Yvette Lewis; staff representative Kate Knudsen, accompanying Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, and Mr. Paul Pelosi; staff representative Lindsey Kerr, accompanying the Honorable Amy Klobuchar and Mr. John Bessler; staff representative Stefanie Hagar Muchow, accompanying Senate majority leader, the Honorable Mitch McConnell, and the Honorable Elaine L. Chao; and staff representative Rachelle Graves Schroeder, ac-

companying the chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, the Honorable Roy Blunt, and Mrs. Abigail Blunt, assembled on the President's platform.

Accompanying the President-elect, the staff director of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, Fitzhugh Elder IV; the Acting House Sergeant at Arms, Tim Blodgett; and the Acting Senate Sergeant at Arms, Jennifer Hemmingway, assembled on the President's platform.

The President-elect of the United States, Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and Dr. Jill Biden assembled on the President's platform.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Vice President Pence, Mr. President-elect, Madam Vice President-elect, Members of Congress and the judicial branch, former Presidents and First Ladies, Vice Presidents, leaders from abroad, and a whole bunch of Bidens, America, welcome to the 59th Presidential Inauguration, where in just a few moments Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will take their solemn oaths.

This ceremony is the culmination of 244 years of a democracy. It is a moment when leaders, brought to this stage by the will of the people, promise to be faithful to our Constitution, to cherish it, and defend it. It is a moment when they become, as we all should be, guardians of our country.

Have we become too jaded, too accustomed to the ritual of the passing of the torch of democracy to truly appreciate what a blessing and a privilege it is to witness this moment? I think not.

Two weeks ago, when an angry, violent mob staged an insurrection and desecrated this temple of our democracy, it awakened us to our responsibilities as Americans. This is the day when our democracy picks itself up, brushes off the dust, and does what America always does: It goes forward as a nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

(Applause.)

This conveyance of a sacred trust between our leaders and our people takes place in front of this shining Capitol dome for a reason. When Abraham Lincoln gave his first inaugural address in front of this Capitol, the dome was only partially constructed, braced by ropes of steel. He promised he would finish it. He was criticized for spending funds on it during the Civil War. To those critics, he replied, "If the people see the Capitol going on, it is a sign we intend the Union shall go on." And it did, and it will.

Generations of Americans gave their lives to preserve our Republic in this place. Great legislation to protect civil rights and economic security and lead the world was debated and crafted under this dome. Now, it falls on all of us—not just the two leaders we are inaugurating today—to take up the torch of our democracy, not as a weapon of political arson but as an instrument for good.

We pledge today never to take our democracy for granted as we celebrate its remarkable strength. We celebrate its resilience, its grit. We celebrate the ordinary people doing extraordinary things for our Nation, the doctors and nurses on the frontline of this pandemic, the officers in the Capitol, a new generation never giving up hope for justice.

We celebrate a new President, Joe Biden, who vows to restore the soul of America and cross the river of our divides to a higher plane.

We celebrate our first African-American, first Asian-American, and first woman Vice President, Kamala Harris, who stands on the shoulders of so many on this platform who have forged the way to this day. When she takes the oath of office, little girls and boys across the world will know that anything and everything is possible.

In the end, that is America: our democracy, a country of so much good. Today, on these Capitol steps and before this glorious field of flags, we rededicate ourselves to its cause.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

It is now my honor to introduce to you the Senator who has worked with me and so many others to make this ceremony possible, my friend and the chair of the Inaugural Committee, Missouri Senator Roy Blunt.

(Applause.)

Mr. BLUNT. Well, I should have known when Senator Klobuchar got involved, at least, there would be a touch of snow up here this morning. Of all the things we had considered, I don't think snow was on my agenda until I walked out the door a moment ago.

But thank you, Senator Klobuchar, and thanks to the other members of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Inauguration as we officially begin the 59th inaugural ceremony. I also want to thank the joint committee staff and our partners, particularly our security partners, for the way they have dealt with unprecedented circumstances.

When I chaired the inauguration 4 years ago, I shared President Reagan's 1981 description of this event as "commonplace" and "miraculous." It is "commonplace" because we have done it every 4 years since 1789; it is miraculous because we have done it every 4 years since 1789. Americans have celebrated this moment during war, during depression, and now during pandemic.

Once again, all three branches of our government come together as the Constitution envisions. Once again, we renew our commitment to our determined democracy, forging a more perfect union.

The theme for this inauguration, "Our Determined Democracy: Forging a more perfect union," was announced by the joint committee before the election with the belief that the United States can only fulfill its promise and set an example for others if we are always working to be better than we have been.

The Constitution established that determined democracy with its first three words, declaring the people as the source of the government. The Articles of Confederation hadn't done that. The Magna Carta hadn't done that. Only the Constitution says the government exists because the people are the source of the reason it exists.

They immediately followed those first three words with the words "to form a more perfect union." The Founders did not say to form a perfect union; they did not claim that in our new country nothing would need to be improved. Fortunately, they understood that always working to be better would be the hallmark of a great democracy.

The freedoms we have today and the Nation we have today is not here just because it happened, and they aren't complete. A great democracy is working through the successes and failures of our history, striving to be better than it had been. We are more than we have been, and we are less than we hope to be. The assault on our Capitol at this very place just 2 weeks ago reminds us that a government designed to balance and check itself is both fragile and resilient.

During the last year, the pandemic challenged our free and open society and called for extraordinary determination and sacrifice and still challenges us today. Meeting that challenge head on have been and are our healthcare workers, scientists, first responders, essential frontline workers, and so many others we depend on in so many ways.

Today, we come to this moment; people all over the world, as we are here, are watching

and will watch what we do here. Our government comes together. The Congress and the courts join the transition of Executive responsibility. One political party is more pleased today and on every inaugural day than the other. But this is not a moment of division; it is a moment of unification. A new administration begins and brings with it a new beginning; and with that, our great national debate goes forward, and a determined democracy will continue to be essential in pursuit of a more perfect union and a better future for all Americans. What a privilege for me to join you today.

Thank you.
(Applause.)

I am pleased to call to the podium a long-time friend of the President-elect and his family, Father Leo O'Donovan, to lead us in an invocation.

Please stand if you are able and remain standing for the national anthem and the pledge to our flag.

Father O'DONOVAN. Gracious and merciful God, at this sacred time, we come before you in need, indeed on our knees. But we come still more with hope and with our eyes raised anew to the vision of a more perfect union in our land, a union of all our citizens to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

We are a people of many races, creeds, and colors, national backgrounds, cultures, and styles, now far more numerous and on land much vaster than when Archbishop John Carroll wrote his prayer for the inauguration of George Washington 232 years ago.

Archbishop Carroll prayed that You, a Creator of all, would "assist with your Holy Spirit of counsel and fortitude the President of these United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness and be eminently useful to Your people."

Today, we confess our past failures to live according to our vision of equality, inclusion, and freedom for all; yet we resolutely commit still more now to renewing the vision, to caring for one another in word and deed, especially the least fortunate among us, and so becoming a light for the world.

There is a power in each and every one of us that lives by turning to every other one of us, a trust of the spirit to cherish and care and stand by others and, above all, those most in need. It is called love, and its path is to give ever more of itself. Today, it is called American patriotism, borne not of power and privilege, but of care for the common good, with malice toward none and with charity for all.

For our new President, we beg of you the wisdom Solomon sought when he knelt before you and prayed for an understanding heart so that "I can govern your people . . . and know the difference between right and wrong."

We trust in the counsel of the letter of James:

In any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Pope Francis has reminded us how important it is to dream together. "By ourselves," he wrote, "we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together."

Be with us, Holy Mystery of Love, as we dream together. Help us under our new President to reconcile the people of our land, restore our dream, and invest it with peace and justice and the joy that is the overflow of love.

To the glory of Your name forever. Amen.
(Performance of the National Anthem by Lady Gaga, accompanied by the U.S. Marine Band.)

(Fire Captain Andrea M. Hall, of the South Fulton Georgia Fire and Rescue Department,

president of the International Association of Firefighters Local 3920 recited the Pledge of Allegiance.)

(Applause.)

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. What you are all about to be part of, America, is a historic moment of firsts.

To administer the oath to our first African-American, our first Asian-American, and our first woman Vice President, Kamala Harris, it is my great privilege to welcome to the inaugural stage the first Latina to ever serve on the Supreme Court of the United States of America: Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

The Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, SONIA SOTOMAYOR, administered to the Vice President-elect the oath of office prescribed by the Constitution, which she repeated as follows:

I, KAMALA DEVI HARRIS, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

(Applause.)

(Jennifer Lopez performed "This Land Is Your Land" and "America the Beautiful" accompanied by the U.S. Marine Band.)

(Applause.)

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Well, that was great.

The Sun is shining and, Mr. President-elect, this is the first inauguration in the history of America where J-Lo was the warmup act for Chief Justice Roberts.

With that, it is now my distinct honor to introduce the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, John Roberts, to administer the Presidential oath to the next President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden.

(Applause.)

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, JOHN G. ROBERTS, JR., administered to the President-elect the oath of office prescribed by the Constitution, which he repeated, as follows:

I, JOSEPH ROBINETTE BIDEN, JR., do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. So help me God.

The CHIEF JUSTICE. Congratulations, Mr. President.

(Applause.)

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. My fellow Americans—a moment we have all been waiting for—it is now my great privilege and high honor to be the first person to officially introduce the 46th President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDENT. Chief Justice Roberts, Vice President Harris, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Vice President Pence, and my distinguished guests, my fellow Americans, this is America's day. This is democracy's day—a day of history and hope, of renewal and resolve.

Through a crucible for the ages, America has been tested anew, and America has risen to the challenge. Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate but of a cause, the cause of democracy. The people—the will of the people—has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded.

We have learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile, and at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed.

(Applause.)

Now, on this hallowed ground, where just a few days ago violence sought to shake the Capitol's very foundation, we come together

as one Nation under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as we have for more than two centuries.

As we look ahead in our uniquely American way—restless, bold, optimistic—and set our sights on a nation we know we can and we must be, I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here today. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

(Applause.)

I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength—the strength of our Nation—as does President Carter, who I spoke with last night, who cannot be with us today, but whom we salute for his lifetime in service.

I have just taken the sacred oath each of those patriots have taken, the oath first sworn by George Washington. But the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us—on we, the people, who seek a more perfect union. This is a great nation. We are good people. Over the centuries, through storm and strife, in peace and at war, we have come so far, but we still have far to go.

We will press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibilities—much to repair, much to restore, much to heal, much to build, and much to gain. Few people in our Nation's history have been more challenged or found a time more challenging or difficult than the time we are in now. A once-in-a-century virus that silently stalks the country has taken as many lives in 1 year as America lost in all of World War II.

Millions of jobs have been lost, and hundreds of thousands of businesses closed. A cry for racial justice, some 400 years in the making, moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer.

(Applause.)

A cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear now—the rise of political extremism, White supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat.

(Applause.)

To overcome these challenges, to restore the soul and secure the future of America requires so much more than words; it requires the most elusive of all things in a democracy: unity. Unity.

In another January on New Year's Day in 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. When he put pen to paper, the President said:

If my name ever goes down in history, it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it.

My whole soul is in it today, on this January day. My whole soul is in this: bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our Nation. I ask every American to join me in this cause.

(Applause.)

Uniting to fight the foes we face—anger, resentment and hatred, extremism, lawlessness, violence, disease, joblessness, and hopelessness—with unity, we can do great things, important things. We can right wrongs. We can put people to work in good jobs. We can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome the deadly virus. We can reward work and rebuild the middle class and make healthcare secure for all. We can deliver racial justice, and we can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world.

I know, speaking of unity, it can sound to some like a foolish fantasy these days. I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real, but I also know they are not new. Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal, that we all are created equal, and the harsh ugly reality

that racism, nativism, fear, and demonization have long torn us apart. The battle is perennial, and victory is never assured.

Through Civil War, the Great Depression, World War, 9/11, and through struggle, sacrifice, and setbacks, our better angels have always prevailed. In each of these moments, enough of us—enough of us—have come together to carry all of us forward, and we can do that now.

History, faith, and reason show the way, the way of unity. We can see each other not as adversaries, but as neighbors. We can treat each other with dignity and respect. We can join forces, stop the shouting, and lower the temperature. For without unity, there is no peace, only bitterness and fury; no progress, only exhausting outrage; and no nation, only a state of chaos. This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward, and we must meet this moment as the United States of America.

If we do that, I guarantee you we will not fail. We have never, ever, ever, ever failed in America when we have acted together. So, today, at this time, in this place, let's start afresh—all of us. Let's begin to listen to one another again, hear one another, see one another, and show respect to one another. Politics doesn't have to be a raging fire destroying everything in its path. Every disagreement doesn't have to be a cause for total war, and we must reject the culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured.

(Applause.)

My fellow Americans, we have to be different than this. America has to be better than this, and I believe America is so much better than this. Just look around. Here we stand in the shadow of the Capitol dome, as was mentioned earlier, completed amid the Civil War when the Union itself was literally hanging in the balance; yet we endured. We prevailed.

Here we stand, looking out on the great Mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream. Here we stand, where 108 years ago, at another inaugural, thousands of protesters tried to block brave women marching for the right to vote. Today, we mark the swearing in of the first woman in American history elected to national office, Vice President Kamala Harris. Don't tell me things can't change.

(Applause.)

Here we stand, across the Potomac from Arlington Cemetery, where heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion rest in eternal peace. Here we stand, just days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of our democracy, and to drive us from this sacred ground. It did not happen. It will never happen, not today, not tomorrow, not ever—not ever.

(Applause.)

To all those who supported our campaign, I am humbled by the faith you placed in us. To all those who did not support us, let me say this: Hear me out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart. If you still disagree, so be it. That is democracy. That is America. The right to dissent peaceably within the guardrails of our Republic is perhaps this Nation's greatest strength; yet hear me clearly. Disagreement must not lead to disunion, and I pledge this to you: I will be a President for all Americans—all Americans.

(Applause.)

I promise you, I will fight as hard for those who did not support me as for those who did.

(Applause.)

Many centuries ago, St. Augustine, a saint in my church, wrote that a people was a multitude defined by the common action of their

love, defined by the common objects of their love. What are the common objects we, as Americans, love that define us as Americans? I think we know: opportunity, security, liberty, dignity, respect, honor, and, yes, the truth.

Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth, and there are lies, lies told for power and for profit. Each of us has a duty and a responsibility as citizens, as Americans, and especially as leaders—leaders who have pledged to honor our Constitution and protect our Nation—to defend the truth and defeat the lies.

(Applause.)

Look, I understand that many of my fellow Americans view the future with fear and trepidation. I understand they worry about their jobs. I understand, like my dad, they lay in bed at night staring at the ceiling, wondering: Can I keep my healthcare? Can I pay my mortgage? Thinking about their families and about what comes next. I promise you, I get it.

But the answer is not to turn inward and to retreat into competing factions, distrusting those who don't look like you or worship the way you do or don't get their news from the same sources you do. We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts, if we show a little tolerance and humility, and if we are willing to stand in the other person's shoes, as my mom would say. Just for a moment, stand in their shoes.

Because here is the thing about life: There is no accounting for what fate will deal you. Some days, you need a hand. There are other days when we are called to lend a hand. That is how it has to be. That is what we do for one another. If we are this way, our country will be stronger, more prosperous, more ready for the future, and we can still disagree.

My fellow Americans, in the work ahead of us, we are going to need each other. We need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter. We are entering what may be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus. We must set aside politics and finally face this pandemic as one Nation—one Nation.

(Applause.)

And I promise you this, as the Bible says: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." We will get through this together—together.

(Applause.)

Look, folks, all my colleagues I serve with in the House and the Senate up here, we all understand the world is watching, watching all of us today. So here is my message to those beyond our borders: America has been tested, and we have come out stronger for it. We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again—not to meet yesterday's challenges but today's and tomorrow's challenges—and we will lead not merely by the example of our power but by the power of our example.

(Applause.)

We will be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress, and security.

Look, you all know we have been through so much in this Nation. In my first act as President, I would like to ask you to join me in a moment of silent prayer. Remember all those who we lost in this past year to the pandemic, those 400,000 fellow Americans—moms, dads, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. We will honor them by becoming the people and the Nation we know we can and should be. I ask you, let's say a silent prayer for those who have lost their lives and those left behind and for our country.

(Moment of silence.)

Amen.

Folks, this is a time of testing. We face an attack on our democracy and on truth, a raging virus, growing inequity, the sting of systemic racism, a climate in crisis, and America's role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways, but the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this Nation with one of the gravest responsibilities we have had.

Now, we are going to be tested. Are we going to step up, all of us? It is time for boldness, for there is so much to do. And this is certain: I promise you, we will be judged, you and I, by how we resolve these cascading crises of our era. Will we rise to the occasion is the question. Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world to our children?

I believe we must. I am sure you do as well. I believe we will. When we do, we will write the next great chapter in the history of the United States of America—the American story—a story that might sound something like a song that means a lot to me. It is called "American Anthem." There is one verse that stands out, at least for me, and it goes like this:

The work and prayers of centuries have brought us to this day, which shall be our legacy, what will our children say? Let me know in my heart when my days are through, America, America, I gave my best to you.

Let us add our own work and prayers to the unfolding story of our great Nation. If we do this, then when our days are through, our children and our children's children will say of us: They gave their best, they did their duty, they healed a broken land.

My fellow Americans, I close today where I began, with a sacred oath. Before God and all of you, I give you my word. I will always level with you. I will defend the Constitution. I will defend our democracy. I will defend America, and I will give all—all of you—keep everything I do in your service, thinking not of power but of possibilities, not of personal interest but of public good. And together, we shall write an American story of hope, not fear; of unity, not division; of light, not darkness; a story of decency and dignity, love and healing, greatness and goodness—may this be the story that guides us, the story that inspires us, and the story that tells ages yet to come that we answered the call of history. We met the moment. Democracy and hope, truth and justice, did not die on our watch but thrived, that America secured liberty at home and stood once again as a beacon to the world. That is what we owe our forbearers, one another, and generations to follow.

So, with purpose and resolve, we turn to those tasks of our time sustained by faith, driven by conviction, and devoted to one another and the country we love with all our hearts. May God bless America, and may God protect our troops.

Thank you, America.

(Applause.)

(Garth Brooks performed "Amazing Grace.")

Mr. BLUNT. It is hard not to be reminded of President Obama singing that same song at the Mother Emanuel Church, a song that in our country is as close to both poetry and prayer as you could possibly come, and we are going to finish with those two things.

Let me introduce Amanda Gorman, our Nation's first ever National Youth Poet Laureate.

Ms. GORMAN. Mr. President, Dr. Biden, Madam Vice President, Mr. Emhoff, Americans, and the world:

When day comes we ask ourselves,

where can we find light in this never-ending shade?

The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single
mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cul-
tures, colors,
characters and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands
between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put
our future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is
true:

That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victo-
rious

Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine
and fig tree

And no one shall make them afraid
If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promise to glade
The hill we climb
If only we dare

It's because being American is more than a
pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into and how we repair
it

We've seen a force that would shatter our na-
tion
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delay-
ing democracy

And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically de-
layed

it can never be permanently defeated
In this truth

In this faith we trust
For while we have our eyes on the future
history has its eyes on us
This is the era of just redemption

We feared at its inception
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power to author a
new chapter

To offer hope and laughter to ourselves
So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over cata-
strophe?

Now we assert
How could catastrophe possibly

prevail over us?

We will not march back to what was
but move to what shall be
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next genera-
tion

Our blunders become their burdens
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a won-
drous one

We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the
west,
we will rise from the windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolu-
tion

We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of
the midwestern states,

we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful
When day comes we step out of the shade,
afire and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it.

(Applause.)

Mr. BLUNT. Thank you, Amanda Gorman.
Now, for our benediction, I am pleased to
introduce the Reverend Dr. Silvester
Beaman, pastor of the Bethel African Meth-
odist Episcopal Church in Wilmington, DE, a
friend of President Biden for 30 years.

Reverend BEAMAN. As a nation and people
of faith gathered in this historical moment,
let us unite in prayer.

God, we gather under the beauty of Your
holiness and the holiness of Your beauty. We
seek Your face, Your smile, Your warm em-
brace.

We petition You once more in this celebra-
tion. We pray for divine favor upon our
President, Joseph R. Biden, and our First
Lady, Dr. Jill Biden, and their family. We
further ask that You would extend the same
favor upon our Vice President, Kamala D.
Harris, and our Second Gentleman, Doug
Emhoff, and their family. More than ever—
more than ever—they and our Nation need
You.

We need You, for in You we discover our
common humanity. In our common human-
ity, we will seek out the wounded and bind
their wounds. We will seek healing for those
who are sick and diseased. We will mourn
our dead. We will befriend the lonely, the
least, and the left out. We will share our
abundance with those who are hungry. We
will do justly to the oppressed, acknowledge
sin, and seek forgiveness, thus grasping rec-
onciliation.

In discovering our humanity, we will seek
the good in and for all our neighbors. We will
love the unlovable, remove the stigma of the
so-called untouchables. We will care for our
most vulnerable, our children, the elderly,
emotionally challenged, and the poor. We
will seek rehabilitation beyond correction.
We will extend opportunity to those locked
out of opportunity. We will make friends of
our enemies. We will make friends of our en-
emies.

People—Your people—shall no longer raise
up weapons against one another, who will
rather use our resources for the national
good, and become a beacon of life and good
will to the world, and neither shall we learn
hatred anymore. We will lie down in peace
and not make our neighbors afraid.

In You, oh, God, we discover our humanity,
and in our humanity, we discover our com-
monness. Beyond the difference of color,
creed, origin, political party, ideology, geog-
raphy, and personal preferences, we will be-
come greater stewards of Your environment,
preserving the land, reaping from it a sus-
tainable harvest, and securing its wonder
and miracle-giving power for generations to
come.

This is our benediction, that from these
hallowed grounds where slaves labored to
build this shrine and citadel to liberty and
democracy, let us all acknowledge—from the
indigenous Native Americans to those who
recently received their citizenship, from the
African American to those whose foreparents
came from Europe and every corner of the
globe, from the wealthy to those struggling
to make it, from every human being, regard-
less of their choices—that this is our coun-
try.

As such, teach us, oh, God. As such, teach
us, oh, God, to live in it, love in it, be healed
in it, and reconcile to one another in it, less
we miss kingdom's goal.

To Your glory, majesty, dominion, and
power forever, hallelujah. Glory hallelujah,
in the strong Name of our collective faith.
Amen.

(Performance of "The Stars and Stripes
Forever" by the U.S. Marine Band.)

(Performance of "Let Freedom Ring" by
the U.S. Marine Band.)

(The Inaugural Ceremony was concluded at
12:33 p.m.)

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr.
President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr.
BOOKER). You are welcome.

Mr. SCHUMER. A new politeness
from the Chair.

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. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Re-
publican leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for
this 117th Congress, the American peo-
ple chose an evenly split Senate—50
Republicans and 50 Democrats. With
the election of Vice President HARRIS,
that means the Democratic leader will
act as majority leader.

So I want to congratulate my col-
league from New York. His pride and
emotion were palpable yesterday as
this self-described "kid from Brooklyn
[and] son of an exterminator and a
housewife" became the first Jewish
Member of Congress to lead either
Chamber—a historic milestone.