



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 167

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021

No. 74

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, April 30, 2021, at 9 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021

The Senate met at 10 a.m. 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.

Eternal God, in times of trouble, You hear us. We call to You, and You provide answers. As our lawmakers seek to follow Your precepts, guide them in their challenging work.

Lord, strengthen our Senators to trust You completely. Provide them with the powers of wisdom, discipline, and discernment.

You have promised that in everything You are working for the good of those who love You, who are called according to Your purpose.

Let Your Kingdom come. Let Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

We pray in Your sacred 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 (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, 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. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 Democratic leader is recognized.

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, last night, before a joint session of Congress, President Biden laid out a comprehensive, thoughtful vision for the country.

First, he spoke about what we have accomplished so far, and on that front, there was plenty to talk about.

The Democratic majority in Congress passed the most sweeping Federal recovery effort in a new generation, the American Rescue Plan, accelerating the pace of vaccinations and our economic rebound. As a result, the United States administered more than 200 million shots in less than 100 days. More than half of American adults have gotten at least one shot, and two-thirds of American seniors are vaccinated. Eighty-five percent of all Americans have received a stimulus check of \$1,400 through the American Rescue Plan. More than 160 million relief checks have been delivered.

Our economic recovery continues apace. The United States created more than a million jobs over the past 3 months—the most new jobs in a Presi-

dent's first hundred days in American history. And just this morning, we learned that jobless claims hit a new pandemic low for the third straight week. Today's numbers are an indication that our economy is back on track and should be going full throttle. America is turning the corner. America is turning the corner.

Over the first quarter, the American economy grew by 6.4 percent—6.4 percent. Under President Biden and Democratic majorities in Congress, America is turning the corner—6.4 percent growth, wow. That shows you that America is back, and that shows you that the kind of strong, active proposals that we Democrats have made are the right direction for the country and have the support throughout the country of Democrats, Independents, Republicans because it is the right thing to do—the right thing to do.

The story of the first hundred days is a story about shots going into arms, checks going into pockets, life getting back to normal, and the economy picking up a lot of steam. After one of the most difficult years in history, we have made extraordinary progress.

President Biden spoke last night about how and where we can build on that strong foundation. We can't rest. We have a lot more to do. We want to keep this country going at a strong rate of growth, creating new jobs, making America healthier. We want to continue to do that. We are not just going to stop with the ARP. We can't.

President Biden proposed common-sense investments and policies that will provide a pathway to success for working people and for America as a

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S2311

whole. In particular, the President's focus on jobs, middle-class incomes, and helping families and workers succeed in a 21st-century economy was very much welcomed.

America is breathing a sigh of relief to see Joe Biden in that chair and not the previous President, who just all too often, even in those speeches where he was supposed to rise to the occasion, appealed to the worst instincts of people.

The President's plan—President Biden's plan—will help restore that once innate American optimism that has really been shaken for the last 4 years. Now the Congress must act. And, as majority leader, I intend for the Senate to take up legislation to make President Biden's vision a reality.

Truthfully, a lot of what President Biden proposed last night should be bipartisan. Just because a Democratic President proposed a jobs and infrastructure plan doesn't mean jobs and infrastructure are Democratic issues. Just because a Democratic President proposed a comprehensive plan to address childcare and education and workforce training doesn't mean those are just Democratic issues. My Republican colleagues, in one way or another, have joined Democrats on legislation in those subject areas for years.

President Biden spoke at length about the need to outcompete China. That is something our two parties have long agreed on and a topic the Senate will address in the next work period.

Even on the very difficult subjects like police reform, gun safety, immigration, bipartisan compromise—strong bipartisan compromise, strong legislation coming out of bipartisan compromise—is never out of reach.

Senator MURPHY continues to discuss bipartisan safety measures with Senator CORNYN and others. Senators BOOKER and DURBIN continue to discuss bipartisan policing reform with Senator SCOTT, KAREN BASS, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, and many others.

Just this morning, I met with George Floyd's brother, Eric Garner's mother, and Mr. Ben Crump, the lawyer for the family of George Floyd, and I told them that we are committed to getting meaningful, strong reform done—hopefully, in a bipartisan way, if we can.

Here on the Senate floor, we are proving that our two parties can work together on legislation, including on some of the issues that President Biden mentioned. Today's vote offers a great example. This afternoon, the Senate is going to vote on a bipartisan water infrastructure bill. We have agreed with the Republican minority to consider several amendments first, including three Republican amendments. I promised my caucus and the country that we would try to do things in a more open way, where amendments would be debated on the floor. We did that last week on the anti-Asian hate crimes legislation. We are doing it today on the water bill, and we hope to do it on

the comprehensive America COMPETES Act when we come back next week.

So the bottom line is very simple: We are moving forward wherever we can in a bipartisan way.

I expect the Senate will pass the water infrastructure bill with a resounding bipartisan vote after the amendments are debated. So let it be a signal to our Republican colleagues that Senate Democrats want to work together on infrastructure when and where we can.

Certainly, the water bill is not the only example of bipartisan legislation this Congress. As I mentioned, a few weeks ago, nearly the entire Senate stood together to pass legislation to combat the recent surge in hate crimes, particularly against Americans of Asian descent, 94 to 1—94 to 1.

And just yesterday, the Senate passed, with bipartisan support, a measure to reinstate critical rules to reduce the emissions of methane into our atmosphere. It was the first significant action the Senate has taken to combat climate change in at least a decade, probably much more.

Even though our two parties have been divided in the past on the subject of climate change, we can no longer afford to have those differences foil our progress. The methane CRA must be the first—the first of many steps we take to tackle climate change.

So these past few months have provided a great example of what the Senate can do. The American people deserve a Congress that works and produces the kinds of change that Americans are demanding. President Biden pointed the way. He pointed the way forward on a number of issues last night. Now it is up to us, here in the Senate and in the Congress, to make progress, the progress for the American people, a reality.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 69.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Andrea Joan Palm, of Wisconsin, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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 senior assistant 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 Executive Calendar No. 69, Andrea Joan Palm, of Wisconsin, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Michael F. Bennet, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Patrick J. Leahy, Martin Heinrich, Catherine Cortez Masto, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Christopher Murphy, Christopher A. Coons, Tammy Baldwin, Tammy Duckworth, Chris Van Hollen, Tim Kaine, Thomas R. Carper, Amy Klobuchar, Margaret Wood Hassan.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 65.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Cynthia Minette Marten, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Education.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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 senior assistant 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 Executive Calendar No. 65, Cynthia Minette Marten, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Education.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Michael F. Bennet, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Patrick J. Leahy, Martin Heinrich, Catherine Cortez Masto, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Christopher Murphy, Christopher A. Coons, Tammy Baldwin, Tammy Duckworth, Chris Van Hollen, Tim Kaine, Thomas R. Carper, Amy Klobuchar, Margaret Wood Hassan.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, April 29, be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.