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## Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, our souls long for You, for we find strength and joy in Your presence. Guide our lawmakers to put their trust in You, seeking in every undertaking to know Your will. Lord, when they go through difficulties, may they remember that with Your help they can accomplish the seemingly impossible. Give them a faith that will trust You even when the darkness is blacker than a hundred midnights. May they renew their commitment to You, finding strength and courage from Your guidance. Inspire them to always trust You to direct their steps.

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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

### HEALTHCARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, 7 years ago, Democrats forced ObamaCare on the American people. It was supposed to lower health costs, but, of course, they skyrocketed. It was supposed to provide more health options, but they plummeted.

At ObamaCare's launch, millions lost the health plans they liked and were

promised they could keep. In the years since, Americans have continued to lose access to plans, hospitals, and doctors they know and they trust.

Now ObamaCare teeters on the edge of total collapse, threatening to drag even more of the men and women we represent right down with it. That shouldn't be an acceptable outcome to any of us. It certainly is not acceptable to me.

I made a commitment to the people I represent. I told the people of Kentucky that I would vote to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare. The Senate did so in 2015, but President Obama wielded his veto pen. The Senate can do so again now, and President Trump will use his pen to sign such legislation.

The first step this time, the first vote we will take soon, is on whether or not to begin the debate at all—whether to have the debate. I believe my mandate from the people of Kentucky is to vote yes, and I certainly intend to do so.

I know many colleagues feel the same. I know many of us have waited literally years for this moment to finally arrive, and, at long last, it has. I urge every colleague to join me.

I know many have ideas on how to improve healthcare. Some of these ideas have real potential. Others, like applying temporary bandaids or quadrupling down on ObamaCare, are not going to move us forward. That doesn't mean Senators shouldn't have the chance to offer those ideas.

The only way we will have an opportunity to consider ideas is if Senators are allowed to offer and debate them. That means voting to begin the open amendment process. That means voting to kick off a robust debate in which Senators from all parties can represent the views of their constituents. It means voting to proceed, and that will occur tomorrow.

ObamaCare has been a disaster from the start. The added tragedy is the utter predictability of it all. Repub-

licans warned about higher costs and fewer choices. We warned that Americans would lose their plans. We warned that ObamaCare would inevitably collapse under its own weight.

Our concerns were all waved away all the time. It turns out that we were right to be concerned. ObamaCare has hurt the people we represent. We have seen all the statistics—the higher costs and the reduced choices—but this is about more than just numbers on a page. What we are talking about here are the lives of real people, constituents of ours who have struggled under this failed leftwing experiment literally for years.

Through calls, letters, meetings, and dozens of healthcare forums across my State, thousands of Kentuckians have shared their ObamaCare horror stories. I have seen the pain in their eyes. I have heard their struggles to make ends meet. I have come to the Senate floor time and again to relay their heartbreaking stories. I know many colleagues have done the same.

Our constituents deserve better than the pain ObamaCare has brought them. They deserve a new direction on healthcare. When that vote comes, I will keep my commitment to vote to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare. I will vote yes on the motion to proceed. I urge all of our colleagues to do the same.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

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



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