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Senate

The Senate met at 3 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 and sovereign God, the Earth in its fullness belongs to You. Teach us to live by Your precepts and follow Your plans. Guide our lawmakers in the challenging decisions they face. May they build up rather than tear down, using their powers to keep dreams from becoming nightmares. Give them the wisdom to know that history will judge them by whether they act with courage or cowardice.

Lord, lead our Senators in their efforts to guide our citizens to the better angels of our nature. May our lawmakers make the commitment to stand for right though the heavens fall.

And, Lord, we pray for those affected by Hurricane Harvey and for those bracing for Hurricane Irma.

We pray in Your merciful 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.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1757

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1757) to strengthen border security, increase resources for enforcement of immigration laws, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

HURRICANE HARVEY DISASTER RELIEF AND OTHER ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I want to begin by extending the Senate's heartfelt sympathies to those affected by Hurricane Harvey. We have seen the devastation across Texas, Louisiana, and the gulf coast. We know the recovery will not be easy, nor will it be quick.

We also understand the Federal Government's important role in assisting impacted communities. Last week, the President submitted a supplemental emergency funding request that will allow this critical work to continue. It will also allow our country to be better prepared for future natural disasters. It is especially important, given the potential for another major hurricane to strike our country this very week.

As I said when the President submitted his emergency funding request, the Senate will work closely with his administration and the House of Representatives to deliver that much needed relief. I am glad to see the House Appropriations Committee has already taken important steps to get us there, and I look forward to the House sending over legislation so the Senate can act on it as soon as possible.

I know that securing this emergency funding is very important for the

President, and I know that preventing a default or shutdown amidst such a historic natural disaster is also very important to him—and even more so now with another major hurricane on the way.

These are the President's immediate priorities: pass disaster relief, prevent a default, and fund the government. These are my immediate priorities as well, and I am sure all of our colleagues feel the same way. We have to get all three of these things done, and we have to do it very quickly.

In the case of the debt limit, we need to act quickly, given the new uncertainty from the large costs of storm recovery. As the President's Budget Director wrote in his letter to Congress last week, "Given the need for additional spending as a result of disaster response and initial recovery from Hurricane Harvey, the Administration continues to urge Congress to act expeditiously to ensure that the debt ceiling does not affect these critical response and recovery efforts. Otherwise it may not be possible to get those critical resources to Americans who desperately need them."

Here is why. As Treasury Secretary Mnuchin explained, "[O]ur first priority is to make sure that the state gets money, it is critical, and to do that we need to make sure we raise the debt limit. So if Congress appropriates the money, but I don't have the ability to borrow more money and pay for it, we're not going to be able to get that money to the state."

He called for Congress to "put politics aside" and get these things done as quickly as possible. That was the Secretary of the Treasury.

I look forward to continuing to discuss these important issues with the President's team and congressional leaders of both parties at the White House tomorrow. I look forward to discussing other important and shared priorities as well.

Nominees, for instance. It was good to see the Senate clear a large package

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



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