



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2017

No. 154

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

Holy God, who causes wars to cease, bring peace to our Nation and world. Let that peace first begin in our hearts.

Use our lawmakers to bring a spirit of concord instead of chaos to our world. May they set aside time each day to be still in Your presence. Lord, help them to know that time spent with You is never wasted. Permit this daily contact with You to motivate them to exalt You in their lives, as You use them to provide examples of how people can live if they put their trust completely in You.

Lord God of Hosts, continue to abide with us in sunshine and shadows. And Lord, be especially with the people of Puerto Rico.

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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The majority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night on television, we saw a stark contrast between two different visions of healthcare in our country. One is an

idea that is gaining increasing currency with our friends on the other side of the aisle. Some call it single payer. Others try to dress it up with poll-tested PR labels.

No matter what you call it, at its core, here is what it is: a massive expansion of a failed idea, a quadrupling down on the failures of ObamaCare, a totally government-run system that would rip health insurance plans away from even more Americans and take away even more of their personal healthcare decisions. The costs of implementing it would be astronomical. The taxes required to pay for it would be sky high. Yet, after years of ObamaCare's failures—its higher costs, diminished choices, collapsing markets—it seems this is the best our Democratic friends can come up with—not a new idea but quadrupling down on an old one that has already failed. What a contrast with the general approach Senators GRAHAM and CASSIDY and many other Republicans have pursued.

We think the American people deserve a better way forward—like returning more power from the Federal Government to the States where Americans actually live, allowing for reforms that can actually lower costs and improve care, and actually moving beyond the growing failures of a failed law called ObamaCare.

As I said, what we saw last night reminds us of this stark contrast in vision. It is an important debate for our country. It is one that will certainly continue.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, we have seen all the serious problems facing the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands as a result of recent hurricanes. The damage has been terrible. The latest hurricane was especially devastating.

We want the people of Puerto Rico and the islands to know that we are thinking of them, and, more importantly, we want them to know that we will continue to work with FEMA, the Department of Defense, and the rest of the administration to help in the recovery.

I expect we will hear more soon on what additional resources will be necessary in Puerto Rico and elsewhere in the paths of the storms. The recovery effort is certainly not going to be easy. It is not going to be quick. But we are here to do our part.

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.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1519, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 165, S. 1519, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the last few days, three Republican Senators have publicly stated that they

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S6097