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Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, from whom all desires and good counsels proceed, rise mercifully upon our darkened hearts, and deliver us from the trench warfare of yet another government shutdown. Wipe out all our old, secret, and selfish desires so that we may be true instruments for Your glory. Lord, remind our lawmakers that You are our strength and that those who abandon You cannot ultimately prevail.

Be near to this Nation, O Lord. We are Your children and find our protection in You.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 2, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN, a Sen-

ator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BOOZMAN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

CHILD PROTECTION IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2017

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 695, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 695, a bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a voluntary national criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

(Mr. GARDNER assumed the Chair.)

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

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to wish my colleagues happy new year. It is a time for new beginnings. Tomorrow, we will kick off the 116th Congress.

Of course, there is urgent business that the new House and the new Senate will need to tackle immediately. Democrats will finally have to get serious about border security so a government funding agreement can be reached that can pass the House, earn 60 votes in the Senate, and get a Presidential signature. All three of those things are needed to make a law. One partisan vote in the House tomorrow is not going to solve anything.

I made it clear to the Speaker that we are not interested in having show votes in the Senate. We are interested in bringing up something the House has passed, 60 Senators will support, and the President will sign; in other words, make a law.

The legislation House Democrats are reportedly planning to introduce and have voted on tomorrow will not be a serious contribution to the negotiations that are going on between the administration and the incoming Democratic majority in the House. It isn't comprehensive. It ignores the needs of border security. It is exactly the kind of proposal you would expect if the incoming House Democrats were choosing to stage a political sideshow rather than doing the hard work of helping to govern the country; in other words, it is a total nonstarter.

Will these new Democrats come to Washington ready to roll up their sleeves, work together, and make laws or are they going to waste time on partisan show votes that will do nothing to move the country in a forward direction? That is the question, political performance art or responsible governance?

We will get an early signal in the next few days, but let me make it perfectly clear one more time, as I have

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



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