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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Father of love, whose presence and power is revealed to the hearts that long for Your guidance, we thank You for the gift of this day. May we use this borrowed time for Your glory.

As our lawmakers strive to honor You, may they work with commendable zeal, knowing that life's evening is coming when their labor will be done. Lord, give them the wisdom to keep Your words in their hearts, providing them with a lamp for their feet and a light for their paths.

Continue to be our strength and shield. May we think of You consistently and trust You constantly.

We pray in Your loving 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 7, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 1628

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1628) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2017.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

SANCTIONS LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Senators today will have an opportunity to advance important bipartisan Iran sanctions legislation. As we consider this bill, we anticipate that amendments addressing Russia sanctions are likely to be offered. I am encouraged that the chairmen of the Foreign Relations and Banking Committees, Senator CORKER and Senator CRAPO, have already been in discussions with their respective ranking

members to work toward a bipartisan agreement. I support that effort, and I will have more to say about the underlying legislation tomorrow.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on one other matter, later today President Trump will visit Cincinnati to discuss the importance of our Nation's inland waterways. Kentucky is home to over 1,900 miles of navigable inland waterways, which, in addition to adding majestic beauty to my State, are also vital to thousands of jobs in the Commonwealth.

In recent years, over 95 million tons of cargo and agricultural products have been transported across these water trade routes. Our many levees, docks, and dams represent crucial infrastructure that play an important role in our regional and national economy.

I am proud of the work Congress has done in the past to protect our Nation's waterways, like passing the Water Resources Development Act by a bipartisan majority last year in order to support infrastructure, enhance commerce, and maintain American ecosystems.

As President Trump continues to release his plans for our Nation's infrastructure, I look forward to working with the administration and colleagues in the Senate to protect and improve the many roads, bridges, airports, and waterways that serve people and jobs all across our country.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 722 occur at 1:45 p.m. today, and if cloture is invoked, time postcloture count as if invoked at 10:30 a.m.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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



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Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

SANCTIONS LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first on Iran and Russia: This week we will be considering bipartisan legislation to impose sanctions on Iran for its ballistic missile testing, for its human rights abuses, and for its overt support of terrorism. I support this and look forward to a vote on the measure. It is important we do it.

I also understand that the majority leader will consent to an amendment vote alongside that bill on bipartisan Russia sanctions legislation. There is a broad bipartisan consensus for moving forward on tough sanctions against Russia. Russia defied the sovereignty of the Ukraine with the annexation of Crimea. It has been accused of human rights abuses including propping up the brutal Assad regime in Syria, and of course the intelligence community has confirmed that Russia interfered with our democracy.

I appreciate that the majority leader has committed to having a vote on Russia sanctions, and I thank so many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for pushing this issue. It is the right thing to do, and I appreciate them doing it.

I strongly believe that Russia's sanctions legislation needs to do three important things. First, we must codify existing sanctions on Russia; second, we need to give Congress a chance to review any decision by this administration before sanctions are lifted; and, third, we need to impose tough, new sanctions on Russia for its attack on our democracy.

Two pieces of legislation, one posted by the two lead sponsors, Senators McCAIN and CARDIN, the other by Senators GRAHAM and CARDIN—both bipartisan and both, I believe, with at least 10 cosponsors from each side of the aisle—do these things. What we have suggested to the leader is that we put those two bills together and combine them, tweak them a little bit, and move forward. We await the answer from the majority leader on our proposal.

It is certainly our responsibility and the responsibility of this Congress to vote on the tough Russia sanctions bill

as a response to Russia's persistent violations of international norms and agreements.

If we do nothing on Russia or if we have a weak bill, we will not accomplish that goal, and Mr. Putin will continue to do everything he is doing. We know sanctions have bite with Russia. If the Russians see that this Congress, in a bipartisan way, is resolute and strong, it will make a difference, and I hope we move forward.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, there are many subjects in this very quickly changing world in which we live. The next subject is infrastructure.

Today, President Trump will continue his infrastructure week in talking about inland waterways. I would like to repeat that Democrats welcome a discussion about these issues. Democrats have argued in favor of a large infrastructure package to address our crumbling roads and bridges, our levees, our dams, our ports, and our locks for a long time. While we disagreed with President Trump on a great many things during the campaign, I think many of my colleagues thought that when Mr. Trump was elected, we could find some common ground on the topic of infrastructure.

Needless to say, so far, the President's actions on infrastructure have been a disappointment. In 6 months, the President has not given any real details about his infrastructure plan. The most he has done is endorse an off-the-shelf plan to privatize air traffic control. In fact, he actually cut infrastructure spending in his budget by over \$200 billion. Now, during what they have termed "infrastructure week," the White House has only proposed to privatize much of our infrastructure.

Today, I expect more of the same—bold promises, few details. What details we do hear will likely be about how large financiers should decide where and how to build American infrastructure. That has never happened before. The approach will not address the very broad infrastructure needs we have. Financiers will not pay to finance infrastructure projects from which they cannot make a buck. It is their right to seek a profit—that is what businesses do and are supposed to do—but there is no such thing as a free lunch. They are going to need to get recompense when they lay out money. That kind of approach will not fix our water sewer systems. It will not expand rural broadband. It will not fix our energy grid. It will do one thing—lead to Trump tolls from one end of America to the other.

After the election, we stood ready to work with the President on a real bill, provided it would not be just tax breaks for private financiers or roll back labor and environmental protections. We even wrote a detailed blueprint on how to spend \$1 trillion. That

was the President's number. It would create 13 to 15 million jobs. It would rebuild our infrastructure—large parts of it—from one end of America to the other. It would not leave out rural areas that will never benefit from any kind of private financing, as Senators BARRASSO and MORAN have made clear.

We sent it to the White House and never heard a peep. I have talked to the President several times on the phone and said that I want to work with him on infrastructure—no response. Now we have their plan without any consultation from Democrats. Even with talk that they should do this on reconciliation, there has been no Democratic support or votes or input. Just as their doing things by reconciliation is tying the Republican Party in knots on healthcare, it does not bode too well for them on tax reform. It will mess up infrastructure as well.

So I hope the President drops his go-at-it-alone infrastructure push and instead decides to sit down and talk to Democrats about the issue. We agree wholeheartedly on the problem and its magnitude. Let's sit down and start talking about what solutions actually make sense. Let's not have a few financiers who whisper into the President's ear determine our infrastructure policy—because it will be a flop.

TRUMP CARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, on another matter: healthcare.

Yesterday, the insurer Anthem pulled out of exchanges in Ohio, citing the administration's decision to hold cost-sharing reduction payments hostage as the reason for its exit. Anthem joins a growing list of health insurers that have chosen to leave the 2018 marketplace or considered raising their rates as a result of the uncertainty the President and Republicans are causing—deliberately, in my judgment—in our healthcare system.

The President and Republicans blame ObamaCare for insurers leaving the marketplace. It is simply not true. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said it is the "substantial uncertainty about enforcement of the individual mandate and about future payments of the cost-sharing subsidies" that have led insurers to withdraw from the current marketplace. AHIP, which is hardly a Democratic group—it is the largest trade group of insurers and is completely nonpartisan—said the uncertainty about cost-sharing payments was "the single most destabilizing factor in the individual market."

The Affordable Care Act is not falling under its own weight. It is being sabotaged deliberately by President Trump and Republicans who have been whipping up all of this uncertainty to gain political advantage, to say: "I told you so." They are hurting millions of people. That is really wrong.

After downplaying weeks of expectations in moving forward, yesterday our