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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, August 5, 2022, at 3 p.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2022

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our shield, look with favor upon our Senators today. Guide them around the obstacles that hinder their progress, uniting them for the common good of this great land. Lord, free them from anxiety and fear as they put their trust in You. Enable them to go from strength to strength, fulfilling Your purpose for their lives in this generation.

Guide them to use their abilities to accomplish Your holy will. Striving to please You, empower them to stand for right and leave the consequences to You.

We pray in Your holy 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. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, August 3, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LUJÁN 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 PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 5376

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

The ACTING 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 (H.R. 5376) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of S. Con. Res. 14.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant 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.

ABORTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, two sets of numbers show the winds blowing in the Democratic direction: first, the numbers revealed by the vote last night in the State of Kansas and, second, new polling data that shows how overwhelmingly popular the Inflation Reduction Act is in the minds of the American people. These numbers show winds blowing in Democrats' direction on the issue of choice and on the issue of the Inflation Reduction Act.

Today, I want to talk about both. So let me begin with last night's election in Kansas. Last night, in the American heartland, the people of Kansas sent an unmistakable message to MAGA Republican extremists: Back off women's fundamental rights. In the first vote on abortion rights since the MAGA Supreme Court's reprehensible decision to take away constitutional rights protected by *Roe v. Wade*—and which was cheered by many Republicans here in the Senate—voters in Kansas decided by a double-digit margin to preserve the freedom of choice in their State Constitution.

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



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What happened in red Kansas last night is a reflection of what is happening across the country and what will continue to occur through the November elections. Voters are revolting against the extreme MAGA Republican policies that ban abortions with no exceptions for rape or incest and send women and doctors to jail.

Last night's election was also a dark reminder that MAGA Republicans are running the show within the GOP. Their views are spreading through the party like a cancer—views that are repugnant not only to most Americans but, as we saw last night, even to many Republican voters.

And Kansas was just the start. If it is going to happen in Kansas, it is going to happen in a whole lot of States. The strong pro choice turnout we saw last night in Kansas will continue well into the fall, and Republicans who side with these extremist MAGA policies that attack women's rights do so at their own political risk.

NATO

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on NATO, today the Senate will be voting on the resolution of ratification for the Finnish and Swedish applications to join NATO. This is a very important vote. The NATO vote is a very important vote for American security around the world.

Finland's and Sweden's membership will strengthen NATO even further and is all the more urgent given Russian aggression, given Putin's immoral and unjustified war in Ukraine. Putin is strengthening the NATO alliance, and nothing shows it better than the vote we will have this afternoon. With the vote, the Senate will come together in a bipartisan manner and bolster the Western alliance in the face of growing authoritarianism.

When Leader McCONNELL and I met with the Finnish President and the Swedish Prime Minister back in May, we made a commitment to get this done as quickly as possible before the August recess, and today we are keeping that commitment by working together.

Despite the differences between both sides, I have always said that when the opportunity arises, Democrats would be willing to work with Republicans in a bipartisan way to get things done. In the past few weeks, we have seen an amazing string of bipartisan achievements—a bipartisanship that hasn't been seen—with the passage of so many important bipartisan bills in such a short time.

Together, we secured a historic investment in American science and industry. We just passed the largest expansion of veterans' benefits in decades. We passed significant gun legislation. And, today, we will work together to bolster the NATO alliance.

So, again, under Democratic leadership, we want to work in a bipartisan way whenever we can, but when we

can't, we will move forward on issues like climate and prescription drugs that we feel are very important, which I will talk about in a minute.

Finally, as I mentioned yesterday, I invited the Ambassadors and other diplomats from Finland and Sweden to join us in the Gallery during our debate and votes today. So let's get this done by this afternoon.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, on the Inflation Reduction Act, this is the second place where the numbers that we read this morning show that the Democrats are on the move and that Republicans are in retreat.

Today's news provides another bevy of reminders of why the Inflation Reduction Act is not only bold and commonsense but is extremely popular with the American people.

This morning, five former Treasury Secretaries—including former Secretary Hank Paulson, who served under President George W. Bush—released a statement praising the Inflation Reduction Act and urging Congress to move quickly to secure its passage. The bipartisan group wrote that the Inflation Reduction Act “will help increase American competitiveness, address our climate crisis, lower costs for families, and fight inflation—and should be passed immediately by Congress.”

The bipartisan group of Treasury Secretaries also affirmed what Democrats have been saying for days: The Inflation Reduction Act will not—no matter how much our Republican colleagues argue to the contrary—increase taxes for any family making less than \$400,000 a year.

Again, our proposals call for closing loopholes that have long enabled the biggest companies in America to avoid paying their fair share. And even former Republican Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson is now calling on Congress to pass the Democratic agenda. He is in very good company. This morning, a poll by Navigator also showed the Inflation Reduction Act as overwhelmingly popular—overwhelmingly popular—in the minds of the American people.

According to this poll, 65 percent of Americans support the proposals in the bill, compared to only 24 percent who oppose. More than double the people support the act than oppose it. It includes 60 percent of Independent voters and even 40 percent of Republican voters. So America is on our side. They want us to pass this bill.

Now, contrast the Democrats' agenda to what we have been hearing from the other side. While Democrats want to make healthcare more affordable, just yesterday the junior Senator from Wisconsin argued that instead of strengthening Medicare and Social Security, we should put them on the chopping block.

Hear that, citizens of Wisconsin, citizens of America? The junior Senator

from Wisconsin wants to put Medicare and Social Security on the chopping block. He has argued that the benefits, which millions of Americans rely on every day, shouldn't be guaranteed but should be subject to partisan infighting here in Washington.

He would like to revoke the guarantee of Medicare and Social Security and make them discretionary. Well, you know what happens when we make things discretionary around here? All too often they get cut or even eliminated. We don't want to do that. But the Senator from Wisconsin said we should. So senior citizens of America, listen loud and clear: Senator JOHNSON called for making these programs discretionary.

For decades, they have not been. They have been programs that when you become 65, you get it. It is not up to the whims of one Congress or another.

So we will fight as hard as we can to prevent the Republicans, led by the Wisconsin junior Senator, from pulling out the rug from under seniors. We will fight the MAGA Republican politicians who want to gut these critical programs.

It is comments like these that show how out of touch the other side has become. While Republicans were perfectly willing to blow a \$2 trillion hole in our deficit in order to give tax cuts to the ultrarich and to the big corporations, now some of them are saying Medicare and Social Security should no longer be guaranteed.

Of course, our Democratic proposal, the Inflation Reduction Act, is vastly different. We will protect healthcare. We will lower the price of prescription drugs and make energy cheaper while making the largest investment in clean energy ever.

These are things that Americans support. These are things that our country needs. And these are things that we are going to get done when we pass the Inflation Reduction Act in the coming days.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. 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 Republican leader is recognized.

FLOODING IN KENTUCKY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, tragic flooding continues to devastate