



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 168

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022

No. 38

Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Mighty God, help us. Protect us and preserve lives. Be a shield for the nations of our world. Do not abandon those who put their trust in You. Lord, provide our Senators with a durable faith that will cling to You even during a raging tempest. Thank You for being the God of our salvation who refuses to permit evil to triumph. Be merciful to us, dear God, and grant us Your peace, for we find joy when we take refuge in You.

We pray in Your mighty 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

The Senator from Georgia.

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

The 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 3717, S. 3723, AND S. 3724

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand that there are three bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for a second time en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3717) to withdraw normal trade relations treatment from, and apply certain provisions of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 to, products of the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 3723) to impose sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation in response to the invasion of Ukraine, to confiscate assets of the Russian Federation and remit those assets to the legitimate Government of Ukraine, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 3724) to provide emergency supplemental appropriations in response to the crisis in Ukraine, and for other purposes.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now for my remarks.

Earlier this morning, it was an honor—a truly rare honor in my time in public service—to meet with Judge Jackson for the first time since her nomination to the Supreme Court. Before the meeting, I said Judge Jackson was brilliant and beloved, but now that I have met her, I will add another word: “belongs.” She is not only bril-

liant and beloved but belongs on the Supreme Court.

I believe her nomination certainly merits a good number of votes from both parties, and I hope we see that as we move forward in the process. I am certain that when other Senators have a chance to meet with Judge Jackson, they will understand why she is beyond qualified to replace Justice Breyer on the Supreme Court.

For one, if confirmed, Judge Jackson would have one of the most diverse professional backgrounds of any sitting Justice. Throughout her career, she has been a Federal defender; worked in private practice; sat on the U.S. Sentencing Commission; served as a district judge and as a circuit court judge on the DC Circuit; and of course, she was a clerk to Justice Breyer, the very same Justice whose seat she would now fill.

As a district judge, Judge Jackson rendered more than 550 rulings and was rarely reversed by higher courts, illustrating her evenhanded application of the law and facts. Then, when you meet with her, you see that she has brought that broad experience and adopted it into her being. She empathizes with people. She emphasized to me that as a judge, she should try to understand both sides. You could tell, when you met her, that she really believed it and, since, has sort of integrated all of her experiences into her being. She had an incredibly phenomenal interview, as well as has an amazing record.

For all of these reasons, Judge Jackson's nomination has already won support from individuals and organizations across the political spectrum. She is supported by civil rights advocates; she is supported by conservative judges and lawyers; she is supported by the Fraternal Order of Police. Someone who was a public defender is now supported by the Fraternal Order of Police? You can't get much better than that. And she is supported by scores of

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



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men and women who had the honor of working with her over the years.

I have gone through her record. You can hardly find a single person she has met, as she has walked through life and met people, who has said a bad thing about her. And when you meet her, you can see why. When you meet her, you can see why.

America will be much better off with someone like Judge Jackson on the Supreme Court. Our country deserves someone deeply experienced, broadly supported, and someone whose elevation as the first Black woman Justice signifies a long overdue step toward perfecting our Union.

I am grateful to have had the chance to have met with the judge. I thank her for her time this morning, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to elevate this outstanding nominee to the Supreme Court very soon.

In having met her and having studied her record, she deserves the support of Members from the other side of the aisle, and I am hopeful she will get a good number of them to support her.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the State of the Union, last night, before a joint session of Congress, President Biden made the case to the Nation and to the world that in the face of immense challenges, the United States remains strong and ready to meet the tests of our time.

In an hour-long speech delivered before a Chamber that was much fuller than last year, President Biden demonstrated, yet again, the kind of leader he has been all of his life: optimistic, unifying, decent, and honest. He is honest about where we are today and where we must go. I applaud President Biden for laying out a bold, strong, and comprehensive vision that will resonate with the vast majority of Americans.

In particular, I was glad the President focused on three important things. First, he united the parties in supporting Ukraine and against Putin. Second, he showed how under Democratic leadership America has turned the corner on COVID. Third, he confronted the urgency of lowering costs for American families, something our caucus has been focusing on.

First, I was glad that President Biden united the room, the country, and the world in opposing Vladimir Putin and his savage assaults on Ukraine. It is obvious that the President has done an incredibly good job in unifying the Europeans and the West as a united front against Putin. That was felt by people on both sides of the aisle.

When the President called on the Chamber to stand up and applaud Oksana Markarova, the Ukrainian Ambassador, the feeling in the room reminded me of the unity we all felt after 9/11. But just like on 9/11, that unity comes with the sobering recognition

that the scale of Putin's brutality in Ukraine is worsening. Ukraine's State Emergency Service reported this morning that more than 2,000 civilians—2,000 men, women, and children—children—have now been killed as a result of Putin's savage brutality.

What is happening in Ukraine is carnage, and the blood of every one of those innocent people falls on the hands of Vladimir Putin and on his band of crony oligarchs. This evil man must be stopped.

As an important step, last night, the Senate unanimously passed bipartisan legislation that will protect America, our government, and our critical infrastructure from cyber attacks. Finally, the holds were lifted from the other side of the aisle, and we passed unanimously this cyber legislation. It is more important now than ever before because Putin is brandishing a cyber weapon.

Cyber warfare is truly one of the dark arts perfected by Putin's authoritarian regime. It is a weapon he is happy to employ around the world. When our authorities in government know of these attacks, they can prepare against future attacks. They will know who is attacking, where they are attacking, how they are attacking, and that will allow them to strengthen our defenses against future cyber attacks.

Many in the industry—at times, I believe even the Chamber of Commerce—were not for this legislation, but with the urgency of the moment—the need to protect ourselves from cyber attacks—finally, the Senate rose to the occasion. So I thank Senators PETERS and PORTMAN for getting this bill done.

The passage of this bill was little noticed because it came right before Congress adjourned for the State of the Union, but it is a giant step forward to protecting ourselves, and I am glad that we got it done last night. But, of course, we must do more.

The Senate must keep working on a bipartisan basis to pass a robust aid package in the upcoming omnibus so we can send an unmistakable message to Ukraine that we stand with them and a message to Putin that we stand against him. The quickest way we can assure that aid reaches Ukraine is through the omnibus, which needs to get done next week; so I am glad that we seem to be having bipartisan support to get that done.

Second, I was also glad President Biden showed how the country under Democratic leadership is turning the corner in the fight against COVID-19. By passing legislation last year to fund vaccines, expand testing, and support our healthcare workers, we are beating this disease.

What the President said last night was absolutely correct in that we cannot—we cannot—have COVID control our lives anymore, but neither can we let our guard down. Right now, as cases are dropping across the board, Congress must pass more funding for vaccines, testing, and therapeutics.

“Therapeutics” is a word for medication that helps alleviate the virulence of COVID. Very few people who take the therapeutics have to be hospitalized. We also have to ensure that our doctors and nurses and healthcare workers are prepared in case another variant comes this way so that we can stay as close to normal as possible even if another variant arrives. We have to have an ample supply of vaccines, of therapeutics, and of testing ahead of time. We cannot wait. Some of our Republican colleagues seem to be saying: Oh, we don't need this now.

We do need it now while we still have the chance. If Congress waits until another variant arrives, it will be too late.

Let me say that again. Even as cases drop across the board, we cannot be complacent against COVID. Congress must pass more COVID funding now so we can be ready by funding vaccines, testing, therapeutics, and supporting our healthcare workers. If Congress waits until another variant arrives, it will be too late. So we need our Republican colleagues to join us in a bipartisan way, just as they are joining us on Ukraine.

Finally, I am glad that President Biden zeroed in on cutting costs for American families. A year into the President's first year, the economy is surging and creating an unprecedented number of jobs. But people are struggling because costs are also going up. Your wages are going up, but if the costs keep going up, it eats up those wage increases.

Now, why are costs up? Costs are up because of supply chain disruptions stemming from COVID and pent-up demand, as people during COVID didn't buy a lot of things. All the while, Americans are watching incredulously as some of our largest corporations are raising prices despite growing profits. In some cases, executives are seeing lavish pay increases, and in the end, Americans are footing the bill.

Senate Democrats will not stand for this, and we are working with the President to lower costs and build upon the wage growth we have seen over the past year. We are laser-focused on reducing America's costs, from lowering the costs of insulin so no one pays more than \$35 a month, to lowering the cost of all prescription drugs, to lowering the cost of meat at the grocery store, to fixing our ocean shipping lines so the bottlenecks don't raise their costs. Shipping costs have gone way up, as the President mentioned.

Do you know what else we can do to lower costs? We can innovate. Congress should continue working to finalize our bipartisan, bicameral jobs and supply chains bill so we can boost American manufacturing, solve our chip crisis, and make our country less dependent on foreign tech companies.

In short, despite everything the world faces, President Biden reminded supporters and critics alike why the American people entrusted him with