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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 3 p.m.

Senate

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for the years to come, continue to guide our lawmakers during these challenging times, infuse them with wisdom and energy so that they will not become discouraged by what sometimes seems overwhelming. Lord, show them the road that will lead to a desired destination, as You assure them of Your presence, love, and grace. Help them to defer to each other, to respect each other so that, by attitude and action, they will reflect Your divine will.

We pray in Your great 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 (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 23, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 6914

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. 6914) to require institutions of higher education to disseminate information on the rights of, and accommodations and resources for, pregnant students, and for other purposes.

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

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

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, and now to today's remarks. Senate negotiators continue their work on a truly significant undertaking: reaching a bipartisan agreement to protect America's national security, to strengthen our border, and to provide critical aid to Ukraine, Israel, and our friends and partners abroad, as well as humanitarian aid for the Palestinians in Gaza and humanitarian aid to other places around the world.

We are close to reaching a bipartisan agreement on the supplemental, but we are not there yet. Negotiators are still working through some outstanding items. All of us want to reach an agreement, but it is very important that we get this right. So I am heartened that negotiations are in a good place, even as we have more work to do.

I have stayed in close touch with my Senate colleagues, with the Republican leader, and with the White House, and we are all on the same page that we want to reach an agreement. The President said he is willing to work with Republicans in a big way on border security. For the last 2 months, Democrats have demonstrated that we are willing to have this very difficult debate.

It is not easy. In fact, border security is one of the most difficult things we

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



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have undertaken, but Democrats are serious about getting something done.

But as I have said from the beginning, any outcome on the border has to be bipartisan. It has to be something that can get 60 votes in the Senate. We believe we can get it done, so we are going to keep working.

Now, there are many on the hard right who are trying desperately to kill these negotiations before they even finish. Many of them are motivated by naked partisanship; others are taking cues from Donald Trump. These hard-right saboteurs talk on and on about the need to fix the border, but now they don't actually want to see a bipartisan solution on the border—which is the only kind of solution, of course, that can pass.

But here in the Senate, both sides have an obligation to make sure these hard-right voices stay in the minority. We must let the negotiators finish their work. Too much—too much—hangs in the balance for our national security, for our border, for our friends around the world.

This is especially true for the war in Ukraine. Very soon, we will reach the 2-year mark since Putin commenced his illegal invasion, and the war now stands at a turning point. American aid, which has been so crucial for helping our Ukrainian friends hold the line, has been exhausted. The only way to provide more aid is through Congressional action, and it is essential that Congress acts because as Ukraine's supplies run low, Russia's supplies are replenishing.

According to a report yesterday, weapons from North Korea are now making their way to the battlefield, including North Korean missiles. The more weapons from North Korea that enter the war, the more precious resources Ukraine will be forced to use to shoot these weapons down, resources that are already in short supply.

In fact, Ukrainian commanders have already said they have been forced to ration munitions because they don't know when—or if—another round of American aid is coming their way.

So, to my Senate colleagues, it is quite simple. As President Zelenskyy himself told us over a month ago, if the U.S. Congress approves more aid to Ukraine, they can win the war against Putin. But if Congress fails to act, Ukraine faces defeat.

And make no mistake, a defeat for Ukraine will make the world a more dangerous place for the United States. Whatever costs we bear to resist Putin today will be magnified in the future.

We dare not go down that road. We dare not shrink from our obligations to defend democracy in its hour of need.

Our friends in Ukraine need our help. So we must answer their call by finishing work on the supplemental.

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.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the goals of supplemental national security legislation are pretty straightforward. We need to restore security and order at our southern border. We need to help the fight against authoritarian aggression in Europe, we need to invest seriously in competition with our top strategic adversary. And we need to stand side by side with Israel and other allies to impose real costs and restore real deterrence against Iran and its terrorist proxies.

Keeping America safe, securing our interests, standing with our allies—it is a basic appeal to a fundamental governing responsibility. But, unfortunately, it is especially evident in the Middle East that the Biden administration and some of our colleagues here in the Congress have yet to muster the resolve and clarity to fulfill this responsibility. Three and a half months after Iran-backed terrorists slaughtered 1,200 Israelis on October 7, the resolve among some Washington Democrats to help our allies fight back seems to be flagging.

I have said repeatedly that Israel deserves the time, space, and support it needs to restore its security. But, increasingly, the administration and some of our colleagues have expressed a different sentiment—that America deserves the final say in how Israel conducts its defense.

Just consider the renewed fixation with rushing—rushing—to a two-state solution. First, why would any of us think it is a good idea to reward Hamas and the Palestinians who rejoiced on October 7 with a state? Who, I might ask, do our colleagues expect is ready to govern such a state?

We know the answer is not Hamas. Every time those terrorists have faced a choice between improving the lives of Palestinians and taking the lives of Israelis, Hamas has chosen the latter. Billions upon billions of dollars in international aid and yet the only thing Gaza's rulers appear to have chosen to invest in is lethal weapons and terror tunnels.

Hamas certainly doesn't want a two-state solution. It wants to destroy Israel "from the river to the sea."

Palestinians have endured the raw oppression of their supposed leaders' corruption and terrorism for generations. Make no mistake, the most prominent alternative to Hamas is not

substantially better than the darlings of Iran's terrorist network.

Leaders of the Palestinian Authority, from Arafat to Abu Mazen, have rejected every chance at an agreement to live in peace. The PA is also relentlessly and thoroughly corrupt. Their officials may skim off the top to line their own pockets rather than line terrorist tunnels with concrete like Hamas, but the result for average Palestinians is not dissimilar.

I cannot understand why some of my Democratic colleagues, including the chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, who pushed so hard to pass legislation combating global corruption, now want to shovel billions of taxpayer dollars to one of the most corrupt entities on the entire planet.

If we are serious about countering corruption, there is no choice. There is no better place to start than with the Palestinian Authority. If there is a path to peace between Israelis and Palestinians, it is not through rewarding terror. It is through new Palestinian leaders and reformed institutions focused on improving lives, not radicalizing a generation of martyrs to destroy Israel.

And yet some Washington Democrats seem infected by a new form of BDS. I don't mean the vile "Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions" agenda that seeks to delegitimize the Jewish State, although the growing prominence of this movement on the left is also truly worrisome. I mean "Bibi Derangement Syndrome"—"Bibi Derangement Syndrome." My colleagues seem to allow their personal feelings about Israel's democratically elected Prime Minister to cloud their views about Israel.

More recently, the American left is outraged that the Prime Minister would cast doubt on the Biden administration's desire to leap back into negotiations about a two-state solution. Perhaps they should listen to Israel's President, Isaac Herzog, a long-standing leader of the Israeli left.

Just last week, President Herzog put to rest any notion that Prime Minister Netanyahu is the obstacle to peace. "No Israeli in his right mind," he said, is focused on peace negotiations. He went on to explain that "Israelis lost trust in the peace process because they see that terror is glorified by our neighbors."

But he also reiterated a more fundamental point, one that my colleagues might do well to consider. Here is what he said: "The world has to face it point blank: there is an empire of evil emanating from Iran," and Iran's activities undermine any chance for peace and stability.

If we are serious about giving peace any hope of success, America must continue to stand with our ally Israel as it removes Hamas terrorists from any calculus of Palestinians' future. We must demand significant reforms of the Palestinian Authority, and we must lead the international effort to impose real—real—costs on Tehran until it changes its behavior.