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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, before You, nations rise and fall. They grow strong or wither by Your design. Help our Nation to embrace righteousness and to strive for unity and renewal. May America set an example of right living that will inspire other nations to follow You. Teach all nations the way of peace so we may plow up battlefields and pound weapons into liberation tools. Teach us to talk across boundaries as brothers and sisters united by Your love.

Today, help our Senators to work with a renewed sense of their accountability to You.

We pray in your sovereign 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 3, 2024.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. DUCKWORTH 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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

RIGHT TO CONTRACEPTION ACT— MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 400, S. 4381.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 400, S. 4381, a bill to protect an individual's ability to access contraceptives and to engage in contraception and to protect a health care provider's ability to provide contraceptives, contraception, and information related to contraception.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 400, S. 4381, a bill to protect an individual's ability to access contraceptives and to engage in contraception and to protect a health care provider's ability to provide contraceptives, contraception, and information related to contraception.

Charles E. Schumer, Edward J. Markey, Christopher Murphy, Chris Van Hollen, Richard Blumenthal, Jack Reed, Tammy Baldwin, Debbie Stabenow, Tina Smith, Tammy Duckworth, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan, John W. Hickenlooper, Catherine Cortez Masto, Christopher A. Coons, Jeanne Shaheen, Gary C. Peters.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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. Madam 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.

TRUMP TRIAL VERDICT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, last Thursday, a jury found former President Donald Trump guilty of 34 counts of falsifying business records as part of a hush money scheme. Former President Donald Trump is now a convicted felon.

The most important takeaway from this case is that nobody is above the law, including Donald Trump. The former President went through the same legal process that all Americans go through. He was tried according to the facts and the law and was found guilty—guilty—by a jury of his peers.

As Donald Trump considers his next steps, there should continue to be no outside political influence, intimidation, or interference in the case. I encourage Mr. Trump's supporters and critic alike to let the process move forward according to law.

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



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RIGHT TO CONTRACEPTION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now on reproductive care, this month, America marks a dark and somber anniversary—2 years since a radical MAGA majority on the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. The decision to overturn *Roe* will go down as one of the worst Supreme Court cases in modern times. It will be remembered as one of the most draconian reversals of individual liberty in American history.

There should be no question who brought our country to this crisis. It was Donald Trump and hard-right Republicans, who have made clear that they will not rest until freedom of choice is eliminated across the country.

Democrats will not stand for Republicans' relentless attacks on reproductive freedoms. This week, the Senate will begin our defense of freedom of choice with a vote to protect access to contraceptives.

Before the Memorial Day holiday, I began the process for the Senate to consider the Right to Contraception Act, led by Senators MARKEY and HIRONO. Today, I just filed cloture on the motion to proceed to that bill. Members should expect a vote moving forward on the Right to Contraception Act on Wednesday.

Federal protections for contraceptives are a critical piece of protecting American women's reproductive freedoms, and this legislation would codify the right to contraception into Federal law.

For those who think that Federal protections for birth control are unnecessary, just look at what is happening at the State level. Republican Governors in Virginia and Nevada have already vetoed bills to protect birth control, and the Arizona Legislature has blocked similar bills too. The Federal Government should absolutely have a say in ensuring every American has access to birth control if they need it.

There will be more action to come after that. Over the coming weeks, Senate Democrats will put reproductive freedoms front and center before this Chamber so that the American people can see for themselves who will stand up to defend their fundamental liberties.

The erosion of freedom of choice is perhaps the defining worry for tens of millions of Americans since the MAGA Court eliminated *Roe*.

Today, at least 20 States have near total bans or severe restrictions on abortion. Tens of millions of women lack access to reproductive care. Even services like IVF, which millions of Americans have relied on to have children, to start families, can no longer be assumed as totally safe.

None of this happened in a vacuum. This is all a direct result of Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans who made the repeal of *Roe* their North Star for decades, and Republicans aren't even hiding it. Donald Trump, in fact, said he was "proudly the person

responsible" for the disastrous *Roe* reversal.

Does anyone seriously think that if Donald Trump and Republicans get into power again that they won't try to restrict abortion and reproductive care even more? Of course they will. Of course they will. That is why it is more important now than ever that we pass legislation like the Right to Contraception Act to protect this vital lifeline for millions of women across the country.

This week and in future weeks, Senate Republicans will have to answer for their anti-abortion, anti-women agenda, and my Republican colleagues should know that the American people are closely watching.

BIG OIL

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on Big Oil, well, we just finished celebrating the Memorial Day holiday. On one hand, it is a solemn holiday, a remembrance of all who died to protect our country. On the other hand, of course, Memorial Day weekend is an unofficial start to summer. Schools go out on break, families and friends get together, and millions of Americans go on road trips. So it is not hard to feel the frustration, the sheer exasperation felt by millions when America's biggest oil companies rake in record profits but still raise prices at the pump. It is deeply, deeply unfair. And now we have reason to believe that in some cases it may be unlawful.

Last week, I joined with my Democratic colleagues calling on the Department of Justice to investigate the oil industry after the Federal Trade Commission uncovered evidence of price fixing and of collusion.

According to the FTC, Pioneer Natural Resources—one of the most important producers in the country—may have colluded unlawfully with the foreign nations of OPEC to limit production and artificially boost prices during the early days of the pandemic.

Much of the evidence in the FTC's complaint is redacted, but even what is public is very, very troubling. According to the FTC, Pioneer's former CEO worked extensively with OPEC as early as 2020 to limit production, assuring them that American companies who normally competed against each other were "working to keep output artificially low." Artificially low output means higher prices for Americans.

Pioneer's former CEO reportedly told his competitors that they need to "stay in line" and that "if anybody goes back to growth, [shareholders] will punish those companies." A month ago, he went as far as saying, "Even if oil gets to \$200 a barrel, the independent producers are going to be disciplined."

This strong-arming seems to have worked, unfortunately. Today, growth in U.S. oil output is down 50 percent since the pandemic, but the average household is paying \$500 more a year

per car because of possible collusion—\$500 more a year per car for gasoline because of possible collusion.

That is what frustrates Americans so much about Big Oil: Even when they are making money hand over fist, they will keep raising prices on us; they will keep squeezing us for everything we have got. And now, they may—may—have crossed the line into unlawful behavior.

So the DOJ needs to step in and determine if any laws against collusion or price fixing have been broken. At minimum, the American people deserve to know if Big Oil executives are conspiring with each other or with OPEC behind our back to illegally raise prices at the pump.

TRUMP TAX CUTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, on the Trump tax cuts, we knew from day one that Trump tax cuts stunk to high heaven, and now CBO has shown us they are even worse than we thought. Last month, the CBO reported that an extension of the 2017 Trump tax cuts would add a whopping \$4.6 trillion to the deficit.

Hear that deficit hawks on the other side of the aisle who keep complaining that the deficit is getting higher? The Trump tax cuts would add a whopping \$4.6 trillion to the deficit. That is 50 percent higher than original estimates.

The latest CBO report is a harsh reality check for the self-proclaimed fiscal hawks on the right who complain about the deficit. They complain about spending \$50 million to help feed kids, but they seem to have no concern about a tax cut that mainly goes to the wealthy and big corporations that increases the deficit by \$4.6 trillion.

It is another reminder why, at the end of the day, the Trump tax cuts were a dud for the economy and a political loser for the Republican Party.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.