



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2024

No. 119

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O Lord of our pilgrim years, this day brings us its concerns and duties. As our Senators serve You and country, make them aware that their attitudes, words, and actions influence the structure of events around our Nation and world.

Lord, help these representatives of freedom to master themselves, that they may be the servants of others. In these times of strain, keep them from magnifying the slights and stings that are a part of the legislative process. Lord, give them pure hearts and a passion to serve the American people with integrity, truth, and honor.

And, Lord, we thank You for the life and legacy of Representative Sheila Jackson Lee.

We pray in Your strong 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, July 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 PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH 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.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand that the Chair has an announcement to make.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate a communication regarding the resignation of Senator MENENDEZ.

Without objection, the letter will be printed in the RECORD and spread upon the Journal.

The letter follows:

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, DC, July 23, 2024.

Hon. PHIL MURPHY,
Governor of New Jersey, Office of the Governor,
Trenton, NJ.

DEAR GOVERNOR MURPHY: This is to advise you that I will be resigning from my office as the United States Senator from New Jersey, effective on the close of business on August 20, 2024.

This will give time for my staff to transition to other possibilities, transfer constituent files that are pending, allow for an orderly process to choose an interim replacement,

and for me to close out my Senate affairs.

While I fully intend to appeal the jury's verdict, all the way and including to the Supreme Court, I do not want the Senate to be involved in a lengthy process that will detract from its important work. Furthermore, I cannot preserve my rights upon a successful appeal, because factual matters before the ethics committee are not privileged. This is evidenced by the Committee's Staff Director and Chief Counsel being called to testify at my trial.

I am proud of the many accomplishments I've had on behalf of New Jersey, such as leading the federal effort for Superstorm Sandy recovery, preserving and funding Gateway and leading the federal efforts to help save our hospitals, State and municipalities, as well as New Jersey families through a once in a century COVID pandemic. These successes led you, Governor, to call me the "Indispensable Senator."

I thank the citizens of New Jersey for the extraordinary privilege of representing them in the United States Senate.

Sincerely,

ROBERT MENENDEZ,
United States Senator, New Jersey.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR EN BLOC—S. 4727 AND H.R. 8281

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4727) to amend title 5, United States Code, to clarify the nature of judicial review of agency interpretations of statutory and regulatory provisions.

A bill (H.R. 8281) to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to require proof of United States citizenship to register an individual to vote in elections for Federal office, 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S5159

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, for as long as I have known Joe Biden, I have known him to be a man of one thing: a man who fervently loves his country. From the moment he was elected to the New Castle County Council to his swearing in as Delaware's Senator at age 30, to his elevation as our Nation's 47th Vice President, and to his election as our 46th President, Joe Biden's North Star has not changed: serving the people of the United States of America.

This weekend, President Biden made the kind of decision only a true patriot can make, choosing to pass the torch and to step away from the Presidency at the conclusion of this term.

I know President Biden's decision wasn't an easy one, but, once again, he put the needs of his country and our future first. It is a bittersweet moment but one that fills every single one of us who knows President Biden with limitless gratitude.

On behalf of a grateful Democratic caucus, on behalf of a grateful Senate, and on behalf of a grateful nation, I wish to say thank you—thank you—to President Biden for dedication to our country, and we will keep working with him every single day until this term is done.

By willingly passing the torch, Joe Biden is precisely the kind of leader George Washington would have hoped for. In his Farewell Address, our first President affirmed that elected office belongs to no man or woman alone but to the people above all. Two hundred thirty years later, President Biden honors George Washington's example in a way few Presidents ever have.

But to those of us who have known Joe Biden all these years, we know that this is who he truly is: a man of profound decency. He is, at his core, an honorable man, a family man, a man of faith. And he restored those qualities to the Presidency after 4 years of disaster under the previous administration.

Now, future generations will look at Joe Biden's Presidency and see it was one of the most consequential in American history. It may seem like a lifetime ago, but when President Biden entered office, America was in crisis. A once-in-a-century pandemic was claiming thousands of lives by the day. Our economy was on life support. And in the aftermath of January 6, American democracy was hanging by a thread.

Three and a half years later, America is stronger, more prosperous, and our future is brighter because of President Biden's leadership. And it has been the honor of a lifetime for me to work side by side to bring the Senate Democratic agenda to life here in the U.S. Senate.

With President Biden, we have created 15 million new jobs since the depths of the pandemic, the most in a single term. With President Biden, we have lowered the cost of prescription drugs for tens of millions of Americans. We empowered Medicare to negotiate

with drug companies for the first time ever. We have made insulin \$35 a month for millions of seniors. And we expanded affordable healthcare to more Americans than ever before.

With President Biden, we enacted a generational infrastructure bill to rebuild America, fixing her roads and bridges and highways and lead piping and expanding broadband to so many rural and inner-city areas that didn't have it. I was proud to lead these efforts in this Chamber.

With President Biden, we passed the first gun safety law in 30 years, the first since the Brady bill that I led as a Member of Congress back in the 1990s. And I remember working then with Senator Biden on gun legislation, both the assault weapons ban and the Brady Law.

With President Biden, we enacted the boldest clean energy bill in the history of our Nation: the Inflation Reduction Act. Because of this bill, our kids will breathe cleaner air, our communities will see less pollution, the next generation will enjoy millions—millions—of new, good-paying, green jobs that will last for generations—jobs with a future.

With President Biden, we revived America's grand tradition of scientific research and technological innovation. With the Chips and Science Act, advanced manufacturing is coming back to America, to cities like Syracuse and Albany, but also in States like Arizona and Ohio and Idaho and Texas and so many others.

And with President Biden, America has led the free world to defend democracy in its hour of need. He united the nations of NATO to stand with the people of Ukraine against Vladimir Putin, and NATO is stronger and larger today than it was when he took office.

Incredibly, Mr. President, there is still much, much more. President Biden led the way in appointing the first Black woman to ever serve on the Supreme Court: Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. I worked with him and my colleagues here in the Senate—I thank so many of them—to confirm more than 200 Federal judges, the most diverse slate of judicial and Federal nominees America has ever seen. We worked with him on historic veterans' health reform. We expanded Federal protections for marriage equality—all this and more.

Truly, President Biden's legislative accomplishments are without equal in our recent history.

Of course, the work is not done. This is not a moment of culmination because we have a lot of work left to do. For everything that has transpired these past few weeks, one thing has not changed: Senate Democrats will continue working with President Biden and with Vice President HARRIS and with the entire Biden-Harris administration to make life better.

It was so typical of the President. When he called me to tell me the news that he was not running again, he said:

But we have a lot more work to do over the next several months. It shows you the commitment of the man to making the lives of people better.

So we will continue to work on those issues, but, for now, I want to say for a grateful nation: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Joseph Robinette Biden.

What an amazing legacy President Biden will leave for future generations. History will say of this moment: Here was one of our great American Presidents. He is a leader who made the most difficult choice at the most important moment because he believed it was the right thing to do. Here is someone who put country ahead of self until the very end.

KIDS ONLINE SAFETY ACT AND CHILDREN AND TEENS' ONLINE PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Now on KOSA-COPPA, when you are a parent, there is no greater pain imaginable than the pain of losing a child—in my case, I might say a grandchild as well. We all think of it almost every day when we have kids, when we have grandkids: What if they are gone? How would we even go forward?

My kids are now adults and have kids of their own. But I remember when they were little, nothing mattered more to me than keeping them safe. As parents, that is what we want to do—keep our kids safe as much as we can, to shield them from the harms they are too young to handle, and to ensure we as a country guard against those who would prey or exploit or otherwise harm our loved ones. I feel this way as strongly as ever as a grandparent when I think of my three beautiful grandchildren: Noah, who is age 5; Eleanor, who is age 2; and Henry, who is age 1.

Unlike decades past, ensuring our kids' safety today means ensuring their online safety, to protect kids from online bullying and exploitation and other risks to their mental health.

Social media has helped hundreds of millions of people to connect in new ways over the last two decades, but there are also new and sometimes serious health risks that come along with those benefits. We cannot set these risks aside. On this issue, we desperately need to catch up.

So this week, I am proud to say the Senate will vote on kids' online safety. For the information of Senators, I am announcing that this week, the Senate will take up two bipartisan bills to protect our kids while they use the internet—the Kids Online Safety Act, or KOSA, and the Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act, or COPPA. Today, I will move to lay a message before the Senate that I intend to use as a vehicle for the substance of those two bills. Members should prepare for a cloture vote on the message as soon as Thursday.

Passing kids' online safety, Mr. President, as we all know, as you