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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom. Nothing is impossible to You. Forgive us when we sometimes have anxiety about the future because we fail to remember what You have done in the past. Thank You for Your wisdom that guides us on life's journey, empowering us to walk with integrity. Today, enlighten our Senators, show them Your ways, teach them Your paths. May Your great love so encompass them that discord and confusion will be dispelled. Lord, let Your peace and tranquility guard their hearts and minds. Deal graciously with them, encouraging them to cast their cares upon You, receiving Your loving mercy and protection.

We pray in Your Holy 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote with respect to the Alexander substitute amendment No. 3801 occur at 12

noon today; that the cloture vote on H.R. 2028 occur following disposition of the substitute amendment; and that the 10:30 a.m. second-degree filing deadline for both the amendment and the underlying bill be at 11 a.m. this morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. We have no problem moving the vote to noon, but I want everyone to be clear that we would be happy to have a vote to pass this bill right now. The only thing holding up the bill is, of course, the amendment of which the Presiding Officer is well aware.

We would be happy to move right now with the amendments that have been agreed to—the managers' package we agreed to the night before last—and finish this bill now.

I have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we have seen important progress in this appropriations season, with the committee reporting out one-third of the 12 funding bills already, each with unanimous backing. So let's continue our work to make progress on the bipartisan energy security and water infrastructure funding bill before us.

This appropriations measure will have positive impacts across the country and promote American priorities such as energy innovation, waterways infrastructure, commerce, and public safety. It is the product of much research and deliberation. It shows what can be achieved with the return to regular order.

We know it would not have been possible without the dedicated work and leadership of the Appropriations Committee and the Energy and Water De-

velopment Subcommittee. It is good to see this significant headway we have made thus far. With continued cooperation, we can pass the first appropriations bill of the season and continue our work to move through more of these individual funding measures.

OBAMACARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been 6 years since the flawed health care policies of ObamaCare were signed into law. Six years later, my office continues to receive stories from Kentuckians who are reeling from the negative effects of this partisan law.

For instance, take the heartbreaking story from one middle-class husband and father of two from Covington who suffered a heart attack at the age of 42. Under ObamaCare, this Kentucky dad has seen his health care premium triple and his deductible increase to, as he put it, a "ridiculous" amount. He said he struggles to afford his medicine—which he says costs upward of \$1,000 a month—as he and his family struggle to survive week to week.

Put simply, he says, ObamaCare is a "terrible blight on the health care system" that has resulted in more "expensive, watered down, unaffordable health care for the middle class." Unfortunately, too many American families have had similar experiences under this administration's partisan law because from the start this health care policy was built on a mountain—a mountain of higher costs and broken promises, which only seem to grow larger by the day.

When it comes to ObamaCare, costs in the exchange are higher than its champions expected. A recent study found that ObamaCare exchange individual market enrollees experienced higher medical costs than people insured through employer-provided coverage: 19 percent higher in 2014 and 22 percent higher last year. When it comes to ObamaCare, it simply does

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



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