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Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.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.

Eternal Lord God, we bless Your Holy Name. Provide our lawmakers with the wisdom to obey You completely and receive Your guidance. May Your guiding presence inspire them so that they can find, even in troubles, opportunities for joy.

Lord, remind them of the blessings that come from being challenged, as they learn from experience that the things that test them produce endurance. When their endurance is fully developed, give them the satisfaction of possessing such integrity that their faith will not shrink, though pressed by many foes.

Lord, help our Senators to seek You repeatedly each day with their prayers, fully expecting You to answer their intercession and direct their lives.

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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Gingrich nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Callista L. Gingrich, of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Holy See.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

If no one yields time, the time will be equally divided.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

WORK BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, as I discussed with the President and the Vice President at our working lunch today, the Senate has a full schedule of important work ahead of us.

The Senate's fall agenda includes confirming more nominees to the judiciary, administration, and other important positions. Later today we will resume consideration of another nominee, Callista Gingrich, who has been nominated to serve as our Ambassador to the Vatican. That agenda includes providing continued assistance to communities affected by the recent hurricanes, and we will process the President's supplemental funding request to do just that. The Senate's agenda also includes completing work on the budget resolution and advancing tax reform—two things that are critical to helping our economy finally realize its true potential after the stagnation of the last decade.

This budget will be the next step to spurring growth in our economy. It provides a pathway to balance, it reins

in Federal spending, and it honors our commitments to Social Security and provides for the national defense.

In addition to these important aspects of this budget, it will also provide the legislative tools to advance tax reform. As I have said before, tax reform is the single most important thing we can do today to get our economy moving again.

We think taxes should be lower, simpler, and fairer for middle-class workers so that Americans can keep more of their own hard-earned money in their paychecks. We think taxes should be reformed to end the perverse incentives that help keep American jobs and profits offshore and so it is easier to make and keep American jobs where they belong—right here at home.

We think it is time to take more money out of Washington's pockets and put more money in the pockets of the American middle class. That is why we know it is time for tax reform.

The tax reform goals I just mentioned are shared by many, including the President, his team, Chairman ORRIN HATCH, and Chairman MIKE ENZI. As I said, to get there, we first need to pass the budget before us. I want to thank Chairman ENZI and the members of the Senate Budget Committee for all of their work in getting us to this point. As we advance that budget on the Senate floor this week, Senators on both sides of the aisle will have the opportunity to offer their input.

I look forward to putting our finances on a better path with this budget, just as I look forward to continuing with the other important initiatives on the Senate's fall agenda.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, on the issue of healthcare, last week, President Trump committed two

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



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