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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, who has given us the rich heritage of this good land, we praise Your Name. During this season of peace on Earth, thank You for continuing to supply our needs.

Lord, help us to listen to the quiet direction of Your spirit. Consecrate our speech to Your service, that we may honor You with our tongues.

As Your Senators today seek to do what is right, make Your way clear to them. Strengthen them to face the pressures that come with protecting freedom.

We pray in Your loving 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 PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jeffery Paul Hopkins, of Ohio, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Ohio.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am worried that we are heading toward another unnecessary, manufactured crisis because our current government funding is set to expire in 8 days. So I want to take a moment and talk about how we got here, and the path forward.

In fiscal year 2022, Leader MCCONNELL required parity between defense and nondefense funding. This was a requirement that we met—Democrats and Republicans—and it provided the commonsense framework that allowed us to finish our work.

Now, the Republicans have abandoned this framework, demanding steep cuts to programs that the American people rely on. The cuts will be more painful as inflation continues to squeeze pocketbooks. Heating, cooling, food, and housing—these costs are becoming more expensive.

They have justified this change of tactics by claiming that Democrats spent \$700 billion in reconciliation bills and that this should negate the need to provide parity to nondefense programs. Well, of course, there is an obvious flaw in that kind of reasoning. The spending

that they are talking about was to meet an unprecedented crisis that killed more than 1 million Americans and threatened to collapse the global economy.

Did people expect us not to defend Americans at that time?

The bills were meant to get us out of the pandemic, get the Nation healthy, and get our economy back on track, and I believe they are accomplishing that goal.

Would anybody say they wish we had not spent that money?

They weren't meant to fund the basic functions of the American Government in fiscal year 2023; they were meant to take care of the dangers of the pandemic that killed 1 million Americans and threatened the collapse of the global economy.

Now, we Democrats do agree with our Republican colleagues that inflation threatens the national security. We all agree on that. But nondefense programs face an equal threat and demand an equal response because of inflation, and if we have inaction on the Republican side, that threatens bipartisan priorities and programs—priorities and programs that both Republicans and Democrats support.

Without an omnibus, the bipartisan CHIPS law—remember the CHIPS law? That passed this summer. It will help our country compete with China. Well, it won't be funded, and that competition languishes. And our promise to our veterans will be broken as the bipartisan PACT Act would go underfunded. VA medical care would fall at least \$7.5 billion short.

Without an omnibus, those who are opposing the omnibus or those who, by inaction, won't support getting an omnibus before us will defund the police by slashing assistance to local law enforcement and keep 1,500 police officers off the streets and out of our communities. In the face of a surge in domestic violence, it will be the inaction of those who are not helping us get an

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



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