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Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, our hope for the years to come, today, teach our lawmakers to do things Your way, embracing Your precepts and walking in Your path. Inspire them to trust You for safety. As they receive guidance from You and follow Your leading, replace anxiety with calm, confusion with clarity, and pessimism with hope.

Lord, guide our Senators to find workable solutions for the problems of our Nation and world.

You are our God, and the good things we have come from You.

We pray in Your marvelous 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALEXANDER). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 minute in morning business, please.

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

IOWA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, we all know that, without a doubt, 2020 has been a difficult year. But for me it was an important year to continue fighting for Iowans and listening to Iowans.

This year I completed my 40th year of my 99 county meetings that included a Q&A in every one of those counties. This annual tradition keeps me in touch with the grassroots of Iowa and allows me to bring their ideas to the policymaking tables here in Washington, DC.

With all the twists and turns this year took, my county meetings were more beneficial than ever. I just want to mention a couple of these twists and turns.

The twist and turns involved the big devastating windstorm we called the ''derecho'' that went through central Iowa, destroying 800,000 acres of crops. Those twists and turns involved dealing with all the issues coming from COVID–19.

One thing I know for sure, Iowans are very resilient people. So I look forward to continuing these county meetings and the Q&A's involved with them at the beginning of the new year.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Democratic leader and I worked into the evening alongside the Speaker of the House and the House Republican leader. We made major headway toward hammering out a targeted pandemic relief package that would be able to pass both Chambers with bipartisan majorities. We committed to continuing these urgent discussions until we have an agreement, and we agreed we will not leave town until we have made law.

The American people need more help. It is that simple. Further targeted relief is now months overdue. We need vaccine distribution money. We need to re-up the Paycheck Protection Program to save jobs. We need to continue to provide for laid-off Americans. Congressional leaders on both sides are going to keep working until we get this done.

TRIBUTE TO PAT ROBERTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on a completely different matter, it is both my honor and unhappy duty to offer one more parting tribute to a distinguished Senator who will leave us at the end of the 116th Congress.

My good friend the senior Senator from Kansas, PAT ROBERTS, is preparing to close out the longest congressional tenure the Sunflower State has ever seen.

When PAT arrived in Washington as a freshman House Member, he was a young man among giants—Byrd, Stevens, Dole. But over the past four decades, the name ''Roberts'' has come to define its own iconic brand of heartland statesmanship.

PAT is the first to admit he didn't establish that name all on his own. He inherited it from another great Kansan. Charles Wesley Roberts was a marine, a journalist, and a leader in Republican politics.

So get ready to experience some deja vu, because at age 16, our future colleague got to attend the 1952 convention that nominated Kansas's own General Eisenhower. That early taste of politics planted a seed.

PAT earned his own Marine Corps commission. In fact, he served with the first contingent to return to Iwo Jima, where his father had fought 15 years earlier.

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

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