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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Father of life, awaken in our Senators the joy of living this day with all its new challenges and hopes. May they see in the challenges opportunities to grow in grace and in a deeper knowledge of You. May they find in their hopes seeds to plant that will bring a harvest of healing to our land. Lord, fill their working hours with Your redeeming radiance and their hearts with Your peace. Keep them safe, for they have found in You a refuge. Instruct them with Your truth as You give them faith to believe in the certainty of Your ultimate triumph.

We pray in Your strong 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 proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

(Mr. WARNOCK assumed the Chair.)

NOMINATION OF ISABELLA CASILLAS GUZMAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the COVID–19 pandemic has revealed just how important the Federal Government can be in helping workers, families, and businesses during a time of crisis. Congress has passed trillions of dollars in urgent relief, and we have relied on Federal Agencies to implement that aid quickly, reliably, competently.

So, while it might not normally be as high profile as other Cabinet-level Agencies, the Small Business Administration has recently been in the spotlight. Over the last 12 months, the Small Business Administration has overseen two pandemic-related programs that will dole out more than $1 trillion to our Nation's small businesses, nonprofits, and religious institutions. Moving forward, it will play a prominent role in implementing the American Rescue Plan.

Today, the Senate will vote on President Biden's nominee to take on that important job: Ms. Isabella Guzman.

Ms. Guzman could not be more ready. She comes from a family of small business owners herself. Her dad ran his own veterinary clinic. Not only is Ms. Guzman a veteran of the Small Business Administration, in serving as the Deputy Chief of Staff in the Obama administration, she has just finished a stint as a top official at California's Office of Business and Economic Development, helping support the fifth largest economy in the world.

For many Americans, opening and operating a business of their own is part of the American dream. I have every confidence that, under Ms. Guzman's leadership, the SBA will help small business owners hold onto their dreams until our economy comes roaring back.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. President, this morning, I also want to continue the theme of highlighting aspects of the American Rescue Plan that have not received enough attention.

We have heard a lot about the progress we have made on vaccines. I read, this morning, that 109 million Americans have received at least one vaccination, so we are well on the path to getting Americans vaccinated, and checks have gone out the door. I was on a call with people from central Brooklyn—Bed-Stuy and Brownsville—last night, and many had already received their checks. It was very much needed. It was very much welcomed.

As President Biden announced yesterday, on the vaccines, we have had 100 million shots in people's arms and 100 million checks in people's pockets. Let's say that again. That sounds good to me—100 million shots in people's arms and 100 million checks in people's pockets. The Democrats are delivering what we promised.

Now, we have heard a lot about how the American Rescue Plan will help Americans who need it the most. The 20 percent of Americans at the lowest levels of income will receive the highest levels of support. It is about time. We had the mirror image of that when our Republican colleagues ran the Senate, where the top 1 percent did the best and the bottom 20 percent was totally ignored. That is backward. God bless the people who are in the top 1 percent, but they don't need the help. It is the people struggling to feed their families, pay the rent, and help the kids in school who need the help. We are doing it for the first time in a while. Experts predict that child poverty could be cut in half. Meanwhile,

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

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