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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.

O God, our Father, help us this day to love and serve one another in ways that honor Your Name.

May our lawmakers manifest a courtesy that brings about constructive change. Grant our Senators a tolerance so that they may not be quick to condemn ideas that differ from their own. Lord, give them such integrity so that their work may be their best whether there is anyone to see it or not.

Bless and keep us all. Shine Your wisdom upon us, doing for us more than we can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your great 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. SASSE). The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as we all know, the Senate has been quite busy. Legislatively, we have been hard at work on everything from budgets, to disaster relief, to consumer protections, to tax reform.

On the nominations front, we have taken strong action to strengthen the judiciary, including confirming a slate

of very-well-qualified nominees in recent days. This week, we are continuing our work to staff up the rest of the government as well. This is one of the Senate's most important functions and one we take seriously.

We are currently considering men and women who have been nominated to serve in many different roles at many different agencies. The one thing they all share in common is this: They are ready to get to work, and the sooner we confirm them, the sooner they can get on the job for our country.

First, we will vote to confirm John Gibson as Deputy Chief Management Officer at the Department of Defense. He will be responsible for increasing efficiency throughout the Department's business operations.

Afterward, the Senate will continue its consideration of Steven Engel, who will, as I discussed yesterday, serve as the Deputy Attorney General in the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel.

The next nomination we will consider is that of Peter Robb to serve as the General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board.

For most of its 80-year existence, the NLRB has had the important responsibility of supporting stable labor relations by acting as a fair and impartial umpire in the resolution of labor disputes. Unfortunately, that changed under the previous administration, which wielded its Board majority as an anti-worker political cudgel at the behest of special interests and union bosses. Instead of the Board's historic commitment to impartially applying the law, the NLRB's Obama-appointed Democratic majority put forward policies that diminished the rights of employees, hurt small businesses, and rewarded entrenched political elites at the expense of workers and the middle class.

Thankfully, this Senate recently confirmed a new majority to the NLRB that is already beginning to undo the

damage of the past 8 years. Now we have the opportunity to build upon that good work with the nomination of Mr. Robb.

The NLRB's General Counsel is responsible for investigating cases of unfair labor practices and for advancing cases before the Board and its members. Mr. Robb will fulfill these duties under the aegis of a new Board majority that is returning the NLRB to its true mission once more.

Labor policy is not simply some theoretical abstraction for Mr. Robb; he knows what it means to work as a hospital orderly or a construction worker, welder, truckdriver, forklift operator, or highway sign maker because he himself has worked in all of those jobs before. After law school, Robb gained valuable experience in employment law. His previous leadership roles, including as an NLRB regional field attorney and chief counsel to a Board member, contribute to making Robb an ideal candidate to serve as the Board's General Counsel.

I look forward to voting to advance this nomination, and I urge my colleagues to join me in helping restore the NLRB to the neutral umpire of labor disputes it was meant to be.

TAX REFORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, our complex Tax Code is in desperate need of reform, and we now have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to overhaul it. We all want an economy that reaches for its full potential again. We all want to support small businesses and the middle class. Tax reform represents the single most important action we can take today to advance goals such as these.

I have heard from many Kentuckians calling out for relief from our outdated and burdensome Tax Code. Listen to this small business owner from Murray, KY, who wrote to my office about his struggles under our current Tax Code. This is what he said:

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



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