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Senate

(Legislative day of Tuesday, September 16, 2014)

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

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by Rev. Canon Andrew White, pastor of St. George's Church, Baghdad, Iraq.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Lord God, to You we submit the affairs of this new day, the work of this Senate as it takes its role in leading in a broken world. Today may You give this place great wisdom. May this Senate be the channel of Your healing, the source of Your glory. From this place may there flow the wisdom of not just humanity but of the Almighty.

O Lord, we the people of faith in Iraq—Jews, Christians, and Muslims—give thanks to You for the way this land and this place has stood with us in our terrors and trials. Through this House, we thank You that we have not been left alone. May Your glory be on this land, and may You, O God, bless America.

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 PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I extend to Chaplain Black our appreciation for

the guest Chaplain today. That was a very moving prayer, and I very much appreciate the work our Chaplain does in always giving us courage and helping to build our faith.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until noon today. During that period of time Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The time will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. Following morning business the Senate will proceed to one rollcall vote on the confirmation of John Bass to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, followed by several voice votes on executive nominations.

TWO WASHINGTON NATIONALS STARS HAIL FROM NEVADA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Nevada is a relatively small State population-wise but a large area. We are a State of about 3 million people. We take pride in our home State, as we should. Even though we have grown a lot in the last couple of decades, we are still a big family.

Today Nevadans are celebrating two of our home State's native sons after the Washington Nationals clinched the National League East Division crown. There is a lot of dissension here on the Senate floor and a lot of talk back and forth, but one thing you never hear often enough is that the Republican leader and I love watching baseball. We often share our views of the team and how, if we were there, we may do things a little differently, but we are still a booster for the team.

The reason I mention this today is because there are two individuals who

helped the Nationals clinch the National League East Division who have deep roots in Nevada.

In his first season as manager of the team, Matt Williams, from Carson City, NV, has led his team to the National Division series. He has a stunningly powerful record athletically and is just a nice person. He was a baseball and football star at Carson City High. Carson City is the capital of the State of Nevada.

Matt Williams played baseball collegiately for the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, where he was a star. He was so good, he played 16 years in the Major Leagues. He played for the Giants, Indians, and Diamondbacks. He played in the World Series for each of those teams. He is a five-time all-star and a four-time Gold Glove Award winner. He was a stunningly good third baseman, and he sports a World Series championship ring from the Diamondbacks.

Bryce Harper had his picture on the front of Sports Illustrated when he was 15 years old for hitting a home run more than 500 feet. He is a fine young man from a wonderful family. He came to the Major Leagues when he was 18 years old—he may have been 19. I believe he is going to turn 22 soon.

During his rookie year he had a very serious injury. What was the injury? He was running full speed and rammed into the wall at Dodger Stadium, and he was hurt. It took away from his stellar year, but he still did OK. He was Rookie of the Year and on the all-star team that first year. He played baseball at Las Vegas High School, and he left high school and went to a junior community college as a 17-year-old. Because of his power, he went to the National Junior College World Series. He is a two-time all-star. He is in his third season. In 2012 he was Rookie of the Year, and he was hurt again this year because of his enthusiasm for the

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



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game and his never-ending hustle. He hit a triple and went into third base and messed up his thumb. That required surgery, and as a result he missed much of this season. However, he is having a good season in spite of that.

We are very proud of our baseball athletes.

This year one of the greatest baseball players of all time, Greg Maddux, was, of course, on the first ballot and was made a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame. This unassuming young man has been an example for how people should be athletes—not a lot of talk, other than when he does talk. He has a lot of humility. He is a great athlete.

I wish Matt Williams, Bryce Harper, and the rest of the team the best of everything when the playoffs get underway. It should be an exciting divisional series.

I also follow the Baltimore Orioles, and until the Nationals showed up, that was about all we had in the area. They have a great team. Their owner is a tremendous trial lawyer. He still works every day practicing law. They have a tremendous team. They have had a few bad breaks. Their very young third baseman was hurt. He lost a lot of this season, as he did last year.

Anyway, it would be a great World Series to have Baltimore playing the Nationals. That would be something I would really look forward to. Again, it was exciting to watch them all year. Two or three games ago Bryce Harper hit one of his towering home runs. They are still talking about how far he hit it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I join the majority leader in congratulating the Washington Nats in winning the Eastern Division of the National League. It is a pretty exciting development and has a lot of Nevada connections.

KENTUCKY COAL JOBS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it is no secret that the Obama administration policies have been extraordinarily harmful to job creation and retention. From the perspective of my home State of Kentucky, there is no greater example of the ill-effects of these policies than the President's war on coal.

Given the unhealthy economy, the Senate should be regularly debating and voting on measures to overturn antijobs policies and pass bipartisan reforms to help grow our economy. But under the current majority, that, sadly, is not the case. The majority leader instead has refused to permit any amendments on preserving coal and coal-fired power all year long—none whatsoever; no votes at all—even

though the Obama administration's anticoal rules not only adversely affect States with Republican Senators, such as Kentucky, but States represented by Democratic Members as well.

The Senate's failure to address coal is reflective of the Chamber's dysfunction. While the House is passing bipartisan jobs bills, Senate Democrats' priorities are show votes.

Let's review where we are and how we got here.

In 2008 Candidate Obama said:

If somebody wants to build a coal power plant, they can—it's just that it will bankrupt them, because they are going to be charged a huge sum for all that greenhouse gas that's being emitted.

I have to say he has been true to his word. Americans have seen a barrage of regulations and redtape from the President's Environmental Protection Agency, strangling the coal industry—one of my home State's most important sources of jobs and economic development. Kentucky miners and thousands more from the Commonwealth whose jobs rely on mining are feeling the pain from the President's efforts.

The regulations and lack of certainty in the coal industry that this administration has caused have contributed to a loss of 7,000 Kentucky jobs in that industry since President Obama took office—7,000 lost jobs. That tells me the overregulation this administration's EPA keeps piling on is contributing in a major way to the job decline in my home State.

Those of us who represent coal States have made numerous attempts to rein in EPA, but the majority leader and fellow Democrats here in Washington have blocked us at every turn.

Last September I introduced the Saving Coal Jobs Act. The bill would have ended the abuse of the permitting process by the EPA by requiring the Agency to approve or veto mining permit applications within 270 days of their submission. It was simply a time limit to make a decision. This legislation is necessary because the EPA's tactic of choice is to sit on permits, effectively killing them. My bill also included language prohibiting any new carbon emission standards on new or existing powerplants as mandated by Federal agencies without the approval of Congress. After all, Congress, not the executive branch, is supposed to write our Nation's laws.

Unfortunately, what happened when I introduced this legislation is something that has become all-too familiar. When I made a motion to proceed to the bill, it was blocked by the majority leader.

In April I offered my Saving Coal Jobs Act as an amendment to the then-pending unemployment insurance bill before the Senate. This motion was blocked by the majority leader as well.

In May I again offered the Saving Coal Jobs Act as an amendment to the then-pending energy efficiency bill. Once again it was blocked by the Senate majority leader.

A few days later in May I offered legislation to stop the EPA from moving forward with its anti-coal jobs carbon regulations. My amendment, introduced along with Senators VITTER and HOEVEN, would have halted the administration from moving forward with new regulations on coal-fired powerplants until the technology required to comply with the regulations is commercially viable, which currently it is not. Once again this commonsense measure on behalf of Kentucky coal miners and their families and jobs was blocked by the majority leader, and that bill was originally sponsored by a colleague on the other side of the aisle, on the Democratic side. It fared no better under the majority leader than do Republican procoal bills.

Moreover, the majority leader is not just blocking procoal legislation on the Senate floor, he is also willing to shut down the committee process for fear of procoal amendments having the votes to pass. In June, he had the Senate Democrats prevent the Energy and Water Appropriations bill from being marked up when they learned I had the votes for my amendment reining in government regulations on coal-fired powerplants. So once it was clear the votes might be there in committee, they shut down the committee process.

Earlier this year, the President's EPA announced new regulations it wanted to enact on existing powerplants that would be a dagger to the heart of my State's middle class and constitute the single worst blow to Kentucky's economy in modern times. The proposed EPA regulations on existing powerplants would kill jobs and raise utility rates across the State while making the transmission of electricity less reliable. The regulations would adversely affect Kentucky powerplants that account for literally thousands of Kentucky jobs.

These regulations are why this June I introduced the Coal Country Protection Act—legislation to block the President's proposed regulations on carbon emissions from existing powerplants if those regulations eliminate jobs, cost our economy dollars, increase electricity prices or jeopardize electricity reliability.

Those requirements are just common sense. Yet once again the majority leader refused to allow a vote on my legislation.

The importance of my Coal Country Protection Act is reflected in the findings of a recent Government Accountability Office, or GAO, study. My colleague Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska requested this study which found that as a result of EPA's existing and proposed regulations, the number of coal-fired powerplants closing across the country is even higher—even higher—than what was originally estimated by the GAO in 2012.

These coal plant retirements are largely due to EPA redtape. Current