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Senate

The Senate met at 11 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.

God of grace, glory, and power, the battle belongs to You. We are grateful that even though storms rage, we can continue to anchor our hopes in You. Forgive us for sometimes painting a caricature of the many because of the pathology of the few.

Inspire our lawmakers to keep their eyes fixed on You. Imbue them with wisdom that they may know the road to take. Lord, rescue them from danger, as You carve tunnels of hope through mountains of despair.

Let the peace we seek in our world be first conceived in our own hearts.

We pray in Your merciful 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 PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1191

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1191) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the Calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, throughout the Democratic filibuster of the antislavery legislation, this is basically what they have been telling us: We don't read legislation we vote on. Even so, it was always a stretch to believe that not a single one—not one—of the 13 original Democratic cosponsors of this bill, nor the many Democrats who voted for this bill in committee, nor their well-educated staffs could not have been bothered to make it to page 4 before deciding to support it—well, support it at least until far-left lobbyists told them they could not support it anymore.

So yesterday's revelation that the Democratic side was indeed aware of the language in question could hardly have surprised anyone. It also makes clear that Democrats decided to yank their support for an antislavery bill for one simple reason: Because far-left lobbyists said they needed to—not because the American people said so.

Nearly 70 percent of Americans support the kind of bipartisan provisions Democrats now claim they object to, and many Democrats have voted for similar bipartisan Hyde language many times before in both appropriations and authorizing legislation. They voted for it many times before in other bills, most recently just this past December.

So our Democratic colleagues obviously lack a rationale for this contin-

ued filibustering of the antislavery legislation. If Democrats are truly sincere about wanting to move to an Attorney General vote as soon as possible, then they should consider some of the recent advice from the Chicago Tribune.

Here is what the Tribune said. "Democrats on the Judiciary Committee have endorsed" the same bill they are now filibustering, the Tribune noted. So "all they have to do is allow a vote" on the same bill to move to another vote they claim to want to have.

Yet, as the Tribune also noted, Democrats do not "want to go on the record against a bill aimed at combating the evils of human trafficking. So they are blocking a vote—yes, blocking a law to combat human trafficking—in hopes that they can get their way."

Here is how the editorial concluded—and this is the part our Democratic friends should listen to: "Democrats... vote to move forward with the human trafficking bill. Then the Senate can get on with approving a new attorney general. And Democrats can resolve never again to vote for a bill they haven't read."

Just resolve to never again vote for a bill you haven't read. It seems pretty simple. Ignore the lobbyists and vote to give hope to the victims of slavery instead. That is the right thing to do, and today we will give our friends another chance to show where they stand in this debate over modern slavery.

(The remarks of Mr. McCONNELL pertaining to the introduction of S. 799 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Democratic leader is recognized.

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



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HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in a few hours, the Senate will vote for a third time on whether to end debate on human trafficking. The result will be the same the third time as it was the second time and the first time, which indicates to me that this week was a waste of time.

I indicated that the vote will fail, and it will fail because the debate is such that this is an important issue. We are determined to fix this bill, and we will fix it by removing the unrelated abortion provision from the pages of this legislation. I hope we can do that soon.

My friend the majority leader referenced reports that Democratic staffers should have—it should not have been plural—a Democratic staff member knew about the abortion provision prior to the legislation coming to the floor. Perhaps that is true, but I don't really know how the abortion language got in the bill for sure. I think I know. But it got in the bill. I think I know who put it in there, but it really doesn't matter. The fact of the matter is it is in the bill, and I am more concerned about getting the bill out.

We have had some columnists make fun about the fact that we should have read the bill more closely. I will not go into a lot of detail, but page 4 of the original bill—the section to which a lot of people love to point—was eliminated. If you look at it, it is crossed out.

If you go to page 50 or 51, it is stuck back in that part of the bill, and this is where the controversy gets pretty interesting. A Republican Senator who was responsible for this bill in the committee sent out a notice to all Senators, including Democrats, saying that we made some changes in the bill that passed last year—one, two, three, four, five, six changes that were made. The problem is he didn't indicate that they put the abortion language back in. It was really misleading, as was indicated on the floor yesterday by Senator FEINSTEIN.

We can go into why the language is in the bill. I have indicated I think I know who put it in and why they put it in. But they did put it in the bill. It is in the bill. We can have all of these accusations about paper trails and why it is in the bill, but it is in the bill, and it needs to come out.

Remember, Speaker BOEHNER, who has good qualifications for being the protector of abortion rights, as seen by the Republicans, was able to pass a version of this legislation without the abortion language. No one can question BOEHNER's qualifications for being anti-abortion. If they passed it in the House, why can't we do the same thing here?

Were the House Republicans wrong to pass the bill? I don't think so.

So before we embark upon a third iteration of the vote today, which is going to fail, I ask the Republican lead-

ership: Are you interested in working toward a solution on this human trafficking legislation? If so, take this language out.

My friend the Republican leader was talking about leftwing lobbyists. The leftwing lobbyists are women, who—as indicated on the floor yesterday by Senator FEINSTEIN—are concerned about protecting their bodies and reproductive rights. They are interested in protecting themselves, as they should be, and they are protecting women all over America.

So are they only interested in scoring political points by forcing these show votes or are they interested in reaching a solution? If they are interested in a solution, we are willing to work with them, but the abortion language is going to come out of this legislation.

For the first time in the history of our country, we are now focused on not doing what has been done with the Hyde amendment for 30 years, and that is making sure there are no government taxpayer dollars spent for performing abortions. Now they have moved beyond that to private funding. It is wrong and we are not going to go there.

Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 178, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 178) to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Pending:

Portman amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking.

Portman amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of "homeless person" under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth.

Vitter amendment No. 284 (to amendment No. 271), to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business.

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

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to address a very se-

rious accusation leveled yesterday against Republican Members of this body by the Democratic whip, the Senator from Illinois. I do so with some regret. The Senator from Illinois and I have been friends for many years. We served in the House together and here in this body, and we have worked together. That is why I was so surprised and disappointed in the comments he made yesterday on the floor of the Senate—comments that are totally inappropriate to be made on the floor of the Senate.

My colleague from Illinois said:

The Republican majority leader announced . . . that he was going to hold this nomination of Loretta Lynch until the bill which is pending before the Senate passes, whenever that may be.

Then he went on to say:

So Loretta Lynch, the first African-American woman nominated to be Attorney General, is asked to sit in the back of the bus when it comes to the Senate calendar. That is unfair. It is unjust. It is beneath the decorum and dignity of the U.S. Senate.

What is beneath the decorum and dignity of the U.S. Senate, I would say to the Senator from Illinois, is for him to come to this floor and use that imagery and suggest that racist tactics are being employed to delay Ms. Lynch's confirmation vote. Such inflammatory rhetoric has no place in this body and serves no purpose other than to further divide us.

Perhaps my colleagues, and the Senator from Illinois in particular, need to be reminded of their own record when it comes to the treatment of African-American women whose nominations were before this body. In 2003, Janice Rogers Brown—an African American—was nominated to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia—a court that had never included an African-American woman judge. The Senator from Illinois voted to filibuster her nomination in 2003 and again in 2005. When she was finally confirmed, after waiting 684 days, the Senator from Illinois voted against the historic nomination. I would never suggest—even with veiled rhetoric—that Judge Rogers Brown's race was the reason for the opposition to her nomination by the Senator from Illinois. And he should extend, I say to my colleague from Illinois, that same courtesy to me and my colleagues.

I would also like to remind the Senator from Illinois about how we were able to fill vacancies in the U.S. District Court of Arizona last year—effectively alleviating a judicial emergency. With tremendous bipartisan support of the nomination of Senator FLAKE and myself, we confirmed a diverse and historic slate of six nominees which included an Hispanic, an African American, and the first Native American woman ever to serve on the Federal bench. But their race had nothing to do with their successful confirmations, just as the race of Ms. Lynch should have no impact on her consideration in this body. Those six judges were approved by this body because each of