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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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 Protector, mountains shake in Your presence and islands skip for joy. We praise You because Your ways are just and true. Lord, You know our hearts and minds like an open book. Thank You for the security we have in You, for You alone remain our rock and refuge.

Lead our lawmakers on the road that You have chosen, providing them with strength for their journey. Keep them safe as You provide them with the patience to wait for Your harvest. Lord, help them in the making of our laws to execute justice for the oppressed and to set the captives free. Give us all the grace to love and pray, even for those who hurt and wrong us.

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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Later this morning the Senate will move to go to conference with the House on the budget resolution. The vote on that motion

will occur before lunch. After about 10 hours of debate, which is stipulated in the statute, we expect a series of votes on motions to instruct conferees on the budget. Senators should expect those votes later this afternoon or this evening.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, just hours ago, 100 percent of Senate Democrats followed the lead of Republicans and Democrats in the House, including NANCY PELOSI and the pro-choice caucus, in voting to endorse the bipartisan principle that Federal funds leaving the government should be subject to bipartisan Hyde language. Given that Americans overwhelmingly support what Hyde does, it is no wonder this principle has been applied by both parties—both parties—to appropriations and authorizing legislation for as long as anyone could remember.

We hope the Democrats' statement of support for Hyde in last night's Medicare vote will finally clear the way for passage of antislavery legislation they have been filibustering over the very same Hyde principle. It was never a morally tenable position. Never. Considering what we saw just 12 hours ago, it is no longer politically tenable either. Democrats couldn't possibly justify voting for Hyde language in order to keep doctors—as they did just hours ago—but then look an abused victim in the eye and tell her she is not worth it. OK to vote for Hyde to help doctors, but then not OK when it comes to victims of sexual trafficking.

Human trafficking is a serious problem in our country. It is hard for a lot of people to believe, but it occurs in every single State. I recently saw a news report about a local nonprofit that is worried about trafficking at big events such as the Kentucky Derby. "They'll take a girl to one city for one to two weeks," an official with that

group said, "then they'll go to another city, and they just follow these circuits . . . it's really hard to get them out of it . . ."

Look, it is unconscionable for anyone to continue filibustering this human rights bill over a principle that has been a fixture—a fixture—in Federal law for decades, that was in the bill when Democrats endorsed it, cosponsored it, and voted unanimously to support it in committee, and that was endorsed again by Democrats just last night.

But just to ensure there are no possible excuses left to continue this filibuster, Senator CORNYN offered another compromise last night to eliminate any remaining pretext. His compromise ensures that, by supporting this bill, Senate Democrats would only be endorsing the same Hyde language that 100 percent of them just voted to support last night, less than 24 hours ago. Remember, this is essentially language endorsed by NANCY PELOSI and the pro-choice caucus.

It is actually the third compromise we have offered on the Senate floor to our friends across the aisle. First, we offered our colleagues a simple up-or-down vote last month to strike the language that they once were for before they decided to be against it. Then, before the recess, Senator CORNYN offered to make the monies in the fund subject to the appropriations process, something our Democratic colleagues had said was important to them.

So this is now the third compromise we have offered on the floor. It is time for our Democratic friends to show a little courage to finally bring their party's filibuster of antislavery legislation to an end. A large bipartisan majority of the Senate has already demonstrated its commitment to doing so, and all that is needed now are a couple more Democrats to join us. That is all that is needed now, a couple more Democrats willing to show the same level of compassion to enslaved victims

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



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they offered to doctors—to doctors—just a few hours ago.

As an official with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women put it: “Our Democratic colleagues should stop choosing a phantom problem . . .”—a phantom problem—“. . . over real victims.”

Because as the Los Angeles Times said:

The Hyde Amendment has been the law for many years. A fight over whether a fraction of the projected millions of dollars in aid to victims of trafficking and hunters of traffickers can be used on abortion services seems fruitless, and the bill should not be derailed by such a fight.

This has gone on long enough. It is time for Senators of conscience to stand up and end this filibuster now.

A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, before Easter, the Senate passed a balanced budget. The House of Representatives did as well. The next step in the process is for each Chamber to appoint Members to a conference committee that can work out any differences between those bills, and then send unified legislation back to Congress for a final vote. We are taking that next step today.

Some of our friends across the aisle seem eager to use this opportunity to rehash some of the same votes we took in passing the budget. The outcome of those votes won't be different, so I am not sure what the point would be, other than to slow down the process for its own sake. So I would urge them to reconsider and decide if that is really what they want to do.

But either way—either way—the new Congress is determined to keep working to finalize the budget. After years of a Senate that often refused to even consider a budget, this is a big change. And it is another example of the new Congress that is back to regular order and back to work.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION AND THE BUDGET

Mr. REID. The Republican leader talked about two issues: one, sexual trafficking, and, two, the budget. His statements regarding the two are illogical as anything can be. Illogical.

First of all, let's talk about sexual trafficking. Senators on this side of the aisle, with rare exception, are not wild about the Hyde amendment, but it has been the law of the land for some 30 years. And why is it the law of the land? Because it has been put in appropriations bills over these many years. But what my friend the Republican leader failed to mention is that if the Cornyn amendment or the Cornyn lan-

guage were adopted, it would change women's reproduction rights permanently. You see, the Hyde amendment has always applied to taxpayer-funded money. But what Senator CORNYN, the author of this bill and this amendment, wants to do is direct this to private money. They are two totally different things. Hyde has never, ever in the past applied to private money—nontaxpayer dollars. So that is why my friend's argument is totally illogical. Illogical. It has no basis in fact. We are not going to stand by to enlarge this so-called Hyde amendment to private money.

Now we have tried. We have tried. Ten different offers have been made to Senator CORNYN and Senator MCCONNELL to work our way through this. There are many ways we can handle this. But they feel—my friend the Republican leader and the assistant Republican leader feel this is their opportunity to broaden Hyde. We are not going to allow that to happen. It would be wrong. We have made 10 separate offers of ways to get to yes, but Republicans appear unwilling to compromise about the Hyde language, and that is unfortunate.

To carry on the illogic of the Republican leader, every organization has a mission statement, a summary of their goals and values. Congress is no different. There are mission statements that are done every year and they are called a budget. We have our mission statement; the Republicans have theirs. The budget sets forth our core values as a party, a statement of our values that tells the American people what we really care about and whose side we are on. We are committed to a budget that puts the middle class first, a budget that supports hard-working families, creates jobs, and invests in our future. The Republicans, by contrast, are hell-bent on passing a budget that creates a war on the middle class and serves the interests of special interests and the superwealthy.

Let's take a look at what the Senate Republican budget does. Remember, this is their statement of core values, and their war on the average American from Reno to Las Vegas to Chicago to Louisville—it doesn't matter where you go—is an attack on the middle class. Why do I say that? It deprives more than 16 million Americans of health coverage. That is the first thing their budget does. It devastates Medicare. It makes Medicare something we would not recognize, and they do it, of course, at the expense of America's seniors. It cuts Medicaid and hurts millions of families who are not able to pay for their care.

Everyone thinks Medicaid is just for poor people. Some people don't think they have much value in our society and Medicaid is something that shouldn't get much of our attention. But a significant amount of Medicaid money goes to people who are in rest homes and convalescent centers. So the money they are whacking from Medicaid hurts not only the young but the

old. It guts nutrition assistance. It guts food that can go to people who are hungry. It undermines job training and employment services for millions of American families. It cuts billions in financial aid for college students.

The Republicans not only want to cut aid to families as it relates to education, but then the debts they have accumulated, which are larger than credit card debt—they don't want to cut them any relief whatsoever. We have tried that lots of times. Our budget reflects that; theirs doesn't.

While the middle class is decimated by Senate Republicans—and who benefits? Special interests and the superrich. They are protected more than ever. The Republicans refuse to close a single loophole to reduce this deficit.

A single tax loophole they will not touch. They will not end tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas. They will not close loopholes for the wealthy, including hedge fund managers. They will not take away wasteful and unneeded tax breaks for the very powerful oil and gas industry. They are attacking the middle class while protecting the super wealthy. That is wrong.

Now, the Republican budget is also dishonest. I heard the Republican leader come here and boast. He boasted about the balanced budget they have. That is absolutely not true. Their budget does not balance the budget. It is simply dishonest to say so. The Republican budget claims to add more money for defense, but it does not.

It is no wonder that the New York Times called the Republican budget “a trillion dollar con job.” “A trillion dollar con job” is the Republican budget. I agree with the New York Times. In the coming days, as we move forward toward a conference—now remember moving forward toward conference has become kind of a joke around here because we do not have conferences like we used to. That is too bad.

There will be no meeting of the conferees. There will be no debate in open session as to how the budget should be changed. The Republicans will get to conference. There will be meetings held by the Republicans. Democrats will not be invited. If they are invited, it is pro forma: Here is what we have decided to do. The conferences, as we used to do them around here, do not exist. It is a rare occasion when they do.

We will not be looking into our efforts to try to improve the budget. We are not looking to obstruct the process to force another all-night vote-arama. We could. Under the rules we could offer endless, endless motions to instruct: 5, 6, 50, 100, 200. We could do that. We are not going to do that. But we will be offering a few motions to make clear where we stand on important issues.

For example, there will be an amendment that men and women who do the same work should be paid the same money. If my daughter works here and