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Senate

The Senate met at 1 p.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.

Eternal God, the source of all wisdom, thank You for the reminder at today's joint meeting of Congress that we should practice the Golden Rule. May this marvelous rule inspire our lawmakers to do unto others as they would have others do to them, bringing more civility and cooperation into our legislative process. May our Senators see their legislative vocation as an opportunity to do good for all people, defending and preserving the dignity of humanity as they learn to seek Your image, even for the most vulnerable in our world. May the Golden Rule motivate our lawmakers to reduce violence in our world, to give hope to those trapped in cycles of poverty, and to build bridges to overcome historic differences. Lord, help us all to seize this moment in history to serve Your purposes for our lives, leaving the world better than we found it.

We pray in Your sacred 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 MINORITY LEADER

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

HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today Members of Congress from both Houses were

honored to attend a joint meeting of Congress and receive an address from His Holiness Pope Francis, the 266th Pope of the Catholic Church.

The Holy Father's visit to address a joint meeting was made possible by the foresight and efforts of Speaker JOHN BOEHNER, as well as the hard work and dedication of the House and the Senate Sergeant at Arms and the entire congressional community. Everything worked out just fine. Pope Francis captured the heart and consciousness of the world with his message of love, compassion, respect, and good will to all.

Sitting and listening to the speaker of the day, His Holiness Pope Francis, I am told this is the longest he has ever spoken at one time in English. He spoke slowly, and we had to listen very closely. So I went back and got a copy of the speech so I could read in my own slow way what he had said. A few things he said were really stunning. "You are called"—he is talking to us—"to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good, for this is the chief aim of all politics." Gee, that is good.

He said that he wanted to enter into a dialogue with the many "elderly persons who are a storehouse of wisdom forged by experience."

He said:

A delicate balance is required to combat violence perpetrated in the name of religion, an ideology or an economic system, while also safeguarding religious freedom, intellectual freedom and individual freedoms. . . . We know that in the attempt to be freed of the enemy without, we can be tempted to feed the enemy within.

These are visionary words.

He said that "the voice of faith" needs to "continue to be heard, for it is a voice of fraternity and love," which brings out the best in each society. We need more people speaking out just as he did about the importance of faith.

He said:

If politics must truly be at the service of the human person, it follows that it cannot

be a slave to the economy and finance. . . . We, the people of this continent, are not fearful of foreigners, because most of us were once foreigners.

Now, I am not taking this line by line. I am just skipping through some things that stuck out in my mind.

If we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. . . . Why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on individuals and society.

He said, "Fundamental relationships are being called into question, as is the very basis of . . . the family."

I was so impressed with the intent of his remarks. I thought he did an extremely good job, and I am very happy that I had the opportunity to be there and listen. I admire the conviction and heart of His Holiness because it brings every effort of what we do, I think, to the forefront of what we try to do, to live up to what he suggests we should do. He inspired me, I hope all of us, with his commitment to compassion and consideration for the less fortunate.

I am certain this should come as a shock to no one, given his humble beginnings. He was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to immigrant parents. Pope Francis worked as a janitor, a bouncer, a lab assistant for a chemist before he started his seminary education. Since the beginning of his papacy, Pope Francis has committed to addressing the needs of the poor, extending mercy to those in need, and restoring joy to the world.

Pope Francis was once asked about his view of the church. He said that he viewed the church as "a field hospital after battle." His unique approach to leading the world's 1.2 billion Catholics has captured the attention of billions, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, inspiring us all to live up to our highest values.

I was forced to remember today my mentor from my high school days to my time in Congress, who became the

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Governor of Nevada. We ran independent of one another. We wound up being Governor and Lieutenant Governor. He was a devout Catholic. The values he instilled in me stemmed from his faith. He was the most honest man I ever met. He was a devout Catholic, as I indicated. He went to mass virtually every day.

He died—every place he went, it was early. He got to morning mass, 7 o'clock mass, early. It had not started. The priest had not come out yet. He put his head on his shoulder and died. He was such a good man. Those of us who knew him—and so many people knew him—know that he would have enjoyed living in a time where His Holiness is known not just for his influence, knowledge, and righteousness but for his good deeds and kindness to those in need. My friend Mike O'Callaghan had a lot of those same traits.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in just 6 days, the government will shut down unless we figure out some way to fund it. We know how it should be funded. But instead of voting today on a bipartisan way forward, we will still have another failed vote, even though the Senate has already spoken on this issue. Instead of using the Senate's precious time to avoid a shutdown, Republicans are causing us to move forward on another squandered vote.

Republicans should abandon their commitment to fruitless votes and pass a clean funding bill to keep the government open. As reported in the press, there is a conversation going on now with the White House and with the House and Senate leaders to have funding until the end of the year, not for a few weeks, not for a few months. I think we have done our part over on this side of the aisle. We communicated our priorities and tried to sit down at the negotiating table, ready to keep the government open.

Inserting into this debate a meaningless, losing attack on women is just a waste of time, but they have decided—they the Republicans have decided—once again to place partisan, ideological agendas over the well-being of the Nation. To drag this partisan attack on any further when we are facing a government shutdown is not responsible. The Republicans should change their tactics. When Republicans gained control of the Senate, we were told that there would be no government shutdowns. But do we need the fear of a government shutdown? Shutting down is bad, the threat of a shutdown is not good, but here we stand, days before funding for the government expires, wasting time on publicity stunts.

Every moment Republicans squander on pointless votes brings us closer to an unfunded Federal Government. Wasting time also leads to a void for shutdown advocates. Just last night, all over the news, it was reported that

the junior Senator from Texas is going to extreme lengths to undermine the complete funding of our government. He is circulating a letter seeking support for a failed strategy that can only have one outcome: a government shutdown.

I would hope my Republican colleagues will not join in that, not for a minute, not for any period of time. I say to my friends from the other side of the aisle: Stop this brinksmanship. Instead, work with Democrats to ensure we have an open, funded government serving the American people.

I see there are Senators on the floor. Would the Presiding Officer be good enough to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.J. Res. 61, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 61) amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

McConnell (for Cochran) amendment No. 2669, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

McConnell amendment No. 2670 (to amendment No. 2669), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2671 (to amendment No. 2670), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2672 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2669), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2673 (to amendment No. 2672), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell motion to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 2674, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2675 (to the instructions) amendment No. 2674), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2676 (to amendment No. 2675), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2 p.m. will be equally divided between the leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Utah.

REMEMBERING ELDER RICHARD G. SCOTT

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who passed away September 22, 2015, at the age of 86.

Richard G. Scott had the razor-sharp mind of an engineer, fused with the tender softness of a disciple's soul.

A graduate of George Washington University in mechanical engineering, who did post-graduate training in nuclear engineering, he had a brilliant mind with an uncanny capacity for formulas, projections, and calculations. Yet he became known throughout the world for an enormous heart with an equally uncanny capacity to love and to have empathy for people from every walk of life.

Elder Scott's gentle voice invited all who had lost their way, who had given up hope or had wandered far to come home, home to the faith, family, and community that would bring them real peace and lasting, genuine joy.

Countless individuals around the world heard his invitation to come home and rightly felt that he was talking directly to them. Ever in search of the one who was lost—Elder Scott's words and witness of Jesus Christ served as the lower lights upon the shore to gently guide many a wanderer home.

Elder Scott had an extraordinary depth of empathy, particularly for those who silently suffered and anxiously sought for relief, redemption, and renewal in the midst of life's storms. He, himself, was a man acquainted with grief, having lost two young children and later his wife Jeanene to untimely deaths. He also seemed to intimately understand the feelings of deep discouragement, overwhelming uncertainty, as well as the crushing avalanche of personal inadequacy that can descend upon the human soul during difficult days and trying times. Yet he continually stood as a beacon of hope to those who struggled because he knew with an absolute certainty to what source we should look for strength and security during such days and at such times.

His complete love for and belief in the divine potential of each and every soul led him to speak plainly, powerfully, and often with tender, heartfelt, personal feelings. He urged the struggling as well as the faithful to cast aside any behavior, habit or belief that weighed them down or kept them from living up to their full potential. Members of the LDS Church all around the world often felt, as they watched him speak, that he was not only speaking specifically to them but also that he was looking straight into their souls. In truth, he was just speaking with such love, empathy, and genuine compassion that he empowered his listeners to look into their own hearts and see what their Savior saw in them.

Elder Scott saw people not for where they were currently positioned on the road of life but for the potential each person had to do, be, and become more. He once declared: "We become what we want to be by consistently being what we want to become each day."

Elder Scott's vision extended far beyond the struggles of mortality; he focused on raising our sights to higher things, grander places, and more noble thoughts.