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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.

Eternal Spirit, for the beauty of the Earth and the glories of the skies, we praise You. For Your love that extends to us undeserved mercies, we lift our hearts in grateful thanksgiving.

In this challenging season of our national life, give our lawmakers the wisdom to look to You. May they remember that You are the author and finisher of our Nation's destiny, guiding us with Your prevailing providence. Lord, inspire our Senators to remove obstacles that hinder them from accomplishing Your purposes. May they seek only to please You.

God of grace and glory, thank You for continuing to be our refuge and strength.

We pray in Your Holy 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. PAUL). The Democratic leader is recognized.

BENGHAZI SELECT COMMITTEE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, former First Lady, U.S. Senator of the State of New York, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will testify before the so-called Benghazi Select Committee

tomorrow. In recent weeks, it has become absolutely clear that this committee is nothing more than a political hit job on Hillary Clinton.

I remember a program, "Queen for a Day." I guess this is "Speaker for the Day." Republican Majority Leader of the House of Representatives McCARTHY—here is what he said on a TV show, radio show, or whatever it was:

Everybody thought Hillary Clinton was unbeatable, right? But we put together a Benghazi special committee, a select committee. What are her numbers today? Her numbers are dropping.

Well, that is one reason he was Speaker for the day. There were other reasons, of course. But he told the truth. He told the truth. Congressman McCARTHY isn't the only Republican to speak the truth about this so-called committee. Last week Republican Congressman RICHARD HANNA of New York said:

Sometimes the biggest sin you can commit in D.C. is to tell the truth. This may not be politically correct, but I think that there was a big part of this investigation that was designed to go after people and an individual, Hillary Clinton. After what Kevin McCarthy said, it's difficult to accept at least a part of it was not true. I think that's the way Washington works. But you'd like to expect more from a committee that's spent millions of dollars and tons of time.

That is an understatement—about \$5 million just for this one select committee. There have been other hearings that have cost huge amounts of taxpayer dollars. They are going again tomorrow, and they said be ready for 8 hours—8 hours of interrogation. And that is what it is, an interrogation.

These two quotes are from two House Republicans. HANNA from New York is not a Democrat, he is a Republican.

The message is clear: The Benghazi Committee is a political calculation meant to influence Presidential elections. And there is more. Now we have found out that one of the Republican staffers on the committee claims that he—the staffer—was unfairly fired be-

cause he refused to unfairly target Secretary Clinton. But what else could be expected from a committee whose sole purpose is to drag a Presidential hopeful through the mud?

It is no secret that for the last 2 years, numerous Republican-directed organizations with huge amounts of money have been targeting Hillary Clinton—for more than 2 years—because they knew she would likely run for President and they wanted to soften her up, just as McCARTHY said.

Look at the committee's record. In 17 months, committee Republicans have held a whopping three hearings—in 17 months. Tomorrow's hearing will be the first public hearing since January. It is October. October is winding down. Instead, Republican Chairman TREY GOWDY and his committee have focused millions of dollars and thousands of staff hours on Hillary Clinton—and Hillary Clinton only. The committee has interviewed or deposed eight Clinton campaign staffers. Yet Chairman GOWDY has held only one hearing with an expert from the intelligence community and not a single hearing with anyone from the Department of Defense, which is clearly a key entity responding to attacks on our diplomatic post. And what have they learned in all that time? Nothing. A recent report by the Democrats on the Benghazi Select Committee confirms that none of the witnesses they interviewed supported any of the wild conspiracy theories regarding those attacks.

Contrast the Benghazi Committee with the work of the legally required investigation of these attacks, the Accountability Review Board. This independent review was overseen by respected leaders, Ambassador Thomas Pickering, who is one of the great diplomats of our time, and ADM Michael Mullen. They completed their work in less than 3 months, not 17 months. The review board immediately put out a hard-hitting report with a series of recommendations to make sure an attack

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



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like this doesn't happen someplace else around the world. And what was Secretary Clinton's reaction to that report? She took responsibility immediately and began to implement the recommendations from the Accountability Review Board.

In summary, Republicans spent at least \$5 million to attack Secretary Clinton. On this one committee, this one select committee, they have spent \$4.7 or \$4.8 million. Republicans have done little to investigate the Benghazi attacks. And what little work House Republicans actually did only reconfirmed the basic findings of all three of these previous investigations.

House Republicans sadly have used the tragic deaths of four innocent Americans and turned it into an appalling political farce. The very notion that an official House committee was used as a political tool is inexcusable. I would suggest that the chairman of that committee should be ashamed of himself. It is even more disgraceful when nearly 5 million taxpayer dollars were spent on this political hit job.

Senate Democrats will continue to fight to get this sham of a committee disbanded. Weeks ago, we sent a letter to Speaker BOEHNER urging him to bring this disgraceful committee to an end, but, no, they are plodding forward. Today, Senate Democrats sent a letter to the Republican National Committee requesting that it reimburse the American people for the Benghazi Committee's expenses. Why did we do that? It is only fair since the so-called committee is clearly a Republican political organization.

CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today the Senate turns its attention to the cybersecurity bill. It is way overdue. The bill, which is OK, is better than nothing—let's put it that way.

The ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, Senator FEINSTEIN, and the chairman of that committee, Senator BURR, have worked hard on this legislation, which addresses a serious national security issue. In fact, it is so serious that we should have addressed this topic long ago. We tried to. As Senate Democrats, we tried so very hard. We had a comprehensive cybersecurity bill on the floor 3 years ago which was much deeper and better than this one—3 years ago—but our Republican colleagues blocked us from even debating the bill. We couldn't even debate the bill. Why? They, the Republicans, were told the chamber of commerce didn't like it. At about the same time, the chamber of commerce's whole operation was hacked by the Chinese. The people who worked down there expected things to come out in English, but they came out in Chinese. But they didn't like the bill anyway, so they told the Republicans to oppose it, and they marched over here and opposed it.

Democrats, however, realize cybersecurity is a serious issue. We know how important cybersecurity is for the national security of our country and the financial security of our economy.

Even though this bill is not our perfect bill, we are going to cooperate with our Republican colleagues. Several months ago we reached an agreement with Republicans to begin debating this legislation, and now we can process it in an efficient and bipartisan manner.

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.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

I withdraw that. The reason we were going to have a quorum call—I know other people want to have a chance to speak, but Senator McCONNELL is on his way.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

DRUG ABUSE EPIDEMIC

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, before discussing the bill currently before the Senate, I would like to note that President Obama will be heading to West Virginia today with Drug Czar Botticelli to announce additional steps the Federal Government will take to address America's prescription drug abuse and heroin epidemic.

This epidemic has been particularly devastating to my constituents. Today, drug overdoses—principally driven by painkillers—claim more Kentucky lives than car accidents. Today, increased heroin overdose rates account for nearly one-third of all drug overdose deaths in the Commonwealth. Today, thousands of innocent babies are born dependent on opioids.

I recently hosted Director Botticelli in Kentucky to discuss critical issues such as these. I am encouraged to see him and the President engaged and proposing certain steps that my home State of Kentucky has already embraced.

Drug abuse certainly isn't a partisan issue. Many Members of the Senate are actively engaged on the matter. I know the President will be joined today by West Virginia's Republican Senator and Democratic Senator. Finding solu-

tions to this epidemic will require all of us, Republicans and Democrats alike, to work together at the Federal, State, and local levels. Today's announcement is encouraging because it is always positive to see Republicans and Democrats working together to address this epidemic.

Here is another bipartisan opportunity for us to work together on this issue: Let's pass S. 799, the Protecting Our Infants Act. I hope the Senate will pass that important bipartisan legislation very soon.

CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier this year, millions of people were affected when the Obama administration was hit by a devastating cyber attack. It is an attack that has been described as “one of the worst breaches in U.S. history,” but it is hardly the last one we will face.

The challenges posed by cyber attacks are real, and they are broad. They threaten governments, businesses, and individuals. Americans see these threats in the public sector. For instance, as reports have indicated, the sensitive personal information of millions who purchase insurance through ObamaCare is especially vulnerable. Americans see these threats in the private sector as well. For instance, despite the cyber deal recently agreed upon between China and the administration, press reports indicate that Chinese hacking attempts on American companies and businesses appear to be continuing unabated. Americans also know that a cyber attack is essentially a personal attack on their own privacy. It is violating to think of strangers digging through our medical records and emails. It is worrying to think of criminals accessing credit card numbers and Social Security information.

That is why the Senate will again consider bipartisan legislation to help Americans' most private and personal information. It would do so by defeating cyber attacks through the sharing of information. It contains modern tools that cybersecurity experts tell us could help prevent future attacks against both public and private sectors. It contains important measures to protect individual privacy and civil liberties. It has been carefully scrutinized by Senators of both parties. In short, this legislation is strong, transparent, and bipartisan. Republicans and Democrats joined together to pass this legislation through committee, the administration supports it, and the House has already passed similar legislation. With a little cooperation, we can pass it here shortly as well.

The chair of the Intelligence Committee, Senator BURR, is working to set votes on pending amendments and has accommodated other Senators in the form of a substitute amendment. I wish to thank him for his hard work on this legislation. I wish to also thank