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Senate

The Senate met at 3 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:

Our Father, be with us not only in great moments of experience but also during life's mundane tasks.

Through the power of Your Spirit, may our Senators mount up with wings like eagles, running without weariness and walking without fainting. Lord, give them the wisdom to be patient with others, ever lenient to their faults and ever prompt to appreciate their virtues. Rule in their hearts, keeping them from sin and sustaining their loved ones in all of their tomorrows. Surround them with the shield of Your favor, as You provide them with a future and a hope, accomplishing in their lives more than they can ask or imagine.

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 ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.R. 240.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 5, H.R. 240, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 405

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 405) to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, 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 having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. CORNYN. I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the American people can get their news in various fashions, whether it is a blog, the nightly news or in a newspaper. They are very concerned. They are concerned about the threat of global terrorism. And why shouldn't they be? Look at what they see.

We see ISIS has murdered tens of thousands of people. One need only to look back at those thousands of Yazidi people who are trapped in the mountains in Iraq. We saw it play on day after day. These people were fleeing for their lives and many of them didn't make it.

We have watched not only tens of thousands murdered, but we have watched them behead people. Just a few days ago we watched them put a man in a cage, set the cage on fire, and burn him alive. They are so void of any

respectability; they are so uncivilized. They filmed 22 minutes of that man suffering the utmost torture until he died—22 minutes of torture.

We look around the world, and in Paris 20 people are dead of a terrorist attack. People are dead in Belgium thwarting that terrorist attack. In Ottawa, Canada, at the Parliament terrorists attacked. In Sydney, Australia, there was an attack in a restaurant.

It seems that no matter what the day is, there is another act of terror that we have to be aware of. We have watched, with some dismay, at the terror that is coming. ISIS has bragged that they are coming our way.

We have our national security agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, which has protected us from attacks to this point. Now we are 18 days away from having no money for the Department of Homeland Security—18 days. But that is a false number because we are out of session for about 10 of those 18 days. So really, after this week, we are down to less than 1 week to protect our homeland.

Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security, was on national TV yesterday warning the American people of what we face. He went through what his agency does, what they do to protect our homeland. That agency was established during the Presidency of George W. Bush. It happened after 9/11. We consolidated 22 different agencies into something that is more workable. Jeh Johnson has done a very, very good job.

There is border protection, the Coast Guard, and they have responsibilities for preventing cyber attacks. There is rarely a day that goes by when there isn't some cyber attack. Which one is big that day? We had Sony play out, and we had Anthem just a few days ago.

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



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S843

Republicans are hellbent on playing chicken with our national security.

Jeh Johnson said yesterday he would have to furlough as many as 30,000 people if the Republicans decided to do a continuing resolution, which would be at last year's numbers. It would prevent the Department of Homeland Security from funding any new grants. These are grants that help our country, grants for dogs sniffing out all kinds of bad things. These grants fund counter-terrorism task force units. A very big one is waiting to be established in Arizona.

In Las Vegas we have an urban area security initiative. We have 50 million people who come to Las Vegas each year. We need help to make sure local agencies can respond where they have to.

Why are we concerned about these grants? We are concerned because it is what helps local government be ready for these attacks when and if they come.

But the Republicans have come to the conclusion that they are far more afraid of these people—some of whom were here last week—the DREAMers. They dreamed of having a country they could relate to. They came to America as babies. It was the only country they even knew. It was a country where they saluted the flag for many years, and President Obama gave them respectability.

A woman who was here and I talked about last week is a young woman from Las Vegas. Her name is Blanca Gamez. She is a wonderful, wonderful woman. She has two degrees, and she is going to law school next year. She works, and she pays taxes. But it appears that the Republicans are more afraid of her than they are of ISIS—these people who behead people and they burn people in cages.

We cannot allow this to go on the way it is headed. These grants help local firefighters. The DHS directives target criminals instead of families. Republicans, I guess, want us to target these families rather than criminals.

Why are Republicans putting our country at risk?

This isn't some liberal cabal that is talking about this. Let's take, for example, one of the most conservative publications in America, the Wall Street Journal. They wrote a featured opinion piece today about Republican Members of Congress.

The Wall Street Journal says the Republicans' reckless strategy is doomed to fail. Even the very conservative editors of that newspaper said today that Republicans' reckless scheme is destined for—what is in their words—"a spectacular crack-up." These are a few things of what they say in the article.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the February 9, 2015, opinion article from the Wall Street Journal entitled: "Can the GOP Change?"

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Wall Street Journal Editorial, Feb. 8, 2015]

CAN THE GOP CHANGE?

The immigration defeat reveals a larger problem in Congress.

Republicans in Congress are off to a less than flying start after a month in power, dividing their own conference more than Democrats. Take the response to President Obama's immigration order, which seems headed for failure if not a more spectacular crack-up.

That decree last November awarded work permits and de facto legal status to millions of undocumented aliens and dismayed members of both parties, whatever their immigration views. A Congressional resolution to vindicate the rule of law and the Constitution's limits on executive power was defensible, and even necessary, but this message has long ago been lost in translation.

The Republican leadership funded the rest of the government in December's budget deal but isolated the Department of Homeland Security that enforces immigration law. DHS funding runs out this month, and the GOP has now marched itself into another box canyon.

The specific White House abuse was claiming prosecutorial discretion to exempt whole classes of aliens from deportation, dumping the historical norm of case-by-case scrutiny. A GOP sniper shot at this legal overreach would have forced Democrats to go on record, picked up a few supporters, and perhaps even imposed some accountability on Mr. Obama.

But that wasn't enough for immigration restrictionists, who wanted a larger brawl, and they browbeat GOP leaders into adding needless policy amendments. The House reached back to rescind Mr. Obama's enforcement memos from 2011 that instructed Homeland Security to prioritize deportations of illegals with criminal backgrounds. That is legitimate prosecutorial discretion, and in opposing it Republicans are undermining their crime-fighting credentials.

The House even adopted a provision to roll back Mr. Obama's 2012 order deferring deportation for young adults brought to the U.S. illegally as children by their parents—the so-called dreamers. The GOP lost 26 of its own Members on that one, passing it with only 218 votes.

The overall \$40 billion DHS spending bill passed with these riders, 236-191, but with 10 Republicans joining all but two Democrats in opposition. This lack of GOP unity reduced the chances that Senate Democrats would feel any political pressure to go along.

And, lo, on Thursday the House bill failed for the third time to gain the 60 votes needed to overcome the third Democratic filibuster in three days. Swing-state Democrats like Indiana's Joe Donnelly and North Dakota's Heidi Heitkamp aren't worried because they have more than enough material to portray Republicans as the immigration extremists.

Whatever their view of Mr. Obama's order, why would Democrats vote to deport people who were brought here as kids through no fault of their own? Mr. Obama issued a veto threat to legislation that will never get to his desk, and he must be delighted that Republicans are fighting with each other rather than with him.

Restrictionists like Sens. Ted Cruz and Jeff Sessions are offering their familiar advice to fight harder and hold firm against "executive amnesty," but as usual their strategy for victory is nowhere to be found. So Republicans are now heading toward the same cul de sac that they did on the ObamaCare government shutdown.

If Homeland Security funding lapses on Feb. 27, the agency will be pushed into a par-

tial shutdown even as the terrorist threat is at the forefront of public attention with the Charlie Hebdo and Islamic State murders. Imagine if the Transportation Security Administration, a unit of DHS, fails to intercept an Islamic State agent en route to Detroit.

So Republicans are facing what is likely to be another embarrassing political retreat and more intra-party recriminations. The GOP's restrictionist wing will blame the leadership for a failure they share responsibility for, and the rest of America will wonder anew about the gang that couldn't shoot straight.

The restrictionist caucus can protest all it wants, but it can't change 54 Senate votes into 60 without persuading some Democrats. It's time to find another strategy. Our advice on immigration is to promote discrete bills that solve specific problems such as green cards for math-science-tech graduates, more H-1B visas, a guest-worker program for agriculture, targeted enforcement and legal status for the dreamers. Democrats would be hard-pressed to oppose them and it would put the onus back on Mr. Obama. But if that's too much for the GOP, then move on from immigration to something else.

It's not too soon to say that the fate of the GOP majority is on the line. Precious weeks are wasting, and the combination of weak House leadership and a rump minority unwilling to compromise is playing into Democratic hands. This is no way to run a Congressional majority, and the only winners of GOP dysfunction will be Mr. Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton.

Mr. REID. I will read parts of the article:

If Homeland Security funding lapses on Feb. 27, the agency will be pushed into a partial shutdown even as the terrorist threat is at the forefront of public attention with the Charlie Hebdo and Islamic State murders. Imagine if the Transportation Security Administration, a unit of DHS, fails to intercept an Islamic State agent en route to Detroit.

So Republicans are facing what is likely to be another embarrassing political retreat and more intra-party recriminations. The GOP's restrictionist wing will blame the leadership for a failure they share responsibility for, and the rest of America will wonder anew about the gang that couldn't shoot straight.

This is about as serious as anything could be. We need to fund this agency which is so vitally important to our country. We need to pass a clean bill—the bipartisan bill that Speaker BOEHNER and the majority leader agreed to in November—and give the American people the protection they deserve. Anything less is not good, is a disaster for our country, and really is very, very bad to protect our homeland.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). 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, with the time equally divided until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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