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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 10, 2016, at 11:30 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2016

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our God, we honor Your Name. You continue to guide our Nation, and we trust the unfolding of Your prevailing providence. Help us to effectively tell this generation about Your mighty works so that Your Name will be known by those not yet born. Use us to inspire people to celebrate Your matchless mercy and Your power to save. Thank You for keeping Your word, for extending to us Your daily blessings, and for picking us up each time we fall.

Guide your Senators with Your love today. Be for them a shade by day and a defense by night. Lord, keep them on the road that leads to life.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 9, 2016.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PAUL thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate will soon have a chance to come together in support of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, a bill designed to help address the prescription opioid and heroin epidemic that is spreading across our country.

We have seen the impact this crisis is having in all 50 States, how it is affecting people of all different ages and backgrounds. We know that heroin and prescription opioid addiction devastates communities, destroys families, and claims thousands of lives each year, but we also know there are steps

we can take here in the Senate that can help heal our Nation. For instance, just a few months ago we appropriated \$400 million to opioid-specific programs—which is nearly one-third more than what the Senate appropriated the preceding year—and all \$400 million of those funds remain available to be spent today.

We can take another step forward now—a big step—with the passage of this authorization bill. Just listen to what some officials are saying about CARA's potential impact: Northern Kentucky's top anti-drug official said this bill can help "allow individuals, families, and communities to heal from this scourge." The president and CEO of a nonprofit organization with programs in Kentucky noted that CARA can "create lasting impact in Kentucky" and ultimately help lead to more Kentuckians "receiv[ing] the treatment they desperately need. A group that provides overdose prevention training in the Commonwealth said that CARA can give them a "stronger foundation to move from training to action." President Obama's own drug czar noted that provisions like those in CARA are "critically important to make headway" in this epidemic.

The bill before us, with all of its important provisions, is the result of hard work and leadership from many colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Of course, there is the lead Republican sponsor of this bill, the junior Senator from Ohio, Mr. PORTMAN, who has worked closely with colleagues in both parties, such as the junior Senator from New Hampshire, Ms. AYOTTE, as

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



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well as the junior Senator from Rhode Island and the senior Senator from Minnesota. There is the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator GRASSLEY, who worked to move this bill quickly out of committee by voice vote.

I also thank the many Senators who worked with the bill managers to process the kinds of amendments both sides agreed would make this bill even better. That includes the senior Senators from Iowa and California, whose amendment would aid in targeting illegal drug importation. It includes the senior Senator from West Virginia, whose amendment will build upon education and awareness efforts in an effort to underline the dangers of opioid abuse. It includes the junior Senator from Pennsylvania, whose amendment would allow Medicare Advantage and Part D plans to implement a prescription drug abuse prevention tool, a tool similar to what is already available and used in Kentucky in the Medicaid Program and in private plans.

The bipartisan collaboration we have seen thus far shows what we can achieve on behalf of the American people when we work together toward important shared priorities. The passage of CARA would bring us one step closer to ending prescription opioid and heroin addiction and overdose, so let's keep working together to pass it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Republican leader and I have worked together in leadership capacities in the Senate for almost 20 years. He has been the whip and I was the whip. I was majority leader, he was minority leader, and vice versa. My presentations the last few weeks do not take away from the fact that MITCH MCCONNELL and I are friends. We have worked together for a long time, and we have done our best to move the Senate forward. But that does not take away from my need as a Senator to pronounce publicly when he and I disagree. So I want to make sure the record is reflective of that.

As each day passes, the Republican leader continues to transform his caucus into the party of Donald Trump. That is not good. You can see it in the Republicans' rhetoric. The Senators are using increasingly extreme and disturbing language in defending their unprecedented obstruction of President Obama's Supreme Court nominee, who yet is unnamed.

The assistant Republican leader said the President's eventual nominee "will bear some resemblance to a pinata." We talked about, in the past, what a pi-

nata is. He is comparing a Supreme Court nominee to a children's party favor that gets smashed repeatedly with a baseball bat or something similar to a baseball bat. That is nothing more than a thinly veiled threat from Senator CORNYN, serving notice on the coming assault on the President's nominee.

We should not forget that we don't know who this nominee will be. We know nothing about this person, whether it is a man or a woman, educated at Harvard or Stanford or the University of Utah or the University of New Mexico. We don't know. But the Republican leader doesn't care who the eventual nominee is. It appears that is the case. He doesn't want his Senators to care either. All he cares about is appeasing the Trump wing of the party—which is getting pretty big—and Trump's radical followers.

After all, this is the same Republican leader who yesterday again refused to distance himself from Donald Trump. He refused to condemn his hateful campaign for President. Instead, he pledged to support the Republican nominee. It is really shocking to see this transformation. Republicans have not always been this irrational and vicious.

Even Senator CORNYN used to know better. During Justice Alito's confirmation hearings, the then-junior Senator from Texas was also talking about pinatas as he decried personal attacks on Supreme Court nominees. Here is what he said:

I'm happy Judge Alito survived these unwarranted attacks. I'm also sorry that his family had to be subjected to them, as well. At some point, however, we as a committee will need to come to terms with our confirmation process. The current regime treats Supreme Court nominees more like pinatas than human beings. And that's something none of us should be willing to tolerate.

The Republican whip gave this pinata talk the day the Senate Judiciary Committee approved the Alito nomination. Now that President Obama is the one putting forth a Supreme Court nominee, it seems the assistant Republican leader is willing to tolerate, even promote, these "unwarranted attacks" he once denounced. Why the change? The answer is very simple: The senior Senator from Texas, like every other member of his caucus, is simply obeying the Republican leader's orders as he leads them to become the party of Trump, the caucus of Trump, the conference of Trump. This is the path the Republican leader has chosen for his party—a path of demagoguery and lapsed constitutional duties, a path which he forged and which led to the rise of Donald Trump. I do not understand why so many of my Republican colleagues are blindly following this path down a very bumpy road. Where are the moderate Republicans—however few there may be—who see that they are being used by the Republican leader to appease the Trump wing of the party? Where are the voices of reason from within the Republican caucus who will take a stand against this unprecedented dereliction of duty?

Keep in mind, a decade ago the Senator from Texas was decrying a Republican nominee being treated like a pinata. Now, fast-forward 10 years, and he is saying: I am going to make a pinata out of whoever it is, even though they don't know who it is.

I know there have to be some moderate Republicans, or Republicans, because outside of this building, there are Republicans urging their colleagues to forgo this ludicrous obstruction.

A person I enjoyed working with right here, a very conservative Senator from Mississippi, Trent Lott, was the majority leader, and I worked with him very closely. He was a conservative, I repeat, but he was very pragmatic. Yesterday or the day before, he lamented his party's handling of the Supreme Court vacancy. Here is what he said:

I probably would've handled it differently. My attitude, particularly on the Supreme Court, was that elections do have consequences, sometimes bad, and I tried to lean toward being supportive of the president's nominees, Democrat or Republican.

That is how we should do things around here. It was the standard that if a President put forward a nominee and that person did not have some ethical problems and was basically qualified, we would take care of that. There is no better example of that than Clarence Thomas. I didn't vote for Clarence Thomas. I wish he hadn't gotten enough votes. But we did not stop that matter from going forward. He just barely made it. He got 52 votes. But there was no filibuster. He was nominated by a Republican President. The President liked him. On paper, he was qualified. He was a graduate of Yale Law School. But that isn't how they are doing things around here anymore.

What Trent Lott said—he is not alone. Former Republican Senator from Indiana—someone we all liked a lot—Dick Lugar is urging Senate Republicans to do the right thing and honor their constitutional duty. Here is what he said:

I can understand their reluctance given the controversy that surrounds all of the debate that has already occurred. But that is not sufficient reason to forgo your duty.

What Richard Lugar is saying is: Do your jobs. You have a constitutional obligation to do that.

Those are two quotes I just gave from strong Republican leaders telling Senate Republicans to do their jobs. So why won't they? Of the six nominations made to vacancies that have existed during Presidential election years since 1900—more than 100 years ago—each of the six has been confirmed by the Senate. That is what the Senate has done in the past and should do now.

I say to my friends across the aisle: Listen to reason. Heed your constitutional duties. Listen to what the American people are saying. They are not taking a popular stand. It is wrong. Don't fall on your sword for Donald Trump and his kind. Don't sacrifice your integrity as a Senator. Stand up