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Senate

The Senate met at 2 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.

Almighty and everlasting God, the Creator of new beginnings, thank You for Your constant love and for the opportunity to learn from each other.

As we turn to a new chapter in our labors, illuminate the path of our lawmakers with Your holy light. May Your sacred Word provide them with a lamp and light in this world's darkness, keeping them from the detours that lead to ruin. Give them a humility that seeks first to understand instead of striving to be understood.

Lord, guide us all with Your powerful hand until the kingdoms of this world acknowledge Your sovereignty and might.

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.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Chair lays before the Senate the President's veto message on S.J. Res. 23, which the clerk will read and which will be spread in full upon the Journal.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 23, a joint resolution providing for congressional

disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of a rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Standards of Performance for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from New, Modified, and Reconstructed Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units."

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the veto message on S.J. Res. 23 be considered as having been read; that it be printed in the RECORD, spread in full upon the Journal, and held at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The veto message ordered to be printed in the RECORD is as follows:

MEMORANDUM OF DISAPPROVAL

S.J. Res. 23 is a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5 of the United States Code of a rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) relating to "Standards of Performance for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from New, Modified, and Reconstructed Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units." This resolution would nullify EPA's carbon pollution standards for new, modified, and reconstructed power plants. Accordingly, I am withholding my approval of this resolution. (The Pocket Veto Case, 279 U.S. 655 (1929)).

Climate change poses a profound threat to our future and future generations. Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, a primary greenhouse gas, are higher than they have been in at least 800,000 years. In 2009, EPA determined that greenhouse gas pollution endangers Americans' health and welfare by causing long-lasting changes in the climate that can have, and are already having, a range of negative effects on human health, the climate, and the environment. We are already seeing the impacts of climate change, and established science confirms that we will experience stronger storms, deeper droughts, longer wildfire seasons, and

other intensified impacts as the planet warms. The Pentagon has determined that climate change poses immediate risks to our national security.

Power plants are the largest source of greenhouse gas pollution in our country. Although we have limits on other dangerous pollutants from power plants, the carbon pollution standards and the Clean Power Plan ensure that we will finally have national standards to reduce the amount of carbon pollution that our power plants can emit.

The carbon pollution standards will ensure that, when we make major investments in power generation infrastructure, we also deploy available technologies to make that infrastructure as low-emitting as possible. By blocking these standards from taking effect, S.J. Res. 23 would delay our transition to cleaner electricity generating technologies by enabling continued build-out of outdated, high-polluting infrastructure. Because it would overturn carbon pollution standards that are critical to protecting against climate change and ensuring the health and well-being of our Nation, I cannot support the resolution.

To leave no doubt that the resolution is being vetoed, in addition to withholding my signature, I am returning S.J. Res. 23 to the Secretary of the Senate, along with this Memorandum of Disapproval.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, December 18, 2015.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the President's veto message on S.J. Res. 24, which the clerk will read and which will be spread in full upon the Journal.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

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



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Veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 24, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of a rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units."

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the veto message on S.J. Res. 24 be considered as having been read; that it be printed in the RECORD, spread in full upon the Journal, and held at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The veto message ordered to be printed in the RECORD is as follows:

MEMORANDUM OF DISAPPROVAL

S.J. Res. 24 is a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5 of the United States Code of a rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) relating to "Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units." This resolution would nullify the Clean Power Plan, the first national standards to address climate-destabilizing greenhouse gas pollution from existing power plants. Accordingly, I am withholding my approval of this resolution. (The Pocket Veto Case, 279 U.S. 655 (1929)).

Climate change poses a profound threat to our future and future generations. Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, a primary greenhouse gas, are higher than they have been in at least 800,000 years. In 2009, EPA determined that greenhouse gas pollution endangers Americans' health and welfare by causing long-lasting changes in the climate that can have, and are already having, a range of negative effects on human health, the climate, and the environment. We are already seeing the impacts of climate change, and established science confirms that we will experience stronger storms, deeper droughts, longer wildfire seasons, and other intensified impacts as the planet warms. The Pentagon has determined that climate change poses immediate risks to our national security.

The Clean Power Plan is a tremendously important step in the fight against global climate change. It is projected to reduce carbon pollution from power plants by 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030. It builds on progress States and the power sector are already making to move toward cleaner energy production, and gives States the time and flexibility they need to develop tailored, cost-effective plans to reduce their emissions. By nullifying the Clean Power Plan, S.J. Res. 24 not only threatens ongoing progress toward cleaner energy, but would also eliminate public health and other benefits of up to \$54 billion per year by 2030, including thousands fewer premature deaths from air pollution and thousands fewer childhood asthma attacks each year.

The Clean Power Plan is essential in addressing the largest source of greenhouse gas pollution in our country. It is past time to act to mitigate climate impacts on American communities. Because the resolution would overturn the Clean Power Plan, which is critical to protecting against climate change and ensuring the health and well-being of our Nation, I cannot support it.

To leave no doubt that the resolution is being vetoed, in addition to withholding my signature, I am returning S.J. Res. 24 to the Secretary of the Senate, along with this Memorandum of Disapproval.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, December 18, 2015.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2434

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2434) to provide that any executive action that infringes on the powers and duties of Congress under section 8 of article I of the Constitution of the United States or on the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States has no force or effect, and to prohibit the use of funds for certain purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

WELCOMING COLLEAGUES BACK AND THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to welcome colleagues back to a new year in a new Senate that is back to work for the American people. It is clear we had a successful 2015. Committees began functioning again. Senators began having more of a say again. We got important things accomplished for the American people. We are looking to build upon this progress in 2016. There is, of course, much to be done, but I am optimistic about what can be achieved with a bipartisan dedication to moving back to regular order, not just this year but in the years to come.

The scale of what any Congress will be able to accomplish in a given year often depends upon the willingness of the President to cooperate and engage in good faith. When President Obama comes to address Congress tomorrow, he will have an important opportunity

to demonstrate that to the American people. The question is, Will he rise to the moment? Based on what the White House has been saying in the media, it is unlikely we will hear a unifying message for our country tomorrow. That is unfortunate. I think the American people can expect to hear a positive message from Governor Haley. Many are looking forward to hearing what she has to say. I will have much more to say on all of that tomorrow.

REMEMBERING DALE BUMPERS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me again welcome all of our colleagues back. I think they will join me in remembering former Senator Dale Bumpers, who passed away over the holidays.

Some called Dale Bumpers an improbable Senator. Others have remarked on his humor and wit. But what is clear about this former Senate colleague is that he was larger than life in many ways. I am sure his name will continue to be remembered by Arkansans for many years to come. The Senate sends its condolences to the family and friends Senator Bumpers leaves behind.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO CHAPLAIN DR. BLACK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, while the Chaplain is in the building, I wish to say a brief word. I have the good fortune—and have for many years—to come to the floor every day and listen to a prayer offered in sincerity by our Chaplain. The people who watch us on TV think that all he does is walk in here every day and give a little prayer. The fact is, I received information on the things he did this past year.

He represented the Senate in 27 out-of-town speaking engagements. Those speaking engagements are tremendous. He has been in Nevada on a number of occasions. He is a tremendous presenter of what he does and what is good for the country. He delivered the invocation and/or benediction to 17 different ceremonies. He spoke at 10 different Senate functions. He visited with 20 different school groups who came to visit the Capitol. He delivered the invocation at 12 local events. He spoke at 26 local events. He hosted 11 guest Chaplains. He hosted three Jewish programs. He administered premarital and marriage-enrichment counseling. He mentored 20 Senate staffers in a recurring, 10-week spiritual mentoring program. He facilitated the Wednesday morning weekly Prayer Breakfast. He hosted two men's Prayer Breakfasts for Senate staff featuring Os Guinness and Michael Franzese as guest speakers. He hosted a special program at Easter, our 20th